

# MODERN INDIAN HISTORY

COURSE: I

*COLONIAL STATE AND EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM*

*Complementary Course BA Economics/Sociology/ English*

II Semester  
(2011 Admission onwards)



## UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT

### SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**  
**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Study Material

**Complementary Course for BA Economics/Sociology/ English Programmes**  
**II SEMESTER**

MODERN INDIAN HISTORY (AD 1857-1992)  
COURSE: I  
Colonial State and Emergence of Nationalism

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## UNIT-I

### REVOLT OF 1857

#### **Arrival of European Traders**

Indian trade links with Europe started in through sea route only after the arrival of Vasco da Gama in Calicut, India on May 20, 1498. The Portuguese had traded in Goa as early as 1510, and later founded three other colonies on the west coast in Diu, Bassein, and Mangalore. In 1601 the East India Company was chartered, and the English began their first inroads into the Indian Ocean. At first they were little interested in India, but rather, like the Portuguese and Dutch before them, with the Spice Islands. But the English were unable to dislodge the Dutch from Spice Islands. In 1610, the British chased away a Portuguese naval squadron, and the East India Company created its own outpost at Surat. This small outpost marked the beginning of a remarkable presence that would last over 300 years and eventually dominate the entire subcontinent. In 1612 British established a trading post in Gujarat. As a result of English disappointments with dislodging the Dutch from the Spice Islands, they turned instead to India. In 1614 Sir Thomas Roe was instructed by James I to visit the court of Jahangir, the Mughal emperor of Hindustan. Sir Thomas was to arrange a commercial treaty and to secure for the East India Company sites for commercial agencies, -"factories" as they were called. Sir Thomas was successful in getting permission from Jahangir for setting up factories. East India Company set up factories at Ahmedabad, Broach and Agra. In 1640 East India Company established an outpost at Madras. In 1661 the company obtained Bombay from Charles II and converted it to a flourishing center of trade by 1668. English settlements rose in Orissa and Bengal. In 1633, in the Mahanadi delta of Hariharpur at Balasore in Orissa, factories were set up. In 1650 Gabriel Boughton an employee of the Company obtained a license for trade in Bengal. An English factory was set up in 1651 at Hugli. In 1690 Job Charnock established a factory. In 1698 the factory was fortified and called Fort William. The villages of Sutanati, Kalikata and Gobindpore were developed into a single area called Calcutta. Calcutta became a trading center for East India Company. Once in India, the British began to compete with the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French. Through a combination of outright combat and deft alliances with local princes, the East India Company gained control of all European trade in India by 1769. In 1672 the French established themselves at Pondicherry and stage was set for a rivalry between the British and French for control of Indian trade.

**Battle of Plassey** - On June 23rd, 1757 at Plassey, between Calcutta and Murshidabad, the forces of the East India Company under Robert Clive met the army of Siraj-ud-Doula, the Nawab of Bengal. Clive had 800 Europeans and 2200 Indians whereas Siraj-ud-doula in his entrenched camp at Plassey was said to have about 50,000 men with a train of heavy artillery. The aspirant to the Nawab's throne, Mir Jafar, was induced to throw in his lot with Clive, and by far the greater number of the Nawab's soldiers were bribed to throw away their weapons, surrender prematurely, and even turn their arms against their own army. Siraj-ud-Doula was defeated. Battle of Plassey marked the first major military success for British East India Company.

**Battle of Wandiwash, 1760:** From 1744, the French and English fought a series of battles for supremacy in the Carnatic region. In the third Carnatic war, the British East India Company defeated the French forces at the battle of Wandiwash ending almost a century of conflict over supremacy in India. This battle gave the British trading company a far superior position in India compared to the other Europeans.

Battle of Buxar (1764) marked the final ascendancy of the English in Bengal. After the battle of Palassey (1757), the English East India Company was seized with unsurpassable greed, believing that the wealth of Bengal was inexhaustible. The Directors of the company, therefore, ordered that Bengal should pay the expenses of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and purchase out of its revenue all the company's exports from India. The company was bent upon using its control over the nawab of Bengal to drain the wealth of the province. Mir Jafar, the new nawab of Bengal, soon discovered that it was impossible to meet the full demands of the company and its officials who, on their part, began to criticise the nawab for his incapacity in fulfilling their expectations. Therefore, they forced him to abdicate in favour of his son-in-law, Mir Qasim, who rewarded his benefactors handsomely. He, however, belied English hopes, and soon emerged as a threat to their position and designs in Bengal. He believed that since he had paid the company and its servants adequately for putting him on the throne, they should now leave him alone to govern Bengal.

The English disliked the nawab's attempts to check the misuse of the *Farman* of 1717 by the company's servants, who demanded that their goods whether destined for export or for internal use should be free of duties. He sought to take measures to stop the company from selling illegally the dastaks or free passes to friendly Indian traders, thereby enabling them to evade internal customs duties and gain an unfair advantage on honest traders. He tried to save the Indian officials and zamindars from being forced to pay presents and bribes to the company's servants, and hoped to make Bengal strong by freeing himself from the company's control. All this was not to the liking of the English. The alien merchants were no longer willing to tolerate equality between themselves and Indians. The truth of the matter was that there could not exist two masters in Bengal. While Mir Qasim believed that he was an independent ruler, the English demanded that he should act as a mere tool in their hands, as they had put him in power. War was inevitable.

The conflict was precipitated at Patna where an irascible English chief and an embittered nawab provoked each other beyond endurance. A regular campaign ensued during the summer of 1763, during which the nawab's new army was defeated in four pitched battles. Mir Qasim fled to Patna, and then to Oudh. Here he enlisted the support of Shuja-ud-Daulah, the nawab wazir of Oudh, who was joined by the wandering Emperor Shah Alam II. Fighting resumed in the autumn of 1764 and the campaign concluded by the resounding victory of the English at Buxar (in Bihar) on October 22. Shah Alam once more joined the British camp, Shuja-ud-Daulah fled to Rohilakhand while Oudh was overrun, and Mir Qasim disappeared into obscurity.

Buxar was a decisive battle. It riveted the shackles of company rule upon Bengal. Hitherto they had been rivals and manipulators of existing authority and their power was fortuitous and hedged with doubt. It was now unchallenged and about to receive imperial recognition. Buxar also placed Oudh at the mercy of the company. It marks the final establishment of British ascendancy in Bengal. The nawab depended for his internal and external security on the British. By a treaty signed with the company on 20 February 1765, the titular nawab of Bengal was to disband most of his army and to administer Bengal through a deputy subahdar who was to be

nominated by the company and who could not be dismissed without its approval. The company thus gained supreme control over the administration (or *nizamat*) of Bengal. From Shah Alam II, who was still the titular head of the Mughal Empire, the company secured the diwani or the right to collect revenue, of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Thus, its control over Bengal was legalised and the revenues of this most prosperous of Indian provinces were placed at its command. As the *diwan*, the company directly collected its revenues, while through the right to nominate the deputy subahdar on behalf of the nawab; they had their say in the administration. They controlled the finances of the province and its army directly, and its administration indirectly. Thus the British now had the power without responsibility. The nawab and his officials had the responsibility of administration but not the power to discharge it.

Warren Hastings was appointed the Governor of Bengal in 1772. Under the Regulating Act of 1773 passed by British parliament, a Council of four members was appointed, and Warren Hastings (Governor-General 1774-85) was empowered to conduct the Company's affairs with the Council's advice. His task was to consolidate the Company's rule in Bengal. He brought about several administrative and judicial changes. Warren Hastings faced an uphill task in dealing with the Indian rulers. He faced stiff resistance from the Marathas in the north and Hyder Ali in the south. In 1773 he concluded the treaty of Banaras with the Nawab of Avadh appeasing the emperor and getting financial gains thus blocking alliances between the Marathas and the Nawab of Avadh. Under Warren Hastings English army took part in the Rohilla War in 1774 that brought Rohilkhand in the company's jurisdiction.

### **The First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69)**

After the death of the Raja of Mysore in 1760, Hyder Ali, became the ruler of Mysore. He extended his territories by conquering Bednore, Sundra, Sera, Canara and Gutti and subjugated the poligars of south India. With easy success in Bengal, the English concluded a treaty with Nizam Ali of Hyderabad and committed the Company to help the Nizam with the troops in his war against Hyder Ali. In 1767, - the Nizam, the Marathas and the English made an alliance against Hyder. But Hyder was brave and diplomatic. He beat the English at their own game by making peace with the Marathas and alluring the Nizam with territorial gains and together with the latter launched an attack on Arcot. The fight continued for a year and half and the British suffered heavy losses. The panic-stricken British had to sue for peace. A treaty was signed on April 4, 1769, on the basis of restitution of each other's territories.

1769–70 there was 'Great famine in Bengal' in which nearly 10 million people perished. Later several other famines hit different parts of Indian killing millions of people during East India companies rule. During the period 1772-1785 the territory of the East India Company included Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Banaras and Ghazipur. It also included the Northern Sarkars, port of Salsette and the harbours of Madras, Bombay and other minor ports. The Mughal territory included Delhi and other surrounding areas. The territory of Avadh, which was autonomous, was bound in an offensive-defensive alliance with the East India Company since 1765. The North Western part of India was under the Sikh clans, who controlled region around the Sultej. The Muslim chiefs ruled in North western Punjab, Multan, Sindh and Kashmir. The Marathas dominated over western India, parts of Central India from Delhi to Hyderabad and Gujarat to Cuttak. The Deccan was ruled by Nizam of Hyderabad. Hyder Ali ruled over Mysore. Tanjore and Travancore were under the Hindu rulers.

## **Second Mysore war**

In 1780 when the English wanted to attack the French at Mahe, situated on the west coast of Mysore, Hyder Ali did not permit it. Therefore the English declared war against Hyder Ali. Hyder Ali arranged a joint front with the Nizam and the Marathas. In July 1780, Hyder Ali with 80,000 men and 100 guns attacked Carnatic. In October 1780 he captured Arcot, defeating an English army under Colonel Braille. Meanwhile British managed to break the alliance between the Raja of Berar, Mahadji Sindhia, Nizam and Hyder Ali.

Hyder Ali continued the war with the British. But in November 1781, Sir Eyre Coote defeated Hyder Ali at Porto Nova. In January 1782, English captured Trincomali. In 1782, Hyder Ali inflicted a humiliating defeat on the British troops under Colonel Braithwaite. On December 7, 1782, Hyder Ali died. His son Tipu Sultan bravely fought against Britishers. Tipu captured brigadier Mathews, in 1783. Then in November 1783, Colonel Fullarton captured Coimbatore. Tired of the war, the two sides concluded the Treaty of Mangalore in 1784. According to the treaty, both the parties decided to restore each other's conquered territories and free all the prisoners.

**Pitt's India Act - 1784** - British Parliament under Pitt's India Bill of 1784 appointed a Board of Control. It provided for a joint government of the Company (represented by the Directors), and the Crown (represented by the Board of Control). In 1786, through a supplementary bill, Lord Cornwallis was appointed as the first Governor-General, and he became the effective ruler of British India under the authority of the Board of Control and the Court of Directors.

## **Third Mysore War**

The immediate cause of the war was Tipu's attack on Travancore on December 29, 1789 over a dispute over Cochin. The Raja of Travancore was entitled to the protection of the English. Thus taking advantage of the situation, the English, making a triple alliance with the Nizams and the Marathas, attacked Tipu Sultan.

The war between Tipu and the alliance lasted for nearly two years. British under Major-General Medows could not win against Tipu. On January 29, 1791, Cornwallis himself took over the command of the British troops. He captured Bangalore in 1791 and approached Seringapatnam, Tipu's capital. Tipu displayed great skill in defending and his tactics forced Cornwallis to retreat. Tipu captured Coimbatore on November 3. Lord Cornwallis soon returned and occupied all the forts in his path to Seringapatnam. On February 5, 1792 Cornwallis arrived at Serinapatnam. Tipu had to sue for peace and the Treaty of Seringapatnam concluded in March 1792. The treaty resulted in the surrender of nearly half of the Mysorean territory to the victorious allies. Tipu also had to pay a huge war indemnity of and his two sons were taken as hostages.

## **Fourth Mysore war**

Lord Wellesley became the governor general of India in 1798. Tipu Sultan tried to secure an alliance with the French against the English in India. Wellesley questioned Tipu's relationship with the French and attacked Mysore in 1799. The fourth Anglo-Mysore War was of short duration and decisive and ended with Tipu's death on May 4, 1799 who was killed fighting to save his capital.



## **British and Marathas**

First Anglo- Maratha war(1775 –1782): Narayan Rao became the fifth Peshwa of the Marathas. Narayan Rao killed by his uncle Raghunath Rao, who declared himself as the Peshwa. The Maratha chieftains under the leadership of Nana Phadnis opposed him. Raghunath Rao sought help from the English. The English agreed to help him and concluded with him the Treaty of Surat on March 7, 1775. According to the treaty the English were to provide 2,500 men and Raghunath was to cede Salsette and Bassein to the English with part of the revenues from Broach and Surat districts.

Maratha army and chiefs proclaimed Madhav Rao Narayan as the Peshwa and on January 9 1779, the British troops met a large Maratha army at Talegaon and were defeated. This shattered the prestige of the British so low that they had to enter into a humiliating Treaty of Wadgaon. British had to surrender all the territories acquired by the Company since 1773.

Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, sent a strong force under Colonel Goddard who took possession of Ahmedabad on February 15 and captured Bassein on December 11, 1780. Warren Hastings sent another force against Mahadaji Sindhia. Captain Popham captured Gwalior on August 3 1780 and on February 16, 1781; General Camac defeated Sindhia at Sipri. These victories increased the prestige of the English, who gained Sindhia as an ally to conclude the Treaty of Salbai on 17 May 1782. As per this treaty Company recognised Madhav Rao Narayan as the Peshwa and returned to the Sindhia all his territories west of Yamuna. The treaty of Salbai assured mutual restitution of each other's territories and guaranteed peace for twenty years.

### **Second Anglo-Maratha war, 1803:**

After death of Nana Phadnavis in 1800, there was infighting between Holkar and Sindhia chiefs. The new Peshwa Bajji Rao murdered Vithuji Holkar, brother of Jaswant Rao Holkar in April 1801. Holkar defeated the combined armies of Sindhias and the Peshwas at Poona and captured the city. The new Peshwa Bajji Rao II was weak and sought the protection of British through treaty of Bassein in 1802. Bajji Rao II was restored to Peshwarship under the protection of the East India Company. However, the treaty was not acceptable to both the Marathas chieftains - the Shindia and Bhosales. This directly resulted in the Second Anglo-Maratha war in 1803.

Sindhia and Bhosale tried to win over Holkar but he did not join them and retired to Malwa and Gaekwad chose to remain neutral. Even at this point of time, the Marathas chiefs were not able to unify themselves and thus the challenge to the authority of the Company brought disasters for both the Sindhias and Bhosales. The war began in August 1803. British under General Wellesley (brother of Lord Wellesley) defeated Bhosales at Argain on November 29 and the British captured the strong fortress of Gawilgrah on December 15, 1803. In the north, General Lake captured Delhi and Agra. The army of Sindhia was completely destroyed at the battle of Delhi in September and at Laswari in Alwar State in November. The British further won in Gujarat, Budelkhand and Orissa.

By the Treaty of Deogaon signed on December 17, 1803, the Bhosale surrendered to the Company the province of Cuttack and the entire region in the west of the rivers Wards.

Similarly, the Sindhia signed the Treaty of Surji-Arjanaon on December 30, 1803 and ceded to the Company all their territories between the Ganga and the Yamuna. British forces were stationed in the territories of the Sindhia and Bhosale. With these victories Britishers became the dominant power in India.

In 1804 Holkar army successfully defeated British army in Kota and forced them out from Agra. British somehow managed to defend Delhi. However in November 1804 British army managed to defeat a contingent of Holkar army but Holkar again defeated British in Bharatpur in 1805. Ultimately Treaty of Rajpurghat" was signed on December 25, 1805 between Holkar and British.

**Third Marataha War (1817-1818):** Marathas were ultimately defeated and Maratha power destroyed by British in several wars during 1817- 1818. Holkar's forces were routed at Mahidpur December 21, 1817 and Baji Rao II, who was trying to consolidate Marathas, finally surrendered in June 1818. British abolished the position of Peshwa and Marathas were limited to the small kingdom of Satara. Thus ended the mighty Maratha power.

Between 1814 to 1826 British had to fight many wars against Gurkhas in the North and Burmese in the North East. After several losses and some gains British signed peace treaties with Gurkhas of Nepal and Burmese. During the period of 1817-1818 British had to fight against non-traditional armies of Pindaris, who used to plunder British territory. British finally managed to crush Pindaris.

During this period in the North West region of Punjab the Sikh power was growing and Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) of Punjab became very powerful. British already had their hands full with problems in different part of India. They were afraid of Ranjit Singh's power. So in 1838 they made a peace treaty with Ranjit Singh. During the same year there was a big famine in north-west India that killed nearly a million people. But after Ranjit Singh's death there was infighting amongst Sikhs. British tried to take advantage of this and First Anglo - Sikh war started in 1845. Battle of Mudki and Ferozshah (1845) saw heavy fighting between British and Sikhs. Sikhs were defeated due to the treachery of their generals. The final battle of Sobraon on February 10, 1846 proved decisive where Sikhs again lost due to the betrayal of their generals. The British were able to capture most of India after defeating Sikhs in 1849 in Second Anglo - Sikh War.

The year 1853 stands out to be a landmark year in modern Indian history as the first Railway opened from Bombay to Thane and first Telegraph line from Calcutta to Agra was started. This was one of the first major positive contributions that British made in India. Although the initial purpose of these was to improve the mobility and communication of the British troops but much later they became very useful for common people.

### **The East India Company**

The **East India Company** (also known as the **East India Trading Company**, **English East India Company**, and, after the Treaty of Union, the **British East India Company**) was an early English joint-stock company that was formed initially for pursuing trade with the East Indies, but that ended up trading mainly with the Indian subcontinent and China. The Company was granted an English Royal Charter, under the name *Governor and Company of Merchants of*

*London Trading into the East Indies*, by Elizabeth I on 31 December 1600, making it the oldest among several similarly formed European East India Companies, the largest of which was the Dutch East India Company. After a rival English company challenged its monopoly in the late 17th century, the two companies were merged in 1708 to form the *United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies*, commonly styled the **Honourable East India Company**, and abbreviated, **HEIC**; the Company was colloquially referred to as **John Company**, and in India as **Company Bahadur**.

The East India Company traded mainly in cotton, silk, indigo dye, saltpetre, tea, and opium. The Company also came to rule large areas of India, exercising military power and assuming administrative functions, to the exclusion, gradually, of its commercial pursuits; it effectively functioned as a megacorporation. Company rule in India, which effectively began in 1757 after the Battle of Plassey, lasted until 1858, when, following the events of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, and under the Government of India Act 1858, the British Crown assumed direct administration of India in the new British Raj. The Company itself was finally dissolved on 1 January 1874, as a result of the East India Stock Dividend Redemption Act 1873. The East India Company often issued coinage bearing its stamp in the regions it had control over.

The Company long held a privileged position in relation to the British Government. As a result, it was frequently granted special rights and privileges, including trade monopolies and exemptions. These caused resentment among its competitors, who saw unfair advantage in the Company's position. Despite this resentment, the Company remained a powerful force for over 250 years.

## Foundation

Soon after the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, a group of London merchants presented a petition to Queen Elizabeth I for permission to sail to the Indian Ocean. The permission was granted and in 1591 three ships sailed from England around the Cape of Good Hope to the Arabian Sea. One of them, the *Edward Bonaventure*, then sailed around Cape Comorin and on to the Malay Peninsula and subsequently returned to England in 1594. In 1596, three more ships sailed east; however, these were all lost at sea. Two years later, on 24 September 1598, another group of merchants, having raised £30,133 in capital, met in London to form a corporation. Although their first attempt was not completely successful, they nonetheless sought the Queen's unofficial approval, purchased ships for their venture, increased their capital to £68,373, and convened again a year later. This time they succeeded, and on 31 December 1600, the Queen granted a Royal Charter to "George, Earl of Cumberland, and 215 Knights, Aldermen, and Burgesses" under the name, *Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading with the East Indies*. For a period of fifteen years the charter awarded the newly formed company a monopoly on trade with all countries east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan. Sir James Lancaster commanded the first East India Company voyage in 1601.

Initially, the Company struggled in the spice trade due to the competition from the already well established Dutch East India Company. The Company opened a factory (trading post) in Bantam on the first voyage and imports of pepper from Java were an important part of the Company's trade for twenty years. The factory in Bantam was closed in 1683. During this time ships belonging to the company arriving in India docked at Surat, which was established as a trade transit point in 1608. In the next two years, the Company built its first factory in south India in the town of Machilipatnam on the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. The high

profits reported by the Company after landing in India initially prompted King James I to grant subsidiary licenses to other trading companies in England. But in 1609 he renewed the charter given to the Company for an indefinite period, including a clause which specified that the charter would cease to be in force if the trade turned unprofitable for three consecutive years.

The Company was led by one Governor and 24 directors, who made up the Court of Directors. They, in turn, reported to the Court of Proprietors, which appointed them. Ten committees reported to the Court of Directors.

### **Foothold in India**

English traders frequently engaged in hostilities with their Dutch and Portuguese counterparts in the Indian Ocean. The Company achieved a major victory over the Portuguese in the Battle of Swally in 1612. The Company decided to explore the feasibility of gaining a territorial foothold in mainland India, with official sanction of both countries, and requested that the Crown launch a diplomatic mission. In 1612, Sir Thomas Roe was instructed by James I to visit the Mughal Emperor Nuruddin Salim Jahangir (r. 1605 - 1627) to arrange for a commercial treaty which would give the Company exclusive rights to reside and build factories in Surat and other areas. In return, the Company offered to provide the Emperor with goods and rarities from the European market. This mission was highly successful as Jahangir sent a letter to James through Sir Thomas Roe:

‘Upon which assurance of your royal love I have given my general command to all the kingdoms and ports of my dominions to receive all the merchants of the English nation as the subjects of my friend; that in what place soever they choose to live, they may have free liberty without any restraint; and at what port soever they shall arrive, that neither Portugal nor any other shall dare to molest their quiet; and in what city soever they shall have residence, I have commanded all my governors and captains to give them freedom answerable to their own desires; to sell, buy, and to transport into their country at their pleasure. For confirmation of our love and friendship, I desire your Majesty to command your merchants to bring in their ships of all sorts of rarities and rich goods fit for my palace; and that you be pleased to send me your royal letters by every opportunity, that I may rejoice in your health and prosperous affairs; that our friendship may be interchanged and eternal’.

### **Expansion**

The Company, benefiting from the imperial patronage, soon expanded its commercial trading operations, eclipsing the Portuguese Estado da India, which had established bases in Goa, Chittagong and Bombay (which was later ceded to England as part of the dowry of Catherine de Braganza). The Company created trading posts in Surat (where a factory was built in 1612), Madras (1639), Bombay (1668), and Calcutta (1690). By 1647, the Company had 23 factories, each under the command of a factor or master merchant and governor if so chosen, and had 90 employees in India. The major factories became the walled forts of Fort William in Bengal, Fort St George in Madras, and the Bombay Castle.

In 1634, the Mughal emperor extended his hospitality to the English traders to the region of Bengal, and in 1717 completely waived customs duties for the trade. The company's mainstay businesses were by then in cotton, silk, indigo dye, saltpetre and tea. All the while in 1650-56, it was making inroads into the Dutch monopoly of the spice trade in the Malaccan straits, which the Dutch had acquired by ousting the Portuguese in 1640-41. In 1657, Oliver Cromwell renewed

the charter of 1609, and brought about minor changes in the holding of the Company. The status of the Company was further enhanced by the restoration of monarchy in England.

By a series of five acts around 1670, King Charles II provisioned it with the rights to autonomous territorial acquisitions, to mint money, to command fortresses and troops and form alliances, to make war and peace, and to exercise both civil and criminal jurisdiction over the acquired areas.

William Hedges was sent in 1682 to Shaista Khan, the Mughal governor of Bengal in order to obtain a firman, an imperial directive that would grant England regular trading privileges throughout the Mughal Empire. However, the company's governor in London, Sir Josiah Child, interfered with Hedges's mission, causing Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb to break off the negotiations. After that Child started war with the Mughals but the "Child's War" (1686–1690) ended in disaster for the English. In 1689 Mughal fleet commanded by Sidi Yakub took Bombay. After a year of resistance, the English surrendered, and in 1690 the company sent envoys to Aurangzeb's camp to plead for a pardon. The company's envoys had to prostrate themselves before the emperor, pay a large indemnity, and promise better behavior in the future. The emperor withdrew his troops and the company subsequently reestablished itself in Bombay and set up a new base in Calcutta. In 1711, the Company established a trading post in Canton (Guangzhou), China, to trade tea for silver.

### **Forming a complete monopoly: Trade monopoly**

The prosperity that the officers of the company enjoyed allowed them to return to Britain and establish sprawling estates and businesses, and to obtain political power. The Company developed a lobby in the English parliament. Under pressure from ambitious tradesmen and former associates of the Company (pejoratively termed *Interlopers* by the Company), who wanted to establish private trading firms in India, a deregulating act was passed in 1694. This allowed any English firm to trade with India, unless specifically prohibited by act of parliament, thereby annulling the charter that had been in force for almost 100 years. By an act that was passed in 1698, a new "parallel" East India Company (officially titled the *English Company Trading to the East Indies*) was floated under a state-backed indemnity of £2 million. The powerful stockholders of the old company quickly subscribed a sum of £315,000 in the new concern, and dominated the new body. The two companies wrestled with each other for some time, both in England and in India, for a dominant share of the trade. It quickly became evident that, in practice, the original Company faced scarcely any measurable competition. The companies merged in 1708, by a tripartite indenture involving both companies and the state. Under this arrangement, the merged company lent to the Treasury a sum of £3,200,000, in return for exclusive privileges for the next three years, after which the situation was to be reviewed. The amalgamated company became the *United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies*.

In the following decades there was a constant see-saw battle between the Company lobby and the Parliament. The Company sought a permanent establishment, while the Parliament would not willingly allow it greater autonomy and so relinquish the opportunity to exploit the Company's profits. In 1712, another act renewed the status of the Company, though the debts were repaid. By 1720, 15% of British imports were from India, almost all passing through the Company, which reasserted the influence of the Company lobby. The license was prolonged until 1766 by yet another act in 1730.



At this time, Britain and France became bitter rivals. Frequent skirmishes between them took place for control of colonial possessions. In 1742, fearing the monetary consequences of a war, the British government agreed to extend the deadline for the licensed exclusive trade by the Company in India until 1783, in return for a further loan of £1 million. Between 1756 and 1763, the Seven Years' War diverted the state's attention towards consolidation and defence of its territorial possessions in Europe and its colonies in North America. The war took place on Indian soil, between the Company troops and the French forces. In 1757, the Law Officers of the Crown delivered the Pratt-Yorke opinion distinguishing overseas territories acquired by right of conquest from those acquired by private treaty. The opinion asserted that, while the Crown of Great Britain enjoyed sovereignty over both, only the property of the former was vested in the Crown.

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, Britain surged ahead of its European rivals. Demand for Indian commodities was boosted by the need to sustain the troops and the economy during the war, and by the increased availability of raw materials and efficient methods of production. As home to the revolution, Britain experienced higher standards of living. Its spiralling cycle of prosperity, demand, and production had a profound influence on overseas trade. The Company became the single largest player in the British global market. It reserved for itself an unassailable position in the decision-making process of the Government.

### **Saltpetre Trade**

Sir John Banks, a businessman from Kent who negotiated an agreement between the King and the Company, began his career in a syndicate arranging contracts for victualling the navy, an interest he kept up for most of his life. He knew Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn and founded a substantial fortune from the Levant and Indian trades. He became a Director and later, as Governor of the East Indian Company in 1672, he arranged a contract which included a loan of £20,000 and £30,000 worth of saltpetre for the King 'at the price it shall sell by the candle'—that is by auction—where an inch of candle burned and as long as it was alight bidding could continue. The agreement included with the price 'an allowance of interest which is to be expressed in tallies.' This was something of a breakthrough in royal prerogative because previous requests for the King to buy at the Company's auctions had been turned down as 'not honourable or decent.' Outstanding debts were also agreed and the Company permitted to export 250 tons of saltpetre. Again in 1673, Banks successfully negotiated another contract for 700 tons of saltpetre at £37,000 between the King and the Company. So urgent was the need to supply the armed forces in the United Kingdom, America, and elsewhere that the authorities sometimes turned a blind eye on the untaxed sales. One governor of the Company was even reported as saying in 1864 that he would rather have the saltpetre made than the tax on salt.

### **Basis for the monopoly:**

#### **Colonial monopoly**

The Seven Years' War (1756–1763) resulted in the defeat of the French forces, limited French imperial ambitions, and stunting the influence of the industrial revolution in French territories. Robert Clive, the Governor General, led the Company to a victory against Joseph François Dupleix, the commander of the French forces in India, and recaptured Fort St George from the French. The Company took this respite to seize Manilain 1762. By the Treaty of Paris (1763), the French were allowed to maintain their trade posts only in small enclaves in

Pondicherry, Mahe, Karikal, Yanam, and Chandernagar without any military presence. Although these small outposts remained French possessions for the next two hundred years, French ambitions on Indian territories were effectively laid to rest, thus eliminating a major source of economic competition for the Company. In contrast, the Company, fresh from a colossal victory, and with the backing of a disciplined and experienced army, was able to assert its interests in the Carnatic region from its base at Madras and in Bengal from Calcutta, without facing any further obstacles from other colonial powers.

### **Military expansion**

The Company continued to experience resistance from local rulers during its expansion. Robert Clive led company forces against Siraj Ud Daulah, the last independent Nawab of Bengal, Bihar, and Midnapore district in Orissa to victory at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, resulting in the conquest of Bengal. This victory estranged the British and the Mughals, since Siraj Ud Daulah was a Mughal feudatory ally. But the Mughal Empire was already on the wane after the demise of Aurangzeb, and was breaking up into pieces and enclaves. After the Battle of Buxar, Shah Alam II, the ruling emperor, gave up the administrative rights over Bengal, Bihar, and Midnapore District. Clive became the first British Governor of Bengal.

Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, the rulers of the Sultanate of Mysore, offered much resistance to the British forces. Having sided with the French during the war, the rulers of Mysore continued their struggle against the Company with the four Anglo-Mysore Wars. Mysore finally fell to the Company forces in 1799, with the death of Tipu Sultan.

With the gradual weakening of the Maratha Empire in the aftermath of the three Anglo-Maratha wars, the British also secured Bombay (Mumbai) and the surrounding areas. It was during these campaigns, both against Mysore and the Marathas, that Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, first showed the abilities which would lead to victory in the Peninsular War and at the Battle of Waterloo. A particularly notable engagement involving forces under his command was the Battle of Assaye (1803). Thus, the British had secured the entire region of Southern India (with the exception of small enclaves of French and local rulers), Western India and Eastern India.

The last vestiges of local administration were restricted to the northern regions of Delhi, Oudh, Rajputana, and Punjab, where the Company's presence was ever increasing amidst infighting and offers of protection among the remaining princes. Coercive action, threats, and diplomacy aided the Company in preventing the local rulers from putting up a united struggle. The hundred years from the Battle of Plassey in 1757 to the Indian Rebellion of 1857 were a period of consolidation for the Company, which began to function more as a nation and less as a trading concern. A cholera pandemic began in Bengal, then spread across India by 1820. 10,000 British troops and countless Indians died during this pandemic. Between 1736 and 1834 only some 10% of East India Company's officers survived to take the final voyage home.

### **Opium trade**

In the 18th century, Britain had a huge trade deficit with Qing Dynasty China and so in 1773, the Company created a British monopoly on opium buying in Bengal. As the opium trade was illegal in China, Company ships could not carry opium to China. So the opium produced in Bengal was sold in Calcutta on condition that it be sent to China.

Despite the Chinese ban on opium imports, reaffirmed in 1799 by the Jiaqing Emperor, the drug was smuggled into China from Bengal by traffickers and agency houses such as Jardine, Matheson & Co and Dent & Co. in amounts averaging 900 tons a year. The proceeds of the drug-smugglers landing their cargoes at Lintin Island were paid into the Company's factory at Canton and by 1825; most of the money needed to buy tea in China was raised by the illegal opium trade. In 1838, with the amount of smuggled opium entering China approaching 1,400 tons a year, the Chinese imposed a death penalty for opium smuggling and sent a Special Imperial Commissioner, Lin Zexu, to curb smuggling. This resulted in the First Opium War (1839–1842). After the war Hong Kong island was ceded to Britain under the Treaty of Nanking and the Chinese market opened to the opium traders of Britain and other nations. A Second Opium War fought by Britain and France against China lasted from 1856 until 1860 and led to the Treaty of Tientsin.

### **Regulation of the company's affairs:**

#### **Financial troubles**

Though the Company was becoming increasingly bold and ambitious in putting down resisting states, it was getting clearer that the Company was incapable of governing the vast expanse of the captured territories. The Bengal famine of 1770, in which one-third of the local population died, caused distress in Britain. Military and administrative costs mounted beyond control in British-administered regions in Bengal due to the ensuing drop in labour productivity. At the same time, there was commercial stagnation and trade depression throughout Europe. The directors of the company attempted to avert bankruptcy by appealing to Parliament for financial help. This led to the passing of the Tea Act in 1773, which gave the Company greater autonomy in running its trade in America, and allowed it an exemption from the tea tax which its colonial competitors were required to pay. When the American colonists, who included tea merchants, were told of the act, they tried to boycott it, claiming that, although the price had gone down on the tea when enforcing the act, it was a tax all the same, and the king should not have the right to just have a tax for no apparent reason. The arrival of tax-exempt Company tea, undercutting the local merchants, triggered the Boston Tea Party in the Province of Massachusetts Bay, one of the major events leading up to the American Revolution.

### **Regulating Acts of Parliament:**

#### **East India Company Act 1773**

By the Regulating Act of 1773 (later known as the East India Company Act 1772), the Parliament of Great Britain imposed a series of administrative and economic reforms and by doing so clearly established its sovereignty and ultimate control over the Company. The Act recognised the Company's political functions and clearly established that the "acquisition of sovereignty by the subjects of the Crown is on behalf of the Crown and not in its own right."

Despite stiff resistance from the East India lobby in parliament and from the Company's shareholders the Act was passed. It introduced substantial governmental control and allowed the land to be formally under the control of the Crown, but leased to the Company at £40,000 for two years. Under this provision governor of Bengal Warren Hastings became the first Governor-General of Bengal, and had administrative powers over all of British India. It provided that his



nomination, though made by a court of directors, should in future be subject to the approval of a Council of Four appointed by the Crown - namely Lt. General Sir John Clavering, The Honourable Sir George Monson, Sir Richard Barwell, and Sir Philip Francis. Hastings was entrusted with the power of peace and war. British judicial personnel would also be sent to India to administer the British legal system. The Governor General and the council would have complete legislative powers. The company was allowed to maintain its virtual monopoly over trade in exchange for the biennial sum and was obligated to export a minimum quantity of goods yearly to Britain. The costs of administration were to be met by the company. These provisions were initially welcomed by the Company, but with the annual burden of the payment to be met, its finances continued steadily to decline.

### **East India Company Act 1784 (Pitt's India Act)**

**The East India Company Act 1784** (Pitt's India Act) had two key aspects:

**Relationship to the British government:** the bill differentiated the East India Company's political functions from its commercial activities. In political matters the East India Company was subordinated to the British government directly. To accomplish this, the Act created a Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India, usually referred to as the Board of Control. The members of the Board were the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretary of State, and four Privy Councillors, nominated by the King. The act specified that the Secretary of State "shall preside at, and be President of the said Board".

**Internal Administration of British India:** the bill laid the foundation for the centralised and bureaucratic British administration of India which would reach its peak at the beginning of the 20th century during the governor-generalship of George Nathaniel Curson.

Pitt's Act was deemed a failure because it quickly became apparent that the boundaries between government control and the company's powers were nebulous and highly subjective. The government felt obliged to respond to humanitarian calls for better treatment of local peoples in British-occupied territories. Edmund Burke, a former East India Company shareholder and diplomat, was moved to address the situation and introduced a new Regulating Bill in 1783. The bill was defeated amid lobbying by company loyalists and accusations of nepotism in the bill's recommendations for the appointment of councillors.

### **Act of 1786**

The Act of 1786 enacted the demand of Earl Cornwallis that the powers of the Governor-General be enlarged to empower him, in special cases, to override the majority of his Council and act on his own special responsibility. The Act enabled the offices of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief to be jointly held by the same official.

This Act clearly demarcated borders between the Crown and the Company. After this point, the Company functioned as a regularised subsidiary of the Crown, with greater accountability for its actions and reached a stable stage of expansion and consolidation. Having temporarily achieved a state of truce with the Crown, the Company continued to expand its influence to nearby territories through threats and coercive actions. By the middle of the 19th century, the Company's rule extended across most of India, Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and British Hong Kong, and a fifth of the world's population was under its trading influence.

### **East India Company Act 1793 (Charter Act)**

The Company's charter was renewed for a further 20 years by the Charter Act of 1793. In contrast with the legislative proposals of the past two decades, the 1793 Act was not a particularly controversial measure, and made only minimal changes to the system of government in India and to British oversight of the Company's activities.

### **East India Company Act 1813 (Charter Act)**

The aggressive policies of Lord Wellesley and the Marquis of Hastings led to the Company gaining control of all India, except for the Punjab, Sindh, and Nepal. The Indian Princes had become vassals of the Company. But the expense of wars leading to the total control of India strained the Company's finances. The Company was forced to petition Parliament for assistance. This was the background to the Charter Act of 1813 which, among other things:

- asserted the sovereignty of the British Crown over the Indian territories held by the Company;
- renewed the charter of the company for a further twenty years, but
  - deprived the company of its Indian trade monopoly except for trade in tea and the trade with China
  - required the company to maintain separate and distinct its commercial and territorial accounts.
- opened India to missionaries.

### **Government of India Act 1833**

The Industrial Revolution in Britain, the consequent search for markets, and the rise of laissez-faire economic ideology form the background to this Act. The Act:

- Removed the Company's remaining trade monopolies and divested it of all its commercial functions.
- Renewed for another twenty years the Company's political and administrative authority
- Invested the Board of Control with full power and authority over the Company. As stated by Professor Sri Ram Sharma, "The President of the Board of Control now became Minister for Indian Affairs."
- Carried further the ongoing process of administrative centralisation through investing the Governor-General in Council with, full power and authority to superintend and, control the Presidency Governments in all civil and military matters.
- Initiated machinery for the codification of laws.
- Provided that no Indian subject of the Company would be debarred from holding any office under the Company by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent or colour.
- Vested the Island of St Helena in the Crown.

British influence continued to expand; in 1845, the Danish colony of Tranquebar was sold to Great Britain. The Company had at various stages extended its influence to China, the Philippines, and Java. It had solved its critical lack of cash needed to buy tea by exporting Indian-grown opium to China. China's efforts to end the trade led to the First Opium War (1839–1842).

### **Government of India Act 1853**

This Act provided that British India would remain under the administration of the Company in trust for the Crown until Parliament should decide otherwise.

### **Indian Mutiny of 1857–58 (Sepoy Mutiny)**

The Indian Mutiny of 1857 resulted in widespread devastation in India and condemnation of the East India Company for permitting the events to occur. One of the consequences of the Indian Mutiny was that the British Government nationalised the Company. The Company lost all its administrative powers; its Indian possessions, including its armed forces, were taken over by the Crown pursuant to the provisions of the Government of India Act 1858.

The Company continued to manage the tea trade on behalf of the British Government (and the supply of Saint Helena) until the East India Stock Dividend Redemption Act 1873 came into effect, on 1 January 1874, under the terms of which the Company was dissolved.

### **Legacy**

The East India Company has had a long lasting impact on the Indian Subcontinent. Although dissolved following the rebellion of 1857, it stimulated the growth of the British Empire. Its armies after 1857 were to become the armies of British India and it played a key role in introducing English as an official language in India.

### **The Dual (Double) Government in Bengal**

Following the Treaty of Allahabad (1765), Robert Clive set up the infamous dual system of administration in Bengal wherein the Company acquired the real power, while the responsibility of administration rested on the Nawab of Bengal. Under the 'dual' or double government system, the Company got both the diwani (revenue) and nizamat (civil administration) functions of Bengal from two different sources—diwani from the Mughal emperor and nizamat from the nawab of Bengal. As the diwan, the Company was authorized to collect revenues of the province, while through the right to nominate the deputy subahdar it was in a position to control the nizamat or the police and judicial powers. The deputy subahdar could not be removed without the consent of the Company. However, at this point of time, the Company was neither willing nor able to collect the revenue directly. Hence; it appointed two deputy diwans for exercising diwani functions—Mohammad Reza Khan for Bengal and Raja Sitah Roy for Bihar. Mohammad Reza Khan also functioned as deputy nizam. In this way, the whole administration of Bengal was exercised through Indian agency, although the actual authority rested with the Company.

The dual government system held a great advantage for the British—they had power without responsibility. The Nawab and his officials were responsible for administration, but they had no power to discharge it. The system had many weaknesses that ultimately led to administrative breakdown. The peasantry of Bengal suffered greatly due to the decline of agriculture and arbitrary revenue demands. Trade and commerce were disrupted, and the industry and skills ruined.

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## Permanent settlement

Prior to the arrival of Lord Cornwallis in India, no permanent settlement was made in Bengal in the sphere of revenue administration. Cornwallis was the first Governor General who paid his attention to the revenue reforms and attained a great success and tremendous fame. It was the permanent reform of Cornwallis in India. At the time of appointment of Cornwallis as governor General the condition of the farmers of India was very deplorable and the land revenue system of the East India Company was ridden with defects. Hence, Cornwallis resorted to Permanent Settlement for the good of the farmers. When Cornwallis arrived in India, the land revenue system was as follows:

1. The farmers had to pay cultivation tax to the Government.
2. The system of annual settlement was in Vogue.

Hastings had introduced the Five-Year Settlement according to which the right of realisation of tax was given to the highest bidder for five years on contract basis. But there was a great problem in this system in as much as that at the time of auction, the contractors to make such a high bid, that they failed to deposit the amount of the bid in the royal treasury. Therefore this system was converted into annual system on contract basis but this alternative made the situation all the more intricate the new contractors who had no experience of realisation of the tax could not control the situation. The contract system proved harmful for both the peasants and the company and the productivity of the land began to decrease rapidly. Hence the weaknesses of the annual system were clearly apparent at the time of the appointment of Cornwallis. In order to improve the deplorable condition of the peasants and the company, Cornwallis started this system which came to be known as permanent settlement. This permanent settlement continued in India till India achieved freedom. Its chief aim was to impart stability to the revenue system.

Keeping in view all these advantages, the scheme of permanent settlement was introduced in Bengal for the good of the people. The East India Company permitted Cornwallis to implement the permanent settlement in Bengal. It was ordered that first, he should make the revenue settlement with the peasants for ten years and later on, this system should be made permanent. Hence, on 10th February, 1790, ten year's settlement was introduced. It was also declared on this occasion that it would be made permanent as soon as the permission of the Board of Directors had been obtained. Cornwallis received the permission of the British government in 1793 A.D. and the Permanent Settlement was enforced on 23rd 1793 A.D.

Before the commencement of the tenure of Cornwallis, the landlords were not considered to be the owners of the land. By the permanent settlement, the landlords were accepted to be the owners of the land in place of peasants. The revenue of the Company was decided and it began to be realized from the landlords instead of from the farmers. The revenue which was to be paid by the landlords was fixed once for all. There was no possibility of making a change in it. So long, the landlords continued to pay the revenue in time, they remained the owners of their land. The revenue which was to be paid by the peasants to the landlords was also fixed through the patta system. The landlord had no right to make any enhancement or reduction in it without the permission of the Court. Outwardly, this system of permanent settlement looked to be purely an economic system but actually, it gave birth to a social revolution. It gave rise to a new class of potentates, Taluqdars and landlords who soon established their control on the Indian society.

Cornwallis introduced this permanent settlement with great patience. There were two reasons behind this. Firstly, the psychological reason was that Cornwallis was greatly impressed by zamindari system of England and while solving the social and economic problems of India, he thought it worthwhile to establish a powerful feudal system in India also in order to keep control over the peasants and to strengthen the economic position of the country. Secondly, the English officers were fed up with the problem of realisation of tax every year. It made the income of the company indefinite, so he thought it essential to introduce the permanent settlement.

### **Merits and Demerits of the Permanent Settlement:**

Scholars hold different opinions about the merits and demerits of the Permanent Settlement. Mr. Marshman has written, "It was a bold, brave and wise measure." Whereas Mr. Holmes writes, "The permanent settlement was a sad blunder." In the same way several other historians hold divergent opinions about its merits and demerits.

### **Merits of Permanent Settlement:**

1. With the implementation of Permanent Settlement the condition of the peasants improved a lot and their fields began to produce rich crops. The improvement in agriculture also influenced the trade and commerce of the country. As a result of this all round progress, the province of Bengal became the most prosperous one. It was also relieved from the famines. Economics prosperity of Bengal helped the rise of art and literature. In this way the education and culture developed in Bengal.
2. The Government of the company was benefited a lot by the Permanent Settlement. The political advantages of the English made this settlement all the more significant. All the landlords who became the owners of the land felt obliged to the English Government and became its true supporters as the time of revolt. Owing to the liberal view of the Government their separate category was formed and they began to earn ample of money without any effort or labour.
3. With the passage of time the rich landlords began to invest their wealth in trade and commerce. Although the government could not increase the revenue in future yet the flourishing trade enabled the English to impose some fresh taxes on the traders and thus they earned a lot of wealth through new tax levied on these landlords. Besides this, the Permanent Settlement led India towards modernisation in the sphere of revenue system.
4. It freed the English government of the problem of fixation of revenue every year. Moreover, the income of the government was fixed once for all, which enabled it to make its planning according to its resources of income. In case, the landlords did not make payment of their tax, the loss was made good by selling a part of the land of the zamindar.
5. The implementation of the permanent settlement also benefited the peasants. So far, they were forced to pay more and more to the landlords but now their revenue and also fixed through a patty agreement deed which saved them from the harassment from the landlords.
6. It not only increased the agricultural produce but also enhanced the area under cultivation.
7. So far, a large number of employees were involved in the revenue administration of the company but the implementation of the permanent settlement enabled them to devote their services to the other department of the company as there was no work in this department now.

### **Demerits of the Permanent Settlement:**

On the other hand there are some scholars who hold the opinion that the Permanent Settlement adversely affected the interests of the landlords, peasants and the company alike. Actually, this settlement proved defective due to the following reasons.

1. The Permanent Settlement adversely affected the income of the company as the revenue was fixed quite on the low side due to lack of proper measurement.
2. It benefited only the landlords and the condition of the farmers could not be improved as much as was expected. The poor farmers continued to be the victims of the harassments of the landlords who exploited them for their own selfish motives.
3. The British government expected that with the implementation of permanent settlement the income of the company would increase tremendously but their expectations were not fulfilled.
4. This settlement also proved harm full for the landlords who failed to deposit the required revenue in the royal treasury in time. As a result, their land was sold off.
5. The landlords became indolent and led luxurious lives due to their richness. They did not pay proper attention to their lands and left them to their employees who made no serious efforts for the improvement of agricultural produce.
6. The peasants continued to be at the receiving end of the cruelties of the landlords. They continued to realise the maximum revenue from the peasants and deposited only the minimum in the treasury of the company.
7. It hurt the national feeling of the people because this system created a special class of zamindars in the country who became the true devotees of the English. This class did not support the people during the war of independence.
8. It was really a great mistake on the part of Cornwallis that he deprived the majority of the cultivators of the right of ownership of land and made the landlords owners of the land. Sir Charles Metcalfe writes about it, "Cornwallis instead of being the creator of prosperity in India was the great destroyer of it."

Mr. Beveridge also comments in this context, 'A very grave blunder as well as gross injustice was committed when a settlement was made with the landlords alone and the rights of the farmers were completely ignored.' Dr. Ishwari Prasad remarks about Permanent Settlement, "The Permanent Settlement also sacrificed the future interest of the state and deprived it of the right of increased revenue resulting from increased prosperity."

### **Subsidiary Alliance**

Lord Wellesley succeeded Sir John Shore as the Governor General of the company in 1798. He was one of the greatest British rulers of India who can be compared with Clive, Warren Hastings, and Lord Dalhousie, but in actual achievements he surpassed them all. He was an imperialist and endeavoured, his best to make the company the paramount power in India. He clearly declared that the 'company must be viewed in the capacity of a sovereign power.' He wanted to reduce all Indian states to a position of dependence on the company. So he followed a high handed and offensive policy towards the Indian powers. The prevailing circumstances favoured Wellesley to implement his schemes. The Nizam of Hyderabad had deserted the British



camp after his defeat by the Marathas at Kharda in March 1795. He was providing training to his troops under the supervision of a French Officer named Raymond. The Marathas after their victory against the Nizam were increasing their power and influence. The Maratha "chief Daulat Rao Sindhia was drilling his troops under a French General named Perron.

Tipu Sultan of Mysore was carrying on negotiation with the French Governors of Mauritius and Reunion in order to get military help against the English in India. To counter act the growth of French influence in the court of native princes and to bring the Indian states within the orbit of British political power Lord Wellesley followed the System of Subsidiary Alliance. This system helped the company in the expansion of its dominions. According to Sir Alfred Lyall there were four stages in the evolution of the system of subsidiary alliance. In the first stage the English company under took to lend military contingent to help an Indian prince in his wars. Governor General Warren Hastings had lent British troops to Nawab Suja- ud-daulah of Oudh to fight against the Rohilas. In the second stage the English company took the field on its own account with the help of an Indian ally who made common cause with him. In the third stage the company asked its Indian ally to pay money to raise, train and equip army, for the defence of his state.

In 1797 Holm Shore had made such an arrangement with the Nawab of Oudh. A similar agreement was concluded by Lord Wellesley with the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1798. In the final stage the company guaranteed protection to the territories of an Indian ally. Accordingly Subsidiary force was maintained on the soil of that state. The Indian ruler was asked to surrender to the company a part of his territory. So that out of its revenue the expenses of the subsidiary force were to be met. Such a treaty was concluded with the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1800 A.D. The French Governor Duplex began the system of lending European troops to Indian, princes at the expense of the later. The English also followed this practice. In 1765 the East India Company had concluded a treaty with the Nawab of Oudh. Accordingly the company undertook to defend the frontiers of Oudh and the Nawab agreed defrays the war expenses. However it was Lord Wellesley who elaborated and perfected the system of Subsidiary alliances.

The system of Subsidiary Alliance provided that the ruler who would enter in to this alliance would recognise the Suzerainty of the East India Company. He was not to declare war or to carry on negotiations with any other state, without the knowledge and consent of the East India Company. He was to maintain a contingent of company's troops for the defence of his territories, and for the preservation of public peace. The ruler of a bigger state would cede certain territories in full sovereignty to meet the yearly expenses of his company's army but a smaller state was required to pay tribute in cash to the company. The rulers accepting the Subsidiary Alliance were to maintain British residents in their capitals. They were to expel all European officials other than English from their territories. In lieu of all these the East India Company was to provide the rulers effective security against external aggression and internal rebellion. The Nizam of Hyderabad who was the feeblest of all Indian powers readily accepted the Subsidiary Alliance in September 1798.

### **Advantages of the Company:**

The Subsidiary alliance increased the power and the resources of the company. The East India Company got subsidies from the Native powers who accepted the Subsidiary alliance. It maintained troops at the cost of the native powers. Company's troops commanded by British

officers were established on the territories of the native princes. Wellesley claimed that this system enabled the British government to preserve the tranquillity of India by exercising a general control over the restless spirit of ambition and violence which is the Characteristic of every Asiatic Government."The system of subsidiary alliance enabled the English to throw forward their military frontier in advance of the political frontier.

Company's troops were maintained in the capitals of the Indian princes and by this the English could control some of the strategic and key position in India without arousing the Jealousy of other European powers." Not only the company's military frontier was shifted to the political frontier of the allies but the costs of the army were placed on their revenues. The evils of war were removed to a far distance from the territories of the company." Wars and battle were fought on the soil of the allies. The East India Company could avoid the Jealousy of other European powers because in this system the independence of the state was maintained outwardly.

The East India Company succeeded in eliminating the growth of French influence in the court of the native princes. The native rulers who entered into this alliance were asked to dismiss all European officials other than English from their courts.

The dominions of the East India Company also expanded because of the Subsidiary' system. According to the treaty of October 1800 AD the Nizam of Hyderabad ceded to the company all the territories which he had acquired from Mysore in 1799. Similarly the Nawab of Qudli also surrendered Rohil Khand and the lower Doab in 1801 A.D.

### **Disadvantages to the Indian States:**

The rulers accepting the Subsidiary alliance remained under the protection of the company, which took over the responsibility of maintaining law and order in their states. So the system of subsidiary alliance wakened and demoralised the Indian princes. The native rulers lost their administrative and military spirit. The growth of mal administration in their dominions paved the way for the intervention of the company in their internal affairs. The ruler who accepted the Subsidiary alliance paid subsidy to the company which usually amounted to one third of the annual revenue of the states. He taxed his people heavily. So this led to the gross oppression of the people. The rulers neglected the welfare of the people. Thomas Monroe has remarked where ever the subsidiary system is introduced the country will soon learn the marks of it in decaying villages and decreasing population."

The state accepted the subordination of the company and virtually lost her independence. A state purchased security at the sacrifice of independence of national character and of whatever renders a people respectable."The weak and oppressive rulers enjoyed the protection of the company against internal rebellion accepting the subsidiary system. So the people were deprived of their right to revolt against the misrule of their rulers. Sir Thomas Munro has rightly remarked the usual remedy of a bad government in India is a quiet revolution in the palace, or a violent one by rebellion or foreign conquests. But the presence of British force puts off every chance of remedy, by supporting the prince on the throne against every foreign and domestic enemy."The Nizam of Hyderabad accepted the Subsidiary alliance in September 1798. The ruler of Mysore and of Tanjore also accepted the subsidiary Alliance in 1799 and the Nawab of Oudh in 1801. The Peshwa Bajji Rao entered into the system of subsidiary Alliance in December 1802. Similarly after their defeats. Raja Raghuji Bhonsale of Berar and the Sindhia accepted the subsidiary alliance respectively in December 1803 and in February 1804.



## Early Resistance Movements

### Fakir-Sannyasi Resistance

**Fakir-Sannyasi Resistance** against the East India Company dominance in Bengal began from the early 1760s and subsided in the 1790s. The East India Company regulations had disturbed the ways of life of the religious mendicants like the Muslim *fakirs* and Hindu *sannyasis* in several ways. Both the groups of mendicants lived on alms provided by their followers. The company rulers, who little understood the religious institutions of the country, took their alms collection drive for unauthorised impositions on the village people. The government thus issued decrees banning collection of alms by the organised groups like the fakirs and sannyasis. In response, they started a resistance movement against the *feringhee* rulers. The resistance movement got ready support from the peasantry who were hard pressed under the new land revenue policy of the company government. The resisting fakirs belonged to the Madaria *tarika*, a Sufi sect which flourished in Bengal under the leadership of Shah Sultan Hasan Suriya Burhana in the second half of the seventeenth century. The sannyasis were the Vedantic Hindu yogis belonging to the Giri and Puri groups of *ek-dandi* sannyasism. Both the fakirs and sannyasis were armed bands living in *khankahs* and *akhdas*. In rituals and practices there was good deal of affinity between the Sufi fakirs and yogi sannyasis and that contributed to their common alliance against the British.

The Fakir-Sannyasi Resistance movement was organised and led by Majnu Shah, a Sufi saint of Madaria sect. He succeeded Shah Sultan Hasan Suriya Burhana to the leadership of the Bihar based Madaria Sufi order in the mid eighteenth century. He had his lieutenants in the persons of the sufis like Musa Shah, Cherag Ali Shah, Paragal Shah, Sobhan Shah, Karim Shah etc. Bhabani Pathak, a Bhojpuri Brahmin, who had discourse with Majnu Shah and also had communication with a petty zamindar Devi Chaudhurani, led the sannyasi rebels. Lieutenant Brenan was deputed to contain the resistance movement. The Fakir resistance began in nebulous form in 1760 and gathered momentum in 1763. Their main target was the company *kuthi*, zamindari *kachharis* of zamindars loyal to the *feringhee raj* and the houses of their officials. The rebels used swords, spear and lances, gun, fire throwing device, *hawai* and even revolving cannons.

Among the fakirs only Majnu Shah and some of his lieutenants used horse while moving from one strategic place to another. Camels were used for carrying provisions and ammunitions. The guerilla nature of their operations made the company very anxious. In most cases they attacked the company personnel and their establishments in surprise. In regular operations and in specific battle sometimes there was assemblage of five to six thousand fakir-sannyasis. The number of fakirs and sannyasis rose to around fifty thousand or more in 1770s. The rebels had their intelligence agents in the persons of the ordinary villagers who earlier transpired to them the movement of the company troops.

The rebels attacked the commercial *kuthi* of the company at Bakerganj (1763) and kept the factory chief Calley confined for some days and plundered the *kuthi*. In the same year they surprised Dhaka *kuthi* while its English supervisor Ralph Lester evacuated. However, Captain Grant subsequently recovered the factory. The same year the rebels attacked company factory at Rampur Boalia in Rajshahi, captured the factory chief Bennette who was sent to Patna as captive where he was killed. By 1767 the attack of the rebels intensified in Rangpur, Rajshahi, Kuch Bihar, Jalpaiguri and Comilla. To check the activities of the rebels in North Bengal an English

army was sent to Rangpur in 1767 under Captain De Mackenzie. Meanwhile the rebels defeated an English contingent sent by Barwel, the Resident of Maldah, under the command of Myrtle who was killed by the rebels. At the approach of Captain De Mackenzie with his army the rebels retracted towards Nepal. During 1768-70 fakir-sannyasi raids mainly continued in Saran (Bihar), Benares, Purnia, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Comilla and Chittagong districts.

An army under Feltham suddenly attacked the fakir-sannyasis in 1771 on way to Ghoraghat and Govindganj in Rangpur where they sustained a defeat and were dispersed. Majnu Shah proceeded towards Mahasthan with more than a hundred wounded followers. In 1772 Majnu Shah raided the establishments of the company in the Rangpur, Rajshahi and Bogra districts. On one occasion, he along with hundreds of armed followers raided the revenue office of the company at Rajshahi, captured the accumulated fund and kept the kachari under his control. The rebels conducted extensive raids in Purnia, Burdwan, Kumarkhali, Jessore, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka, Midnapore, Birbhum, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Bogra, and Jalpaiguri in 1773.

Fakir-sannyasi raids got intensified in 1776 in the districts of Bogra, Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Chittagong. During the period between 1777 and 1781 the fakir-sannyasi raids mainly continued in Bogra, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Chittagong, Sylhet and Mymensingh areas. The activities of the rebels took a serious turn in Alapsingh pargana of Mymensingh in 1782. After a severe battle at Pukhuria Majnu Shah receded into the Madhupur jungle with his followers. In 1785 he proceeded towards Mahasthangarh and was defeated in a battle. In the following year Majnu Shah planned simultaneous attack in eastern Bengal under himself and in North Bengal area under his lieutenant Musa Shah. In a battle against the company army under Lieutenant Brenan in Kaleswar area (8 December 1786) Majnu Shah lost a large number of his followers. After 1786 Majnu Shah is not seen to lead any expedition. It appears that he himself was wounded in the battle at Kaleswar and died sometime in late 1787 or early 1788 AD.

After the death of Majnu Shah his able lieutenants like Musa Shah, Cherag Ali Shah, Paragal Shah, Sobhan Shah, Madar Baksh, Jari Shah, Karim Shah, Kripanath, Rowshan Shah, Anup Narayan and Sri Nibash continued the revolt till the closing of the year 1800 and even upto 1812 AD. But after the death of Majnu Shah the movement was gradually losing its direction and dynamics. In the late 1790s, the rebels fell out and all parts of Bengal came under firm British control.

### **Introduction of English education**

What is Modern Education? The educational system which the British introduced in India is known as the modern education. Under this system greater emphasis was laid on the teaching of English language and its literature and the study of Indian languages were generally neglected. Now onwards the study of such languages as Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit was left to the individual efforts of the people themselves. Moreover, the modern education was based on logic and scientific research rather than on faith and ritualism.

#### **Causes or objectives for the Introduction of Modern Education:**

The English introduced the modern education in India to fulfil their various objectives. The chief among them are the following:

1. To reduce the expenditure on administration.

The English introduced the Modern education in India with the sole object of reducing the expenditure incurred on administration. In different departments they needed a large number of such employees who could not be brought from England. This demand could be met only by employing the educated Indians who could prove far less expense than the Europeans.

2. To encourage the study of the English language:

The English were now the master of India and like all masters (alien rulers) they too wished that the people under their rule should learn their language which they must use in communicating with them. Besides they thought that as a result of the learning of English to Indian people would easily accept the British rule.

3. To expand market for English goods:

The English capitalists thought that after learning the English language and acquiring Western education the Indians would become semi-English. According to Macaulay the Indian would then remain Indians only in their colour while in their interest, ideas, morals and intelligence they would become English. In such conditions the market for British goods would automatically expand.

4. Spread of Christianity:

The Christian missionaries believed that the modern education what little faith they had in their religious beliefs. Thus they would be attracted towards Christianity.

### **Steps taken by the company to introduce Western Education in India:**

#### **1. Early Efforts:**

In the beginning the company never took it as its duty to give education to the Indians. It was a commercial company and their sole motive was to earn profits and not to spend money on education. Nevertheless, some British officers in their individual capacity tried to break some ice in this direction. In 1781 A.D Warren Hastings laid the foundation of the Calcutta & Madras. Similarly Sir William Jones, a judge of the Supreme Court founded the Asiatic society of Bengal in 1784 A.D. This society, in later years, did a lot of work in spreading education. In 1792 A.D. the Resident of Benares took special interest in spreading education and started several English schools and colleges where English was taught. The missionaries started for the same purpose the Wilson College at Bombay, the Christian College at Madras and the St. John College at Agra. Some progressive Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy also started English schools and colleges where English was taught.

The missionaries started for the same purpose the Wilson College at Bombay, the Christian college at Madras and the St. John College at Agra. Some progressive Indians like Raja Ram Mohan Roy also started English schools. Raja Ram Mohan Roy laid the foundation of a school at Calcutta in 1816 A.D.

#### **2. Charter Act of 1813 A.D.:**

In England, a feeling was gaining ground that the company had done practically little to the mental and moral development of the Indian people. It was, therefore, laid in the charter Act of 1813 A.D that the company would set aside a sum of rupees one lakh for promoting the

knowledge of modern sciences in India. But even this meagre amount was not utilized for several years as no decision could be reached as to what the medium of education should be.

### **3. Lord Macaulay and Decision regarding the medium of instruction in 1835 A.D.:**

It was at last during the period of Lord William Bentinck (1828-35) that Lord Macaulay and Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a representative of the progressive Indians, made efforts so that a decision was taken in 1835 A.D. to promote the teaching of Western sciences and literature through the medium of English alone. Wilson and Several Indians opposed this decision but Lord William Bentinck upheld the Macaulay view. Another important step was taken to encourage English learning in 1874. When it was decided during the period of Lord Harding, that only those Indians who had sufficient knowledge of English be appointed on Government jobs.

### **4. Charles Wood's Despatch, 1854 A. D:**

Charles Woods, the President of the Board of Control, did a Yeoman's job in spreading education in India when in 1854 A.D. he sent a despatch to Lord Dalhousie the then Governor-General of India. It was recommended therein that - (1) an education department was to be established in every province. (2) Universities on the model of the London University are established in big cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. (3) At least one Government school is opened in every district. (4) Affiliated private schools should be given grant-in-aid. (5) The Indian natives should be give training in their mother-tongue also. In accordance with the Wood's despatch Education Departments were established in every province and universities were opened at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in 1857 A.D.-and in Punjab in 1882 A.D. and at Allahabad in 1887 A.D.

### **Drawbacks of the Company's System of Education:**

#### **1. Lack of Funds:**

Even the meagre amount of one lakh set aside for educational purposes could not be spent till 1833 A.D.

#### **2. Neglect of the Common People:**

The Company never took a serious interest in the field of education. By educating the members of the higher and the middle classes only they created a serious gap between various classes of the Indian people. The only object of their educational system was to prepare clerks who would carry on the work of the company's administration smoothly. It simply shows the selfishness of the company.

#### **3. The Medium of Instruction:**

All the subjects were taught through English as such the study of Indian languages was neglected. All those who got their training in English considered themselves superior to others. Thus classes of people were born who were Indians only in blood and colour but they considered themselves English in thought and in their way of living.

#### **4. Neglect of the Women's Education:**

No funds were set aside for the education of women, as women's education had no utility for the English. On the other hand, they were afraid of hurting the sentiments of the India of the Indian people as the conservative Indian opinion was against giving any education to their women folk.

### 5. Neglect of Scientific and Technical Education:

The English government never paid any attention towards imparting scientific and technical education. By 1857 A.D. Only three medical Colleges, one each at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and one Engineering College at Roorkee were opened. Admission to these Colleges was open only for the Europeans; as such the Indians were almost neglected.

Despite the above drawbacks, we can say that the British had played a very important role in the promotion of education in India. It was this education which later on inspired a number of Indians with the fire of nationalism which ultimately rooted out the British Empire from the Indian soil.

### **Social reforms Under the East India Company**

By the 1770s, rampant corruption within the East India Company forced the British government to enact reforms. The most sweeping of these reforms were undertaken by Lord Charles Cornwallis in the 1790s. Cornwallis's reforms resulted in the cleansing of the East India Company administration, but also constricted the participation of Indians in their own government. Evangelical religious movements in Britain also induced reform. Slavery was abolished, and campaigns were launched against what were viewed as Indian social abuses. British utilitarians supported the cries for social reform and plans for betterment of the Indian population. Both Evangelicals and Utilitarians pressed for the introduction of English-language instruction in India and an infusion of British technology.

In the first half of the 19th century, the British legislated reforms against what they considered were iniquitous Indian practices. In most cases, the legislation alone was unable to change Indian society sufficiently for it to absorb both the ideal and the ethic underpinning the reform. At the center of the social reform program was the abolition of the practice of sati. Despite some resistance, the British insisted on an end to the practice. The British intentionally transmitted to India what they regarded as the enter pieces of Western civilization education, technology, and administrative organization in an attempt to recast Indian civilization in the Western image. Upper-caste Hindu society had long looked askance at the remarriage of widows in order to protect both what it considered was family honour and family property. Even adolescent widows were expected to live a life of austerity and denial. The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856, enacted in the waning years of Company rule, provided legal safeguards against loss of certain forms of inheritance for a remarrying Hindu widow, though not of the inheritance due her from her deceased husband. However, very few widows actually remarried. Some Indian reformers, such as Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, even offered money to men who would take widows as brides, but these men often deserted their new wives.

### **Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856**

The **Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856**, also **Act XV, 1856**, enacted on 25 July 1856, legalized the remarriage of Hindu widows in all jurisdictions of India under East India Company rule. In order to protect both what it considered family honour and family property, upper-caste Hindu society had long disallowed the remarriage of widows, even child and adolescent ones, all of whom were expected to live a life of austerity and abnegation. The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856, enacted in response to the campaign of Pandit Ishwar Chandra

Vidyasagar, provided legal safeguards against loss of certain forms of inheritance for a remarrying Hindu widow, though, under the Act, the widow forsook any inheritance due her from her deceased husband. Especially targeted in the act were Hindu child widows whose husbands had died before consummation of marriage.

### **Doctrine of Lapse**

Lord Dalhousie came to India as the Governor General of the East India Company in 1848. His period of Governor General Ship witnessed the stupendous growth of British Empire at the cost of army of the Indian states. Dalhousie was a sweeping annexationist and he annexed a large number of Indian states in pursuance of his policy of Doctrine of lapse. There were a number of Indian states within the limits of the British Indian Empire. The rulers of these states had recognised British Political supremacy since the time of Lord Wellesley. But they were completely independent to conduct their internal administration. These rulers who were under British protection did not take any interest in the administration of their territories. However some of them were kind and benevolent towards their people. But most of them were very oppressive rulers.

The industrial revolution had completely changed the rate of production in England. England required new sources of raw materials to feed her growing industries at the same time new markets were also required for the disposal of the industrial, products. Many natives' states were famous for the production of Cotton. Dalhousie wanted to annex the native states to serve the purpose of the British industries. Secondly Dalhousie also wanted that a uniform administrative system should prevail all over the Indian subcontinent. So he considered the existence of the Native states to be unnecessary. Lord Dalhousie declared that the British Government in the exercise of a wise and sound policy is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present them." Dalhousie annexed a number of Indian states by applying the policy of Doctrine of lapse. The policy of Doctrine of lapse meant that in the dependent state or those who owed their very existence to the British power, the sovereignty when the natural heirs of the royal line came to end, passed back or lapse to the supreme power." In other words this doctrine means that the sovereignty of the dependent states or of those held on a subordinate tenure would pass back to the British government, in case of the failure of the natural line of succession.

The British government had acquired the position of the paramount power after the fall of the Mughal Empire and also of the Marathas. This doctrine was based on three principles Firstly the British Government was the paramount power of the British Indian Empire. Secondly the rulers of the dependent states could adopt sons with the sanction of the paramount power. These adopted sons could inherit the throne only with the consent of the British government. Thirdly, the British government as the paramount power could withhold the succession of the adopted sons. During that period there were three categories of Hindu states in India. There were independent states which were not and never had been subordinate to a paramount power. Secondly, there were states which owed subordination to the British government as their suzerain power. Thirdly, there were Hindu States which owed their creation to the British Government. Ever since the Mughal rule the practice was that the paramount power used to sanction the succession to the throne.

The system of adoption was prevalent among the Hindus and in case of the failure of natural heir they used to adopt sons. After the death of a native ruler his adopted son used to perform the



funeral rites and succeed to the throne. But Dalhousie proceeded to annex the native states setting aside the claims of the adopted sons. Dalhousie annexed a number of native states by applying the policy of Doctrine of lapse. However no precise distinction was made between independent, allied, dependent and subordinate states. Dalhousie annexed Karauli on the ground that it was a dependent state but this was over ruled by the Directors of the company on the ground that Karauli" was a protected ally. But Dalhousie was not the real founder of this Doctrine. As early as 1834 the Court of Directors of the Company had asserted that the permission to adopt on the failure of the natural heirs should be the exception and not the rule and should never be granted but as a special mark of favour or approbation." Earlier the Doctrine of lapse had been applied to the state of Mandavi in 1839 and to Kolaba and Jalaur in 1840. In 1842 the titular dignity of the Nawab of Surat was abolished. But Lord Dalhousie applied the Doctrine of lapse in a vigorous manner. Mr. Innes has remarked there was fully adequate precedent for every one of his annexations. But his predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexations if it could be avoided.

Dalhousie acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately" He annexed Satara in 1848. Jaipur and Sambalpur in 1849, Bhaghat in 1850. Udaipur in 1852, Jhansi in 1853 and Nagpur in 1854 by the application of this policy. The first victim of the Doctrine of Lapse was the Maratha Kingdom of Satara, in 1848 the Raja of Satara Appasahib died. He had no natural heir. But just before his death he had adopted a son without the approval of the East India Company. This Maratha Kingdom was created in 1818 by Lord Hastings who had conferred this small principality on Pratap Singh, a representative of the house of Shivaji. In 1839 Pratap Singh was deposed and was substituted by his brother Appa Sahib. So the adoption was subject to the approval of the British. So Dalhousie annexed Satara setting aside the claim of the adopted son of Appa Sahib. The Court of Directors expressed the view that "we are fully satisfied that by the general law and custom of India, a dependent principality, like that of Satara, cannot pass to an adopted heir without the consent of the paramount power."

### **Sambalpur:**

Narayan Singh Raja of Sambalpur died without adopting a son. So Dalhousie annexed Sambalpur in 1849.

### **Jhansi:**

Jhansi was a Suba of the Maratha Empire under the Peshwa. After the third Anglo Maratha war this Suba came under the occupation of the English. Governor general Lord Hastings placed Rao Rama Chandra as the Raja of Jhansi recognising" him, his heirs and successors" as the hereditary rulers of that territory. In 1835 Rao Rama Chandra died childless. The claim of his adopted son was set aside and his uncle Raghunath Rao" was installed on the throne. Raghunath Rao died in 1838 and was succeeded by his brother Gangadhar Rao. In 1853 Gangadhar Rao died without leaving a male heir. Dalhousie set aside the claim of his adopted son Anand Rao and declared the state as an escheat. Dalhousie in fact annexed Jhansi considering it to be a creation of the company. For this reason the widow Queen Laxmi Bai became an arch enemy of the English and played a leading part in the great revolt of 1857.

In 1817 Lord Hastings had recognised Raghujii III, a descendant of the old Bhonsale family as the Raja of Nagpur. Raghujii III was a minor. So the British resident Sir Richard Jenkins functioned as the regent for ten years till 1830. In 1830 the administration of Nagpur was

transferred to the Raja. The Raja did not die in 1853 without leaving any male heir nor did he leave any adopted son. Before his death the Raja had requested the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie to permit him to adopt a son. The Raja died before his request was considered by Lord Dalhousie. But on his death bed Raghujee III directed his Rani to adopt Yashwant Rao as their son. But Governor-General Lord Dalhousie set aside the claim of the Rani to adopt a son and the state was annexed.

The Doctrine of Lapse was also applied to the removal of titles and Pensions. Peshwa Baji Rao II was enjoying an annual pension of eight lakhs of rupees. But after his death his adopted son Nana Saheb was deprived of his pension and title. For this reason Nana Saheb took a leading part in the revolt of 1857, after the death of the Titular Nawab of Carnatic Dalhousie did not recognise any one as his successor. On the death of the Maratha Raja Tanjore in 1855 without any male issue the regal title was abolished. The Doctrine of Lapse of Dalhousie created a feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness in the mind of the native rulers. The adopted sons of the deceased rulers resented the policy of the British government.

The princes who lost their throne took active part in the revolt of 1857. After the death of the Titular Nawab of Carnatic Dalhousie did not recognise any one as his successor. On the death of the Maratha Raja of Tanjore in 1855 without any male issue the regal title was abolished. The Doctrine of Lapse of Dalhousie created a feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness in the mind of the native rulers. The adopted sons of the deceased rulers resented the policy of the British government. The princes who lost their throne took active part in the revolt of 1857.

Thus by 1857 the whole of the Indian Sub continent came under the British rule. The Marathas and the Rajputs ceased to make History after 1818. The rise of the Sikhs after 1839 was of little gain to the people. The East India Company became the paramount power on the soil of India.

### **The Revolt of 1857**

The great Revolt of 1857 was a watershed in the history of modern India. It marked first national challenge to the English in India; it emboldened the growth of Indian nationalist politics; it presaged significant constitutional changes in British India. Today one hundred fifty years later as we commemorate the event, the rebellion provides us with a new source of inspiration to complete the nation-building project.

19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed some anti-imperialist uprisings against imperialism, most notably in Latin America against Spanish colonialism under the leadership of Simon Bolivar and the revolutionary priest Hidalgo. But both in terms of social base and geographical distribution, the 1857 Revolt in India was much more powerful. The Revolt started with the mutiny of the Indian sepoys over the use of greased cartridges, but the sepoys were soon joined by broader sections of the civil society whose moral economy had been disrupted by the political system that had been imposed by the East India Company. The conjunction between the sepoy mutiny with the civil uprisings imparted the rebellion of 1857 the character of a national popular armed Revolt. Writing shortly after the outbreak in the New York Tribune of 28 July 1857, Karl Marx had correctly described it as “not a military mutiny, but a national Revolt”. On 14 September 1857 in New York Tribune Marx compared the 1857 Revolt with the 1789 French revolution and noted:

The first blow dealt to the French monarchy proceeded from the nobility, not from the peasants. The Indian Revolt does not similarly commence with the riots, tortured, dishonoured, stripped naked by the British, but with the sepoys, clad, fled, patted, fattened and pampered by them.



It is unfortunate that professional historians of our country could not appreciate either the national or the popular character of the 1857 Revolt and preferred to call it a Sepoy Mutiny. But we understand that recent researchers have exposed the fallacy of such a contention, and the historians in India and abroad are increasingly acknowledging the national character of the 1857 Revolt.

The 1857 Revolt began on 29th March 1857 when Mangal Pandey of the 34th infantry in Barrackpore became the first martyr. The mutiny spread rapidly in eastern and northern India. Dehri, Patna, Arrah, Azamgarh, Allahabad, Gorakhpur, Faizabad, Fatehpur, Jhansi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Etawah, Fategarh, Gwalior, Shahjahanpur, Agra, Bharatpur, Rohilkhand, Mathura, Agra, Hatras, Delhi, Meerut, Bareilly and Roorkee – these emerged as storm-centres of the Revolt. On 11th May 1857 the sepoys of the Meerut regiment captured Delhi and proclaimed the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar as their undisputed leader. In this entire region the dispossessed talukdars and impoverished peasants and artisans joined the sepoys to contest the English authority. The English land-revenue experiments not only deprived the talukdars and landlords of their estates and social status, but also subjected the peasants to excessive revenue demands. At the same time the acute crisis faced by urban handicraft industry due to the intrusion of cheaper English products and the disappearance of the patronage of the traditional local courts and ruling classes dislocated the livelihood of the artisans. Despite their class contradictions the zamindars, the peasants and artisans joined hands with the sepoys to fight their common enemy – the English. According to one estimate one-fifth of the Indian population in 1857 directly or indirectly participated in the Revolt.

The English authority virtually collapsed over the entire plains of Uttar Pradesh. In Rohilkhand the British rule was 'non-existent' for almost a year. Contemporary British officials remarked that in Oudh and its surrounding areas it was difficult to distinguish who among the rebels were the sepoys and the peasants. In some areas like Bijnour the civil population even rose up in revolt before any help could be received from the sepoys. In other cases as in Bulandshahr the popular uprising coincided with the arrival of the rebel army from Aligarh. Recent researches have thus tended to stress that in the affected area the mutiny of the sepoys were either preceded by or accompanied by or followed by a civil rebellion. The popular violence was characterized by killing of Europeans, pillaging of English establishments and record rooms, indigo factories and burning of land records and official documents. In some areas such assaults on symbols of English authority were contemporaneous with attacks on indigenous banyas and moneylenders. In parts of North-Western province the peasant participation in the Revolt was motivated by the aim to win back the land that they had lost because of English revenue settlement. Contemporary English observers like Kaye admitted that there was hardly any Indian belonging to any religious faith between the Ganges and Jamuna who was not against the British. Although traditionally believed that Bengal remained aloof from the tumult, I understand that recent historians in Bengal are demonstrating that the English in Bengal were also panic-stricken and the area, too, was seething with unrest.

The other unique feature of the 1857 Revolt was the solidarity amongst the rebels cutting across religious and provincial lines. Leaders of the Revolt issued proclamations to stress the importance of communal amity amongst the rebels, emphasizing the need of Hindus and Muslims to join their hands to drive out the English and protect their own religious customs and rituals. Mention may be made in this connection of the pamphlet Fath-I-Islam (Victory to Islam) issued from Lucknow. Again, the Azamgarh proclamation called upon the Indians of all classes

and religions to rise up against the faithless English. The rebel leader Feroze Shah's proclamation of August 1857 reiterated the same national spirit:

It is well known to all that in this age, the people of Hindustan, both Hindus and Mohammedans, are being ruined under the tyranny and oppression of the infidel and treacherous English.

Historians have also drawn our attention to such examples as the Muslim rebel leaders banning sacrifices of cows during the festival to avoid any Hindu-Muslim discord.

It is unfortunate that sometimes the Revolt of 1857 is denied the national character since the ideal of a unified all-India nation state was premature for most people of 19<sup>th</sup> century India. But how can we deny a national character to a popular outburst against an alien regime, particularly when it enjoyed the support of a large mass of population and affected a large part of the country? We need not forget that based on this particular criterion many European episodes have been considered as national events, as for example, the Russian peasants fighting Napoleon or the French fighting the English under Joan of Arc or the Carbonaris fighting for Italian unification even when the concerned Russians, French or the Italians were yet to develop the notion of a united Russia, France or Italy. Double standards in historical judgements are required to be avoided.

The Revolt failed, thanks to the brutalities committed by the English on the rebels. But the Revolt generated new national ideas. Historians like Irfan Habib have demonstrated that apart from laying stress on communal harmony the rebel leaders visualized a new national order. They sought to establish 'a kind of elective military rule', assured economic relief to the zamindars, peasants and artisans alike and promised better service conditions for the sepoy. The rebel leaders certainly deserve credit for nursing this national vision at a time when nationalism in the modern bourgeois sense was yet to develop.

What then is the lesson to be drawn from the 1857 Revolt? The uprising underlines the importance of fighting imperialism at all costs. The 1857 rebels fought and died for a cause – the cause of national liberation from an alien rule. They raised the standard of rebellion when the English power in India was at its ascendant height, and fought relentlessly shoulder to shoulder for a national cause till the last hour, ignoring religious, ethnic and local divides. Today when we are fighting to uphold the secular and democratic values of our federal polity, to strengthen the national unity of our country and to frustrate the evil designs of the forces of neo-imperialism we can draw strength from the martyrs of the 1857 Revolt. This should be the context of the commemoration of the 150 years of the 1857 Revolt. I am happy that the government of India has constituted a committee to observe the anniversary. But this should not be only confined to high level conferences for established academics or officials. We should use the occasion to correct any distorted understanding of the great event, publish credible accounts of the Revolt in vernacular and in a language that can be understood by the rank and file in our society, and disseminate the political lesson of the uprising at the grass-root level. Only then the commemoration of the glorious chapter in our struggle for freedom can have a multiplier effect, and only then can we pay our real tribute to the martyrs who died for the noble cause to make our country a better place to live in.

## **POLITICAL CAUSES**

- a) Lord Dalhousie's policy of annexation caused uproar among the people of India. The last Peshwa, Baji Rao's adopted son Nana Sahib was deprived of the pension his father was receiving. Rani Laxmi Bai's adopted son was not given the throne after the death of his father. To make matters worse Lord Dalhousie announced in 1849 that Bahadur Shah Zafar will not be allowed to stay in the Red Fort anymore and they were compelled to move to a place near Qutab Minar. To further worsen the situation Lord Canning announced in 1856 that with the demise of Bahadur Shah Zafar, his successor will not be allowed to use the title "king".
- b) The political scheme's of the British were in question when they resorted to harsh means when dealing with the native princes. The written and oral pledges made with the princes were often disregarded by the British. The annexation of Oudh without a reason led to a huge uprising. The proposal of taking away the title from the Mughal emperor shocked the Muslims. The annexation of Jhansi, Satara and Nagpur shocked the Hindus as they were predominantly Hindu states. The remaining Hindus and Muslims who were unaffected became insecure, lest they meet the same fate.
- c) C) The myth about the superiority of the British was shattered when they were badly beaten in the first Afghan War. They were again humbled in 1855-56, when they had to face the rebellion of the Santhal tribe of Bengal and Bihar. This proved that the Indian army was quite powerful.
- d) There was a rumour floated around that with the end of the Revolt of 1857 the British Raj would come to an end. This rumour emanated from the fact that the battle of Plassey in 1757 brought about British power and with 1857 a century would be completed which will mark the end of British rule.

## **ECONOMIC CAUSES**

- a) During the first two hundred years (16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries) the East India Company confined its activities to trade and commerce and had no political intention. The company purchased textiles, indigo, saltpetre, spices and foodgrains from Indian market in exchange for gold and other precious metals. It thus played a useful role by exporting Indian goods and by increasing the production the Indian goods became so popular that the British government had to pass a law in 1720 forbidding the use of Indian textiles. However during the 18th century, the pattern of trade went through a drastic change.

With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, England developed its own textile industry and with that the dependence on Indian textiles came to an end. The result was that instead of buying finished textile goods from India, the British company purchased raw cotton and exported the same to England. India soon became a raw material producing country, supplying cotton and jute to the factories in Britain. Cotton was processed into finished cloth and exported back to India. British traders made massive profit through this two way trade.

Demand for Indian textiles having reduced, the local handloom industry incurred heavy losses and suffered badly. The poor Indian weavers could not compete with the machine made goods imported from England. Moreover, the Company used its political resources to buy the best quality cotton from the Indian markets leaving no scope for the Indian weavers to produce good quality products. Gradually, the Indian handicraft and Cottage industries died out. There was major unemployment problem and that resulted in

resentment among workers against the British rule. The little patronage that they received from the native princes also was gone because of the annexations of those dominions. The miserable condition of the working class led to this rebellion against the British Rule. The trade and commerce of the country was monopolized by the by the East Indian Company. No efforts were made to improvise on the living conditions of the people. Cruel exploitation of the economic resources made people miserable leading to periodic famines.

- b) The British confiscated the lands and properties of many landlords and Talukdars, especially those of Oudh. These very disgruntled landlords became leaders of the Revolt.
- c) Thousands of soldiers under the employment of the native states became jobless when the states were annexed to the British dominion. As many as 60,000 families lost their livelihood, when Oudh's army was disbanded. Naturally the disbanded soldiers were seething with anger and were seeking an opportunity to strike at the new regime which had deprived them of their livelihood.
- d) Gradual disappearance of many states also deprived those Indians who held civil and judicial posts in the states, of their jobs. Even religious preachers were divested of their livelihood with the extinction of native kingdoms. The people who were affected rose against the British.

## **SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CAUSES**

Indians had a lurking suspicion that they would be converted to Christianity under the new regime. The fear was largely due to the activities of some of the activities of some Christian missionaries who openly ridiculed the customs and the traditions of both Hindus and Muslims. The English also established Chapels and Churches for propagating Christianity at the expense of the government. Even civil and military officers were asked to propagate the gospel. The religious sentiments of the people were further hurt when a tax was imposed on property held by temples and mosques.

Indian soldiers in the service of the company were equally prejudiced against the English in the religious matters. An ACT was passed in 1856 known as the "General Services Enlistment Act", which imposed on the Indian sepoys the obligation to serve wherever required. This dreaded sea voyage and considered this measure against their religious customs. The passing of the laws allowing converts from Hinduism to Christianity to inherit their ancestral property was a clear proof of the encouragement to the Christian missionaries for the spread of Christianity in India.

The introduction of western innovations had unsettled the minds of the ignorant people. The spread of English education, the construction of railways and telegraph lines, legislation for the suppression of sati and the remarriage of the widows engendered a belief that the British were determined to convert the people to Christianity. The introduction of railways was resented on the ground that people of all castes would have to travel in the same compartments. The common people did not appreciate these changes. They looked upon them as foreign innovations designed to break down the social order to which they were accustomed and which they considered sacred.

The educated Indians were also denied high posts. The highest office open to an Indian in Civil Services was that of a sadar or an Amin with an annual salary of Rs. 500 only. In the military service the highest office that an Indian could secure is that of a Subedar. Humiliation and torture

were inflicted upon Indians in their own country. This racial discrimination hurt Indian sentiments tremendously.

## **MILITARY CAUSES**

The East India Company was formed with the help of Indian soldiers. Instead of giving them due credit, the Indian soldiers were made victims of ridicule. Disregarding the fact that the Indian soldiers were efficient, the British officials paid them poorly and they lived in total squalor. Indian soldiers who had formerly held high offices in the times of the native princes found themselves in low ranks. All the higher ranks were reserved for white men irrespective of their capacity to perform. The future of the soldier was doomed and bleak. There was no hope of receiving any allowance also. The Bengal army lacked discipline. The sepoys were unhappy as they were for the most of the times sent overseas to fight, which was not desirable at all. There was no retirement age. The Bengal army had Hindustani sepoys of the higher caste who disliked menial jobs and dreaded overseas fighting as it meant loss of caste. The bitter feeling and anger reached its highest point with the emergence of the Enfield Rifles. The cartridges of these rifles were greased with cow and pig fats. The sepoys had to remove the cartridge with their teeth before loading them into the rifles. Both the Hindus and Muslims were discontented as it was sacrilegious for both of them. Hindus consider cow sacred and Muslims consider pigs. Thus, both refused to use this cartridge and there was disharmony everywhere.

### **Causes for the failure of the revolt**

#### **1. Lack of planning, Organization and Leadership**

Movement without planning, organization and leadership is bound to be a failure. The revolt of 1857 was no exception. The revolt was supposed to have started on May 31, 1857 as decided by Nana Sahib and his colleagues. But an incident at Meerut whereby the soldiers had to bite cartridges made of pig fat and cow fat added fuel to the fire leading to the revolt breaking out early. The leaders had no made plans. The movement had no leader on top to guide people and command obedience. Every movement requires some sort of discipline and a leader to guide and help. But since the Revolt unexpectedly broke out on May 10, 1857, there is nothing much the leaders could do.

#### **2. Indian Help to the British**

Unfortunately, some of the Indian prince's helped the British government at that point of time. The Sikh princes of Nabhya, Patiala and Kapurthala and the rulers of Hyderabad and Gwalior very openly helped the British suppress the war with men and money. Holka and Scindia remained loyal to the British. Their help at this point of time riveted the shackles of British yoke over India for almost another century.

### ***Results of the Revolt***

#### **1. End of company's rule**

The British Parliament passed an "Act for the Better Government of India" in 1858, whereby the administration responsibility was passed into the hands of the British Queen and her Parliament. With this, the rule of the Company came to an end. The Board of Control was abolished and the Board of Directors had no power left. A secretary of State for India was to take the place of the

President of the Board of Control. He was advised by a board of fifteen members. The designation of the Governor-General was changed. While he remained Governor-General for the provinces under his rule, he came to be known as Viceroy while dealing with Nawabs, Rajas and native princes.

## **2. Policy of Divide and Rule**

During the Revolt of 1857 the Hindus and Muslims had unity and fought together for the welfare of the country. The British government realized that the unity of the Hindus and Muslims was posing a serious threat and therefore the best thing would be to create a wall between the two communities. Thus, they adopted the "Divide and Rule" that completely destroyed the relationship. So much so that the unrest between the two communities has still not been resolved. As the Muslims had taken a prominent role in the Revolt, they were deprived of patronage in education, business and services and Hindus were given preferential treatment. At a later stage the Policy was reversed. The British used this disharmony to their advantage and widened the gulf between the two major communities. It was on this ground that India had to be partitioned on the event of her independence in 1947.

## **3. Economic Exploitation of India**

Economic exploitation of the country was an inevitable situation after the Revolt. In words of Majumdar, "the extinction of the East India Company's Rule brought in grave economic perils to India. India now became a dumping ground of British manufacturers and an almost inexhaustible field for investment of capital for it offered unlimited scope for commercial and industrial enterprises like railways, steamers, tea, and coffee plantations etc". The British henceforth started abusing political power for the enhancement of their commercial and economic interest.

## **4. End of Peshwaship and the Mughal Rule**

Nana Sahib escaped after the Revolt as he had actively taken part in it. He could not be traced after that. With his escape the Peshwaship came to an end. The title of Mughal emperor was also abolished as the last Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar died in 1862 and he also took part in the Revolt. Thus came the end of the glorious Mughal dynasty founded by Babur in 1526 in the first battle of Panipat.

## **5. Reorganization of Army**

The British soldiers realized that the numerical inferiority of the British Indian army was one of the causes of the Revolt. The British soldiers were increased in number which means, the expenditure also increased. Artillery and other advanced means of warfare were in the care of British hands. In order to break down the unity of the Indian soldiers, they were divided and separated.

## **6. Change in the British Policy towards Indian states**

To appease native princes, the British declared that they would honour all treaties and the agreement entered into by the East India Company with the native rulers. Further, Doctrine of Lapse was abandoned and the right to adoption recognized. The Indian princes were assured that their territories would never be annexed. Henceforth, the continual existence of Native States was guaranteed. However, there were clearly defined restrictions and limitations to them. The military prowess was greatly reduced.



## 7. Rise of Nationalism

The sacrifices of some great Indian rulers during the Revolt of 1857 aroused feelings of Nationalism among men. Nana Sahib, Rani of Jhansi and Bahadur Shah became National heroes. People celebrated their heroism and their attempts to fight for freedom. The revolt became a symbol of challenge to the mighty British power in India. According to Tara Chand, "the memory of 1857 substantiated the later movement, infused courage into the hearts of the fighters furnished a historical basis for the grim struggle and gave it a moral stimulus - (its) memory distorted but hallowed with the sanctity, perhaps did more damage to the cause of the British rule in India than the revolt itself".

### Nature-Interpretations

The Revolt of 1857 was born out of various features ranging from the British policy of conquest and expansion to the colonial exploitation of India. Geographically speaking, it affected north-western, north and central India. The 'Sepoy Mutiny' – as it was labelled initially by the colonial official writings, focused on the 'Mutiny' theme. To colonial officials and writers it was the handiwork of a set of discontented sipahis who were unhappy with the introduction, in 1857, of the new Enfield rifle, with its distinct ammunition, which required the bullet to be bitten before loading. Rumours that the grease used on the bullets was either from the fat of cattle or pigs had symbolic implications. Thus, whereas cows were considered 'sacred' by the Hindus, the Muslims considered pigs to be 'polluting'. This created strong animosities and was located as an attack on Hindu and Muslim religious beliefs. As can be expected, this understanding gave primacy to the religious factor and reinforced a line of thinking which saw the Revolt as a 'Muslim conspiracy', that gained acceptance among contemporary officials. Syed Ahmad Khan (1817 - 1898) wrote a tract (*Asbab-e-Baghawat-e-Hind* viz. 'The Causes of the Indian Revolt') to counter this allegation, where he sought to examine the underlying features that determined the nature of 1857. And taken together these seem to be the basis for formulations like the 'clash of civilizations', echoes of which are heard even today in the post-9/11 context.

Contemporary writings in the mid-nineteenth century generated political hysteria and racism, which legitimized the barbaric image of the 'Indian'. Nevertheless, the 1857 Revolt demonstrated the way English opinion itself was divided at home. Thus, Chartists like Ernest Jones hailed the Revolt and unmasked the colonial exploitation of India (*The Revolt of Hindustan; or, The New World*, London, 1857). Of course the most serious dissenting voice was that of Karl Marx who linked the colonial exploitation of India to the anger that was displayed by the people during the Revolt. Marx and Engels hailed the unity displayed by the different religious communities who opposed British colonialism (*Marx and Engels, The First War of Independence, 1857-1859*, Moscow, 1975).

Interestingly, the Indian National Congress after its formation (1885) actually denounced the 1857 Revolt, given the social background of most of the leaders who were pro-British in their thinking. However, by the end of the nineteenth century the Revolt attracted and inspired the first generation of the Indian nationalists. Thus, V.D.Savarkar, who was perhaps the first Indian to write about the Revolt in 1909, called it *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. His pro-nationalist stance made Savarkar reject the colonial assertion that linked the Revolt with the greased cartridges. As he put it, if this had been the issue it would be difficult to explain how it could attract Nana Sahib, the Emperor of Delhi, the Queen of Jhansi and Khan Bahadur Khan to

join it. Besides, he also focused on the fact that the Revolt continued even after the English Governor General had issued a proclamation to withdraw the offending greased bullets. Savarkar went ahead and connected the Revolt to the 'atrocities' committed by the British. At the same time, the importance he gave to religion illustrates the influence of the imperialist writers on him.

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

The access to sources after the independence of India saw interesting developments related to the studies on the 1857 Revolt. What developed was a rather sophisticated Nationalist historiography that harped on the complexities of the Revolt. It included Nationalist historians like R.C. Majumdar, S.B. Chaudhuri, S.N. Sen, and K.K. Datta, (viz. R.C. Majumdar, *The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*, 1957; S.B. Chaudhuri, *Civil Revolt in the Indian Mutinies, 1857-59*, 1957 and *Theories of the Indian Mutiny*, 1965; S.N. Sen, *Eighteen Fifty-Seven*, 1957; and, K.K. Datta, *Reflections on the Mutiny*, 1967). These historians were not uniformly comfortable with the idea that the 1857 Revolt was the 'First War of Indian Independence'. Moreover, they referred to ideas like nationalism that were supposedly witnessed during 1857 or saw the very inception of the national movement contained in the Revolt. Nevertheless, they went very clearly beyond the simple categorizations that had seen two dominant and opposing narratives – lauding the British, the victors who had 'won' the war and the claims of the 'rebellious Indians', who had been 'defeated'.

This meant a shift in focus, with efforts being made to locate the internal contradictions (viz. the Indian 'rich', which included the moneylenders and buniyas) and the popular basis of 1857 and not concentrate merely on the influential classes which had been the focus of contemporary British officials. It is here that Nationalist historiography worked on and developed the legacy of the Marxists, even as some Nationalist historians inscribed their disapproval of seeing it as the 'First War of Independence'. In this sense at least, the Nationalist historians accorded a space – howsoever limited – to the popular basis of the Revolt.

Since peasants did not/do not write their histories, they did not document their interaction with the 1857 Revolt. But, is it possible to ignore the folklore and traditions of resistance associated with the 1857 Revolt? Moreover, can one afford to ignore the connections between 1857 and the peasant revolts of the preceding phase, or those outside the northern region of India? One can for example refer here to the Revolts of the Bhills in 1852 (in Khandesh, Dhar and Malwa), the Santals in 1855-6 (in Rajmahal, Bhagalpur, Birbhum), the Mapillas over the 1836-1854 period in Malabar, the Kandhas in Ghumsar and Baudh (1855-60), the Savaras of Parliakhemedi (1856-57), or, for that matter, the Indigo Revolt in Bengal (that began in 1859 and was directed against white planters) – in spite of being told repeatedly about the role of the Permanent Settlement and the bhadrалoks, that supposedly left Bengal as a 'zone of peace' in this phase.



Unless one locates historical processes in a narrow, factual manner, it would be indeed almost impossible to assume that peasants cannot think or incorporate components from the past while struggling against colonial rule as well as their immediate oppressors. In this sense at least, it is difficult to study the Revolt unless one takes into account the social history of peasant protest prior to 1857 and in the phase after it. This would show the peasants in a bitter anti-imperialist political struggle, where the internal exploiter in the form of the *sahukar* or *buniya* was not spared. It would also undermine a point that has almost got frozen as common sense – viz. that the impact of the 1857 Revolt was not felt outside the Indo-Gangetic plain.

With the passage of time the development of other historical approaches generated a lot of debates on the nature of 1857 among historians. The first exhaustive work on the Revolt was published in 1957 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the event. Edited by P.C.Joshi (1857: A Symposium, 1957), it focused on both the diversities and the specificities of the 1857 Revolt. This included assessing 1857 against the colonial backdrop, examining aspects of participation and focusing in a major way on the internal contradictions. This volume also sought to highlight dimensions of popular culture by incorporating folk poems that have survived. One has in mind here the contributions especially of P.C.Joshi and Talmiz Khaldun.

In many ways this work inspired a serious spell of writings on the Revolt. Here mention must be made of Eric Stokes who examined issues ranging from the way the nature of 1857 was conditioned by the background, the demographic and ecological features to the social composition and the role of the peasants, especially the ‘rich’ peasants’ (viz. *Peasant and the Raj: Studies in Peasant Society and Agrarian Revolt in Colonial India*, 1978; and his *The Peasant Armed: The India Revolt of 1857*, 1986). Interestingly, his research guided Stokes to reassess his position. Thus, whereas in his first work he had focused on the ‘rich’ peasant leadership and mobilization, in *Peasant Armed* Stokes enlarged the social basis of peasant participation in the Revolt.

However, it was left to historians like Rudrangshu Mukherjee (*Awadh in Revolt, 1857-58: A Study of Popular Resistance*, 1984) and Tapti Roy (*The Politics of a Popular Uprising: Bundelkhand in 1857*, 1994) to enrich our understanding of the Revolt by their focus on the popular level of the Revolt. Their effort was based on specific area studies – viz. Awadh and Bundelkhand – that brought to light fascinating complexities of popular militancy that had remained ignored.

Alongside, historians like Iqtidar Alam Khan have studied questions related to organization (‘The Gwalior Contingent in 1857-58: A Study of the Organization and Ideology of the Sepoy Rebels,’ *Social Scientist*, January-April 1998, pgs. 53-75; hereafter S.Sct.), Gautam Bhadra and Saiyid Zaheer Husain Jafri have focused on the middle level leadership (‘Four Rebels of Eighteen Fifty Seven’, in Ranajit Guha, ed. *Subaltern Studies IV*, 1985, pgs. 229-75; and ‘Profile of a Sainly Rebel - Maulavi Ahmadullah Shah’ in S.Sct., respectively). Scholars like Khaldun (in P.C.Joshi, pgs. 1-70) and E.I.Brodkin (‘The Struggle for Succession: Rebels and Loyalists in the Indian Mutiny of 1857’, in *Modern Asian Studies*, 1972, pages 277-90) have focused on activities in the areas where British authority had been subverted, and if 1857 was indeed a restorative Revolt.

More recently – since the 1990s – historians have focused on the popular dimensions of 1857. Here one can refer to scholars like K.S.Singh who have highlighted the participation of *adivasis*

(“The ‘Tribals’ and the 1857 Uprising”, S.Sct. pgs. 76-85); Badri Narayan who has focused on low and outcastes and popular culture (‘Dalits and Memories of 1857’, ICHR Conference Proceedings, December 2006, unpublished; and ‘Popular Culture and 1857: Memory Against Forgetting’, S.Sct. pgs. 86-94); and Rajat Ray who has studied the mentalities of 1857 (The Felt Community: Commonality and Mentality before the Emergence of Indian Nationalism, 2003, pgs. 353-534). Moreover, working within the paradigms of cultural studies scholars like Jenny Sharpe (Allegories of Empire: The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text, 1993) and Nancy Paxton (Writing Under the Raj: Gender, Race and Rape in the British Colonial Imagination, 1830-1947, 1999) have delineated the way the theme of the ‘rape’ of white women that was virtually created to fuel racism, which emerged as a major fall-out of the Revolt.

What needs to be emphasized is that the 1857 Revolt represents possibly one of the most powerful and dramatic anti-colonial movements which united the peasants and the landed sections against the ruthless imperialist onslaught over the first half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, it also questioned the internal exploiters like the moneylenders and buniyas. What has been delineated illustrates the evolution of the historiography on the 1857 Revolt. As seen, historians have shifted their focus from the mutinous ‘sepoys’, and seeing in it the origins of Indian nationalism to studying the diversities of the Revolt both in terms of popular participation and regions affected by it as also highlighting the internal contradictions. Presently some historians are engaged in researching gender-related issues, which would undoubtedly enrich our understanding of the Revolt of 1857.

## UNIT-II

### ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS UNDER THE CROWN

#### **Lord Lytton (1876-1880)**

Lord Lytton (8 November 1831 – 24 November 1891) was an English statesman and poet. He served as Viceroy of India between 1876 and 1880, including during the Great Famine of 1876–78. His implementation of Britain's trading policy has been blamed for the severity of the famine, which killed up to 10 million people. Bulwer-Lytton's supporters argue that his many letters reveal a man who, in his own mind, would have been acting for the best. Always sensitive to others' situations, Robert Lytton made – and kept – friends with as much facility as he wrote

verse (he was a successful poet under the pen name of Owen Meredith). He was also credited in the years after the famine with implementing new arrangements in the running of India which ensured that such a severe famine never occurred again.

### **Background and education**

He was a son of novelists Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1st Baron Lytton and Rosina Doyle Wheeler. He was educated at Harrow School and at the University of Bonn.

### **Diplomatic career**

In 1849 he entered the Diplomatic Service, aged 18, when he was appointed as attaché (private secretary) to his uncle, Sir Henry Bulwer, who was Minister at Washington, DC. It was at this time he met Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. He began his salaried diplomatic career in 1852 as an attaché to Florence, followed by Paris in 1854 and The Hague in 1856. In 1858 he was transferred to St Petersburg, Constantinople and Vienna. In 1860 he was appointed British Consul General at Belgrade.

In 1862 Lytton was promoted to Second Secretary in Vienna, but his success in Belgrade led to Lord Russell appointing him Secretary of the Legation at Copenhagen in 1863. During this time he twice acted as Chargé d'Affaires in the Schleswig-Holstein conflict. In 1864 he was transferred to the Greek court to advise the young Danish Prince. In 1865 he advanced to Lisbon where he concluded a major commercial treaty with Portugal. After an appointment to Madrid he became Secretary to the Embassy at Vienna and, in 1872, Paris. By 1874 he was appointed British Minister Plenipotentiary at Lisbon where he remained until being appointed Governor General and Viceroy of India in 1876.

### **Viceroy of India**

Midway on his journey [to India] he met, by prearrangement, in Egypt, the Prince of Wales, then returning from his tour through India. Immediately on his arrival in Calcutta he was sworn in as Governor General and Viceroy, and on 1 January 1876, surrounded by all the Princes of Hindustan, he presided at a spectacular ceremony on the plains of Delhi, which marked the Proclamation of her Majesty, Queen Victoria, as Empress of India. After this the Queen conferred upon him the honor of the Grand Cross of the civil division of the Order of the Bath. In 1879 an attempt was made to assassinate Lord Lytton, but he escaped uninjured. The principal event of his viceroyalty was the Afghan war. In 1877, Lord Lytton convened a *darbar* (imperial assembly) in Delhi which was attended by around 84,000 people including princes and title holders. In 1878, he promulgated the Vernacular Press Act, which empowered him to confiscate the press and paper of a local language newspaper publishing 'seditious material'. The resulted in public outcry in Calcutta led by the Indian Association and Surendranath Banerjee.

### **Famine and Second Afghan War (1876-81)**

Disraeli, a novelist himself, selected as the next viceroy Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, son of the famous novelist and a poet using the name Owen Meredith, but he lacked administrative experience. A monsoon failure began a terrible famine in 1876 that was especially devastating in Madras and Mysore but also affected Hyderabad, Bombay, and the United Provinces. The rains failed again in 1877. About 36 million people were affected, and an estimated five and a half million died of disease and starvation. Mysore tried local relief efforts, and its Government bought up large quantities of grain. Viceroy Lytton complained that they needed high prices to

stimulate imports and limit consumption, but high prices caused the poor to starve. They reacted by fixing wages for relief work so high that many who did not need the jobs as badly went there. Richard Temple and the finance minister John Strachey believed that mitigating the suffering had to be tempered by economic considerations, and Temple was appointed Famine Commissioner in January 1877. He found that in Madras many were getting relief who did not need it. The imperial Government sent General Kennedy to Madras to organize relief works on a much larger scale, and he reduced the number of those receiving gratuitous relief. Between January and September 1877 Temple increased those employed in relief work from under a half million to over two million. Rains came in the fall, and relief operations were phased out in 1878.

The Government of India lost £2.5 million of land revenue and spent £11 million on famine relief compared to the £6.5 million spent in Bihar where very few had died. However, proportionately this was less, and the economizing caused the loss of many lives. General Strachey headed the Famine Commission, which recommended in 1880 that they add 5,000 miles of railways and more irrigation works, especially in precarious areas. They described six basic principles for famine relief.

1. Employment must be provided for those in need without putting others out of work.
2. The state should distribute raw grain or money in villages rather than feed people in poorhouses and temporary camps except in extreme cases.
3. Government should allow private commerce to supply and distribute food whenever possible.
4. Loans should be made for purchasing seed grain and bullocks and to landlords while suspending rents.
5. Local administrators should have responsibility for expenditures unless extra assistance is needed, especially for water storage.
6. Migration of cattle from drought areas to grassy forests may be facilitated.

These recommendations were generally accepted. Strachey proposed setting aside £1.5 million annually for famine relief, and this insurance fund reduced the borrowing for public works. A new Famine Code was promulgated in 1883.

During the worst part of the famine in 1877 the Parliament obliviously removed the five-percent import duty on manufactured cotton goods which Northbrook and the Council had opposed doing. The Government of India was thus short of money while it was also spending much on the war in Afghanistan. The Indian Whipping Act had been passed in 1864, and the number of judicial floggings reached a high of 75,223 in 1878. Wasudeo Balwant Phadke blamed the misery in India on the foreign rulers, and after the famine he tried to organize an armed rebellion in Bombay. He and about 45 men robbed the village shops of Dhamari in February 1879. He used the money from this and other robberies to hire five hundred Rohillas, giving him nine hundred armed men. However, Phadke was captured in July and was transported for life for waging war against the Queen. Also in 1879 Lytton forced through the removal of duties on coarser cotton goods. Varied salt duties had required a customs line of almost 2,000 miles of thorny hedges and walls guarded by an army of 8,000 men. Lytton made salt a Government monopoly with uniform duties. The tax on salt was less than three farthings per pound, but it gave the Government annual revenue of more than £7 million. The Viceroy made it even harder for Indians to pass civil service exams in England by reducing the maximum age to 19 in 1877.

Two years later he opened one-sixth of the covenanted service positions to Indians, but they had to be approved by the Governor-General-in-Council. The conservative Lytton also enacted the Vernacular Press Act against sedition in native-language newspapers with the argument that they were more susceptible than English readers, but his liberal successor got this repealed.

Major Robert Sandeman, who had skillfully settled disputes on the border of Dera Ghazi Khan's district in the Punjab with the Bugti and Mufti tribes, was sent to calm the quarrels between Khudadad Khan of Kalat and his local chiefs. In July 1876 they were reconciled. Viceroy Lytton sent Col. George Pomeroy Colley with a force to make a secret treaty with Khudadad at Jacobabad in December. The Khan received an increased subsidy and agreed to let the British build a railroad and telegraph lines through his territory so that they could occupy Quetta, where Sandeman became the British agent for Baluchistan. The Act of 1876 made Queen Victoria sovereign over the Indian states as of the beginning of 1877. Lytton wanted to send Lewis Pelly to Kabul to announce his becoming viceroy and Victoria's inauguration as Empress of India, but Afghanistan's Amir Sher Ali refused to receive a British envoy. Instead he suggested that the native agent Atta Muhammad go from Kabul to Simla, and the British promised him money and arms against unprovoked aggression and recognition of Sher Ali's son Abdulla Jan as his heir. Lytton also implied threats that Afghanistan could be smashed between Russia and England or be wiped out by both of them.

Amir Sher Ali sent his minister Nur Muhammad Shah to meet with the British envoy Lewis Pelly at Peshawar in January 1877. Negotiations broke down upon the Amir's refusal to accept a British agent in Afghanistan, and a few days later Nur Muhammad died of illness. After the British put a garrison in Quetta, Sher Ali sent troops to Qandahar. While the Russo-Turkish War raged, Lytton recognized the Maharaja of Kashmir's authority over the chiefs of Chitral and Yasin, whom Sher Ali wanted to control.

In June 1878 Konstantin Petrovich Kaufmann, the Russian governor-general of Turkestan, sent General Stolietoff from Tashkent to Kabul with troops and a draft treaty offering Russian support to Amir Sher Ali against external aggression and recognition of his son Abdulla Jan as his heir. Because the Russians might turn to his nephew Abdur Rahman, Sher Ali reluctantly received the Russian in July. However, news of Russian and English agreement on the Berlin Treaty caused Stolietoff to withdraw quickly. Abdulla Jan died on August 17, the day Sher Ali received a message from Indian emissary Gholam Hussain that a British mission was coming. A month later he sent back a message threatening resistance unless "conciliatory letters" were sent.

Neville Bowles Chamberlain led the British contingent and left Peshawar on September 21, but they were turned back at the Khyber Pass. British public opinion was outraged, but John Lawrence wrote a letter to the London Times asking, "Have not the Afghans a right to resist our forcing a mission on them, bearing in mind to what such missions often lead, and what Burma's mission in 1837 did actually bring upon them?"<sup>4</sup> Despite Gladstone's warnings, both houses of Parliament approved the war and put the cost on India. Lytton sent Sher Ali an ultimatum, demanding an apology and acceptance of a British mission in Afghanistan by November 20. Sher Ali fled to Russian Turkestan in December and died in February. General Frederick Roberts led a British army through the Kurram Pass to Kabul, and General Donald Stewart occupied Qandahar. Already the Punjabis complained they had lost 80,000 animals to starvation.

Before he left Kabul, Sher Ali had released his oldest son Yakub Khan from prison. Yakub negotiated with Major Louis Cavagnari and signed the Treaty of Gandamak on May 26, 1879.



Yakub Khan was recognized as Amir, accepted a permanent British representative in Kabul, and ceded to the British the Khyber Pass, Kurram Valley, and Pishin and Sibi by Baluchistan. The British agreed to pay him 6 lakhs of rupees annually, remove their troops from Afghanistan, and defend him from foreign aggression. Cavagnari was knighted for his diplomatic success and became the first British Resident at Kabul in July. However, as Lawrence and others had predicted, he and his staff of two hundred were murdered on September 3 by mutinous troops from Herat.

General Stewart was still in Qandahar, and he sent General Roberts with 6,000 men to avenge the massacre. They defeated a small Afghan force at Charasiab and entered Kabul in October. Yakub Khan abdicated and was sent to India, where Lytton refused to consider restoring him because he blamed him for Cavagnari's death. Roberts had 87 people hanged for suspected complicity in the massacre or for resisting the British; those not cooperating with British foragers had their villages burned. Muhammad Jan gathered more than 20,000 Afghan warriors north of Kabul by December; but the British beat back their attacks, and by Christmas they had dispersed. In March 1880 the war, which had been estimated to cost £6 million so far, had already spent £11 million. Because the British would not withdraw from an Afghanistan in chaos, the operations were expected to cost another £7 million by the end of the year.

A British force from Bombay was sent to Qandahar, and General Stewart led his 7,000 men through a fight at Ghazni to Kabul by May 3, 1880. Partly because of his Afghan policy, Disraeli's party lost the election, and he resigned on April 28. Lytton was trying to break up Afghanistan but also resigned. Prime Minister William Gladstone appointed the liberal George Ripon as viceroy, and he arrived in June. Although Abdur Rahman, Sher Ali's nephew, had found refuge in Russian territory, he agreed to the British terms and was proclaimed the Amir of Kabul on July 22. Ayub Khan, the brother of Yakub Khan, was governing Herat, and he marched on Qandahar, where Sher Ali Khan had been proclaimed an independent governor; he appealed to the British. General James Primrose had less than 6,000 men, and he sent General George Burrows with about 2,500 men. Ayub Khan had 16,000 men, and at Maiwand they gave the British their worst defeat by Asians, killing 969 British soldiers and most of their baggage animals. Hearing of this, General Roberts with help from Abdur Rahman led 10,000 men from Kabul, and after marching 318 miles they defeated Ayub Khan's army outside of Qandahar on August 9. Ayub Khan lost nearly 3,000 men and fled back to Herat. Sher Ali Khan was persuaded to retire in India on a pension, and Abdur Rahman took over Qandahar province in April 1881. Later that year Ayub Khan marched on Qandahar again and defeated them; but Abdur Rahman led his forces to victory over Ayub Khan, who fled to Persia.

Abdur Rahman had become the ruler of all Afghanistan with an annual subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees. The British had spent £17.5 million on an unnecessary war because of an irrational fear of Russian power. Frederick Roberts agreed with Lawrence that the forward policy had failed. He believed that if the Russians went into Afghanistan, they would have the same problems or worse. Viceroy Ripon was able to reduce military expenditures.

### **Vernacular Press Act**

The **Vernacular Press Act** was passed in 1878 under the Governor Generalship and Viceroyalty of Lord Lytton, for 'better control' of Indian language newspapers. The purpose of the Act was to control the printing and circulation of seditious material, calculated to produce



disaffection against the British Government in India in the minds of the ignorant, uneducated and largely illiterate masses.

The infamous “Gagging Act” of 1857 has been passed following the mutiny. It sought to regulate the establishment of printing presses and to restrain the circulation of printed mater. All presses had to have a license from the government. No distinction was made between publications in English and other regional languages. The Act also held that no licensed press should publish printed material impugning the motives of the British Raj, tending to bring it hatred and contempt and exciting unlawful resistance to its orders. When the British Government found that the Gagging Act was not potent enough to repress all Nationalist sentiments, it went on to create a more forcible law, designed in part by Sir Alexander Arbuthnot and Sir Ashley Eden, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. At the time the Vernacular Press Act was passed, there were thirty five vernacular papers in Bengal, including the Amrita Bazar Patrika, the editor of which was one Sisir Kumar Ghose. Sir Ashley Eden summoned him and offered to contribute to his paper regularly, if he allowed what he published to go under scanner by Sir Ashley’s office first. Ghose refused, and remarked that “there ought to be at least one honest journalist in the land.” The Vernacular Press Act might be said to have grown from this incident. About the time the Act was passed, Sir Ashley remarked in a speech that forty five seditious writings published in fifteen different vernacular papers were presented before him before the Act was finalized. The Vernacular Press Act stated that any magistrate or Commissioner of Police had the authority to call upon any printer or publisher of a newspaper to enter into a bond, undertaking not to print a certain kind of material, and confiscate any printed mater it deemed objectionable. The affected party could not seek redress in a court of law. General threats to the Indian language press were these:

1. Any attempt to subvert the functioning of democratic institutions.
2. Agitations and violent incidents.
3. False allegations against British authorities or individuals.
4. Attempts at endangering law and order to disturb the normal functioning of the state.
5. Threats to internal stability.

Any one or more of the above were punishable by law. No redress could be sought in any court in the land.

### **Reception**

Reactions to the Vernacular Press Act were, with one exception, negative. The community of editors and printers were unanimously outraged. However, Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore emphatically supported the Act, on the ground that the vernacular press did not represent the feelings of the greater part of the Indian populace accurately. Public reaction to this statement was unfavorable. Sir Richard Temple and Sir George Campbell had acknowledged the absolute loyalty of the press in Indian languages between the years 1872 and 1878. Surendranath Banerjea of the Indian Association pointed this out in his movement against the Vernacular Press Act and wondered how the same Indian Language press referred to by Temple and Campbell could turn hostile and seditious within a span of three years. Most of the Bengali middle class intelligentsia would not be a party to Banerjea’s agitation, but he found some strong supporters among Bengali Christians. Banerjee was arrested on grounds of libel and sedition, but this gave rise to a storm, of protest through street processions and general closure of work. The Vernacular Press Act was repealed on December 7, 1881, when Lord Ripon was Governor General and Viceroy

of India. The Indian Penal Code was amended to make room for censorship of objectionable material in the writings of the Indian language press.

### **Queen's Proclamation of 187(Delhi Durbar)**

The Delhi Durbar, meaning "Court of Delhi", was a mass assembly at Coronation Park, Delhi, India, to mark the coronation of a King and Queen of the United Kingdom. Also known as the Imperial Durbar, it was held three times, in 1877, 1903, and 1911, at the height of the British Empire. The 1911 Durbar was the only one attended by the sovereign, who was George V. The term was derived from common Mughal term durbar.

#### **Durbar of 1877**

Called the "Proclamation Durbar", the Durbar of 1877 was held beginning on 1 January 1877 to designate the coronation and proclaim Queen Victoria as Empress of India. The 1877 Durbar was largely an official event and not a popular occasion with mass appeal like 1903 and 1911. It was attended by the 1st Earl of Lytton - Viceroy of India, maharajas, nawabs and intellectuals. This was the culmination of transfer of control of much of India from the British East India Company to the The Crown.

The Durbar was the beginning of a great transformation for India where the campaign for a free India was formally launched.

Inside Victoria Memorial in Kolkata is an inscription taken from the Message of Queen Victoria presented at the 1877 Durbar to the people of India:

*"We trust that the present occasion  
may tend to unite in bonds of close  
affection ourselves and our subjects;  
that from the highest to the humblest,  
all may feel that under our rule the  
great principles of liberty, equity,  
and justice are secured to them; and  
to promote their happiness, to add to  
their prosperity, and advance their  
welfare, are the ever present aims and  
objects of our Empire."*

A medal to commemorate the Proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India was struck and distributed to honoured guests. Ramanath Tagore was made a Maharaja by Lord Lytton, viceroy of India. It was at this glittering durbar that a man in "homespun spotless white khadi" rose to read a citation on behalf of the Pune Sarvajanik Sabha. Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi put forth a demand couched in very polite language:

*"We beg of Her Majesty to grant to India the same political and social status as is enjoyed by  
her British subjects."*

With this demand, it can be said that the campaign for a free India was formally launched.

## Lord Ripon

**Ripon, Lord** (1827-1909) Governor General and Viceroy of India (1880-1884). Before he came to Calcutta to join as Governor General and Viceroy of India George Frederick Samuel (Earl of Ripon) was a member of parliament from 1852 to 1879. While in parliament he held the posts of Under Secretary for War (1859-61), Under Secretary for India (1861-63), Secretary of State for War (1863-1866), secretary of state for India(1866), and Lord President of the Council (1868-73). He was made a Marquess in 1871.

The change of government in Britain with the Liberal Party of Gladstone in power led to a corresponding change in the top executive of India as well. Lord Ripon, who had previously held high posts in the India Office two times, was appointed the Governor General and Viceroy of India. Lord Ripon, a radical liberal among the liberals, set his reform programme in motion immediately after he assumed power (8 June 1880). His earliest measure was to end the protracted Anglo-Afghan hostilities. He entered into a peace treaty with the new Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman. The new Amir agreed, in return for an annual subsidy, to determine his foreign policy in consultation with the government of India.

Lord Ripon made remarkable contribution to the development of **Local government (For more details see the following title 'Local Government')**. In 1882, he abandoned the existing system of local government by the officially nominated people. His reform thought, as he declared, was directed to educating the people politically and educationally. According to his local self-government plan, the enormous Local Boards were split into smaller units to achieve greater efficiency. In order to ensure popular participation in the management of local affairs the existing nomination system was replaced by election system. But due to opposition from the British civilians, who believed the natives were not yet prepared for electoral system, Ripon could not implement his electoral ideas as fully as he intended to. The nominated members on the local committees, rural and urban, remained side by side with the elected members. However, Ripon's credit lies in the fact that it was he who introduced election system for the rural boards for the first time.

The famous Bengal tenancy act of 1885, though enacted after Ripon's departure, got its origin from the Rent Commission which he established in 1880 in response to widespread peasant unrest in the country. Against the rack-renting zamindars and taluqdars the Bengal raiyats were agitating for long. The Rent Commission was asked to study the agrarian problems and make appropriate recommendations for legislative actions. The upshot of the commission report (1882) was a long debate on the rights and liabilities of tenants and the eventual enactment of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 under which the raiyats got considerable rights in land which they lost under the permanent settlement.

For Ripon education was one favourite subject. As Lord President of the Council in the Liberal Government of Gladstone, Ripon had been responsible for bringing important educational reforms. As Governor General Ripon gave high priority on education, particularly primary education. He set up a committee called Indian Education Commission (1882) headed by WW Hunter for looking into the problems of primary and secondary education. In pursuance of the recommendations of the **hunter commission**, (For details see the following title 'Hunter Commission') as it was commonly known, a new education policy emphasising primary and collegiate schools was adopted.

Ripon's administration was particularly marked by the most controversial Ilbert Bill issue. The controversy arose out of the question of the jurisdiction of native judges over European subjects. The Law member, **Sir Courtney Ilbert** (For more details see the following title 'Ilbert Bill'), introduced a bill banning the protected status of the white and seeking equality of all subjects, native or otherwise, in the eye of law. The anglo-indian community put up a strong resistance movement to the passage of the bill and forced the government to enact the bill by bringing substantial amendment to its original spirit and letter.

The liberal policy of Ripon met resistance again when he repealed in 1882 the controversial **vernacular press act (1878)** that required the editors of Indian newspapers either to give an undertaking not to publish any matter objectionable to government or to submit the proof sheets before publication for scrutiny. The native press hailed his action, but the Anglo-Indian press and the community were against the idea of granting freedom of press to the natives. However, Ripon's idea about granting freedom of press to all without showing any racial discrimination prevailed.

Ripon left India in December 1884. No other Governor General before or after Ripon was more dear to the natives as he was and conversely no other Governor General was possibly so detestable to the Anglo-Indian community as Ripon.

### **Local selfGovernment**

Government below or government as organised locally. Historically, local government was always there in Bengal. Only its forms differed from age to age. The ancient and medieval governments of Bengal were heavily dependent on village institutions, which made the structure of the local government. The village society was left to itself for its own governance. The king remained contented with its share in produce in the form of tax. There were state-sponsored institutions, such as village headmen and village councils of many denominations. These were instituted for double purposes: to collect tax and to keep the people together for keeping production going and for keeping the kingdom happy and prosperous. There is not enough record at our disposal to discuss in details about the actual nature of the local governance under the state-sponsored institutions like *Gramin*, *Gramika*, or *gramapala*, etc. It is quite possible that above the village level, there existed not local self-government but a local extension of the central authority, perhaps tempered by some degree of local consultation system through a social council system.

**Medieval Period.** Historians reckon the beginning of medieval period with the establishment of Turko-Afghan rule in Bengal from the 13th century. It is believed by many, but disputed by others, that administration of villages in medieval times was left to the panchayets. Each village had its own council or *panchayet*. It appointed or elected its own headman who served as a link between the village and the central government. The headman collected revenue from the cultivators and forwarded the same to the treasury. He was answerable for delays in revenue collection. A *patwari* or village accountant working under the supervision of the headman used to keep records of crops and revenue. The panchayets were generally entrusted with the task of looking after education, irrigation, religious practices and moral conduct of the villagers. Holding fairs and festivals, and maintenance of law and order were also their functions.

It is not clear whether the administrative units during the medieval period were the same as those in the ancient period, but it seems that revenue collection became more organised during

the Mughal period and local administration was more geared up to that end. Thus, during the Mughal rule, Sarkar/Chakla and Pargana emerged as the focal point of revenue and general administration. Secondly, during the medieval period, there is no evidence of local consultation through the council system; it was quite simply a top-down administration consisting of the extension of central authority into the local areas. These two characteristics are likely to have undermined the authority of whatever self-government was prevailing at the village level. During the medieval period, particularly under the Mughals, the town gained importance in Bengal. The Mughals were essentially an urban people, and their most remarkable contribution in respect of local government was in the urban areas. The office of *Kotwal* was developed as the cornerstone of the municipal organisation during this period. Appointed under a *Sanad* of the Emperor, the Kotwal was a person of high status; law and order was his first responsibility, and he used to maintain a body of horses, city guards and a group of spies. Almost every sphere of city life was under his responsibility.

### ***Colonial period***

The early period of the British rule did not much touch upon the structure of the existing local government system. It was through the permanent settlement that a new type of local governance in English model more or less was introduced replacing the traditional institutions. Pargana system was abolished, so was the panchayet system. The new civil and criminal justice and its *adalat* system became the basis of the local government. Zamindars and other landholders were made the natural leaders of the society.

The zamindari institution, however, lost its potency in the later part of the nineteenth century. The end of east India company rule in 1858 and parliamentary commitment to take the people of the country in partnership in phases led to many reforms leading to increasing participation of people in the local governance. Thus, government passed the Bengal Chowkidari Act of 1870. The Act tried to revive the traditional Panchayet System. It authorised the District magistrate to appoint a panchayet at the village level consisting of five members. The primary function of the panchayet was to appoint village watch-men called chowkidars for the maintenance of law and order. The panchayet could also assess and collect taxes from the villagers to pay the salaries of the chowkidars.

The most direct mode of western self governance was attempted by Viceroy Lord Ripon (1880-1884). His administration resolved in 1882 to introduce local self-governing institutions in phases. In implementing the resolution, the Bengal Council passed the Local Self-Government Act, 1885 under which a three-tier system of local government for rural areas was provided: (i) a District Board in each district, (ii) a Local Board in a sub-division of a district, (iii) a Union Committee for a group of villages.

The District Board was made the centre-piece in the local government system and entrusted with extensive powers and responsibilities. A Local Board acted as an agent of the District Board and could exercise only those powers delegated to it by the District Board. The Local Board acted as a supervising body of Union Committees and could delegate any responsibility to Union Committees which were designed to administer, on an average, an area of twelve square miles in the villages. Union Committees, consisting of not less than five or more than nine members, were to be elected from among the residents of the union.

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## **Hunter Commission**

**Hunter Commission** officially known as the Indian Education Commission, 1882, was the first education commission in the history of modern India. Appointed by the Government of India, it was to review in depth, the state of education in India since **wood's education despatch of 1854**, and to recommend necessary measures for further progress. The other consideration, which prompted the Government to launch this enquiry, was the agitation of the missionaries, particularly in England, accusing lapses of the Government in implementing the provisions of the Despatch of 1854. Because of the great importance, which the Government attached to primary education, higher education was excluded from the Commission's purview and instead was directed to concentrate chiefly on primary education.

Presided over by Sir William Wilson Hunter, a Bengal Civilian, the Commission included Ananda Mohan Bose, A.W. Croft (Director of Public Instruction, Bengal), Bhudev Mukhopadhyay, Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore, Kashinath Trimbak Teelang and Sayed Ahmad Khan who later withdrew in favour of his son Sayed Mahmud.

The Commission submitted its report in October 1883 and its thirty-six recommendations regarding primary education added a certain momentum in its slow advance. The Commission stated that 'while every branch of education can justly claim the fostering care of the State, it is desirable in the present circumstances of the country to declare the elementary education of the masses, its provision, extension and improvement, to be the part of the educational system to which the strenuous efforts of the State should now be directed in a still larger measure than heretofore'. It recommended that (1) 'primary education be regarded as the instruction of the masses through the vernacular in such subjects as will best fit them for their position in life, and be not necessarily regarded as a portion of instruction leading up to the University'; (2) 'an attempt should be made to secure the fullest possible provision for an extension of primary education by legislation'; (3) 'where indigenous schools exist, the principle of aiding and improving them be recognised as an important means of extending elementary education'; (4) 'primary education be declared to be that part of the whole system of public instruction which possesses an almost exclusive claim on local funds set apart for education, and a large claim on provincial revenues' and (5) 'both Municipal and Local Self-Government Boards keep a separate school-fund'. There were also recommendations for inspection and supervision, encouragement of night schools wherever possible, elasticity as regards attending hours to suit the needs of rural families, religious teaching etc.

With its conviction that higher education is equally necessary for the balanced progress of a community the Hunter Commission made twenty-three recommendations regarding secondary education also. The Commission, however, recommended that while primary education should be provided without regard to the availability of local support, English Secondary Schools should ordinarily be supported on the availability of local co-operation. The Government of India approved of nearly all the recommendations of the Commission.

### **Ilbert Bill**

The **Ilbert Bill** was a bill introduced in 1883 for British India by Viceroy Ripon that proposed an amendment for existing laws in the country at the time to allow Indian judges and magistrates the jurisdiction to try British offenders in criminal cases at the District level, something that was disallowed at the time. It was named after Courtenay Ilbert, the recently-appointed legal adviser to the Council of India, who had proposed it as a compromise between two previously suggested bills. However, the introduction of the bill led to intense opposition in Britain and from British



settlers in India that ultimately played on racial tensions before it was enacted in 1884 in a severely compromised state. The bitter controversy deepened antagonism between the British and Indians and was a prelude to the formation of the Indian National Congress the following year.

### **Controversy**

The most vocal opponents of the bill were British tea and indigo plantation owners in Bengal, led by Griffith Evans, who feared that, unlike British judges, Indian judges would not overlook their mistreatment of Indian workers. At the same time, rumours began circulating of an English female being raped by an Indian in Calcutta. In reference to the Indian Rebellion of 1857, when it was alleged that English women and girls were raped by Indian sepoys, many British colonialists expressed great concern over the humiliation English females would have to face appearing before Indian judges in the case of rape. The British press in India even spread wild rumours about how Indian judges would abuse their power to fill their harems with white English females. The propaganda that Indian judges cannot be trusted in dealing with cases involving English females helped raise considerable support against the bill.

English women who opposed the bill further argued that Bengali women, who they stereotyped as "ignorant", are neglected by their men, and that Bengali babu should therefore not be given the right to judge cases involving English women. Bengali women who supported the bill responded by claiming that they were more educated than the English women opposed to the bill, and pointed out that more Indian women had academic degrees than British women did at the time, alluding to the fact that the University of Calcutta became one of the first universities to admit female graduates to its degree programmes in 1878, before any of the British universities had later done the same.

### **Resolution**

At first, as a result of popular disapproval of the Ilbert Bill by a majority of English women, Viceroy Ripon (who had introduced the Bill) passed an amendment, whereby a jury of 50% Europeans was required if an Indian judge was to face an European on the dock. Finally, a solution was adopted by way of compromise: jurisdiction to try Europeans would be conferred on European and Indian District Magistrates and Sessions Judges alike. However, a defendant would in all cases have the right to claim trial by a jury of which at least half the members must be European. The bill was then passed on 25 January 1884 as the Criminal Procedure Code Amendment Act 1884, coming into force on 1 May of that year.

## **UNIT-III**

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BRITISH RULE**

#### **De-industrialization of India under the British**

After destroying its agriculture British had embarked upon the destruction of Indian industry. Several Indian historians have argued that British rule led to a de-industrialization of India. By the Act 11 and 12 William III, cap. 10, it was enacted that the wearing of wrought silks and of printed or dyed calicoes from India, Persia and China should be prohibited, and a penalty of £200 imposed on all persons having or selling the same. Similar laws were enacted under

George I, II and III, in consequence of the repeated lamentations of the afterward so “enlightened” British manufacturers. And thus, during the greater part of the 18th century, Indian manufactures were generally imported into England in order to be sold on the Continent, and to remain excluded from the English market itself.

**Ramesh Chandra Dutt argued (in Economic History of India, London, 1987):**

“India in the eighteenth century was a great manufacturing as well as a great agricultural country, and the products of the Indian loom supplied the markets of Asia and Europe. It is, unfortunately, true that the East India Company and the British Parliament, following the selfish commercial policy of a hundred years ago, discouraged Indian manufacturers in the early years of British rule in order to encourage the rising manufactures of England. Their fixed policy, pursued during the last decades of the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth, was to make India subservient to the industries of Great Britain and to make the Indian people grow raw produce only, in order to supply material for the looms and manufactories of Great Britain”.

According to Karl Marx, “However changing the political aspect of India’s past must appear, its social condition has remained unaltered since its remotest antiquity, until the first decennium of the 19th century. The handloom and the spinning wheel, producing their regular myriads of spinners and weavers, were the pivots of the structure of that society.” “It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning wheel. England began with driving the Indian cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindostan, and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons.”

From 1818 to 1836 the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in the proportion of 1 to 5,200. In 1824 the export of British muslins to India hardly amounted to 1,000,000 yards, while in 1837 it surpassed 64,000,000 of yards. But at the same time the population of Dacca decreased from 150,000 inhabitants to 20,000. This decline of Indian towns celebrated for their fabrics was by no means the worst consequence. “

There is a good deal of truth in the deindustrialization argument. Moghul India did have a bigger industry than any other country, which became a European colony, and was unique in being an industrial exporter in pre-colonial times. A large part of the Moghul industry was destroyed in the course of British rule. The second blow to Indian industry came from massive imports of cheap textiles from

England after the Napoleonic wars: In the period 1896-1913, imported piece goods supplied about 60 per cent of Indian cloth consumption, 45 and the proportion was probably higher for most of the nineteenth century. Home spinning, which was a spare-time activity of village women, was greatly reduced.

It took India 130 years to manufacture textiles and to eliminate British textile imports. India could probably have copied Lancashire's technology more quickly if she had been allowed to impose a protective tariff in the way that was done in the USA and France in the first few decades of the nineteenth century, but the British imposed a policy of free trade. British imports entered India duty free, and when a small tariff was required for revenue purposes Lancashire pressure led to the imposition of a corresponding excise duty on Indian products to prevent them gaining a competitive advantage. This undoubtedly handicapped industrial development. If India

had been politically independent, her tax structure would probably have been different. In the 1880s, Indian customs revenues were only 2.2 per cent of the trade turnover, i.e. the lowest ratio in any country. In Brazil, by contrast, import duties at that period were 21 per cent of trade turnover.

British rule had not promoted industrialization in India either. Japan and China were not colonized by the British; they remained independent. The Indian steel industry started fifteen years later than in China, where the first steel mill was built at Hangyang in 1896. The first Japanese mill was built in 1898. In both China and Japan the first steel mills (and the first textile mills) were government enterprises, whereas in India the government did its best to promote imports from Britain.

Until the end of the Napoleonic wars, cotton manufactures had been India's main export. They reached their peak in 1798, and in 1813 they still amounted to £2 million, but thereafter they fell rapidly. Thirty years later, half of Indian imports were cotton textiles from Manchester. This collapse in India's main export caused a problem for the Company, which had to find ways to convert its rupee revenue into resources transferable to the UK. The Company therefore promoted exports of raw materials on a larger scale, including indigo, and opium, which were traded against Chinese tea. These dope-peddling efforts provoked the Anglo-Chinese war of 1842 in which the British drug-pushers won and forced China to accept more and more opium.

### **Commercialisation of Agriculture**

The latter half of the 19th century, witnessed a developing trend in the Indian Agriculture. The emergence of the commercialization in the Indian Agriculture was the marked feature in the latter parts of the 19th century. So far agriculture had been away from the business enterprise. Now agriculture began to influence by the commercial consideration. Under the commercialization of Agriculture, certain specialized crops were s grown. The sole aim for the productions of such crops was not for consumption in the village, rather these were used for sales in the national and even in the international markets. Commercial crops like cotton, jute, groundnuts, oilseeds, sugarcane, tobacco, etc were more remunerative than food grains. Again the cultivation of crops like condiments, spices, fruits and vegetables could make a widespread commercial transaction. However the historians have opined that the trends of commercialization reached in its highest level of developments in the plantation industry i.e. tea, coffee, rubber etc, which were produced for selling in the wider market.

Agriculture as a medium of business transaction was not a sudden outcome. Rather certain factors were responsible for the commercialization and specialization of agricultural market. The spread of money economy, the replacement of custom and tradition by competition and contract, the growth of internal and external trade, the emergence of a unified national market etc was responsible for the commercialization of agriculture.

However to the Indian peasants, commercialization seemed a forced process. To meet the excessive land revenue demands of the state and by the high rates of interest charged by the moneylenders, forced the peasants to participate in such process of commercialization. By this process of commercialization, the cultivator had to rush a part of their harvest into the market and sell it in the prices whatever it fetched. Under this circumstances, many poor farmers had to buy back those crops which they s had sold at lowers prices during the harvest time. Further the Indian agriculture was influenced by the widely fluctuating Indian prices. The cottons boom of

the year 1860 pushed up the prices but mostly benefited the hosts of intermediaries. This resulted in terrible famine. However the modernization or commercialization in agriculture did not increase the production level in the country. Rather it brought economic disruption in the country.

The British rulers of India did not conceive of India as an industrialized country. Rather the British rulers deliberately followed policies to de-industrialize India. Their sole motive was to convert India and preserve it as an agricultural farm providing raw materials to industrializing Britain. However, compulsions of maintaining Imperial control over the country. It is thorough economic exploitation, which led Britain to construct roads, railways, telegraph lines, posts, irrigation system, etc. However the constructions of modern industries provided the material basis for the beginnings of the modern industry in India. Lord Dalhousie touched on the commercial benefits from railways construction. The constructions of railways in India stimulated the growth of a numbers of others industries. The same years lord Dalhousie penned his minute on Railways. The railways system thus became the forerunner of the modern industries in India. It was the railways, which introduced the colonial method of state policy about industrialization.

## **Development of Transport and Communication**

### **Post and telegraph**

Before 1837, the East India Company's dominions in India had no universal public postal service, one that was shared by all regions. Although courier services did exist, connecting the more important towns with their respective seats of provincial government (*i.e.* the *Presidency towns* of Fort William (Calcutta), Fort St. George (Madras), and Bombay), private individuals were, upon payment, only sparingly allowed their use. That situation changed in 1837, when, by Act XVII of that year, a public post, run by the Company's Government, was established in the Company's territory in India. Post offices were established in the principal towns and postmasters appointed. The postmasters of the Presidency towns oversaw a few provincial post offices in addition to being responsible for the main postal services between the provinces. By contrast, the District collectors (originally, collectors of land-tax) directed the District post offices, including their local postal services. Postal services required payment in cash, to be made in advance, with the amount charged usually varying with weight and distance. For example, the charge of sending a letter from Calcutta to Bombay was one rupee; however, that from Calcutta to Agra was 12 annas (or three-quarter of a rupee) for each tola (three-eighths of an ounce).

After the recommendations of the commission appointed in 1850 to evaluate the Indian postal system were received, Act XVII of 1837 was superseded by the Indian Postal Act of 1854. Under its provisions, the entire postal department was headed by a *Director-General*, and the duties of a *Postmaster-General* were set apart from those of a Presidency Postmaster; the former administered the postal system of the larger provinces (such as the Bombay Presidency or the North-Western Provinces), whereas the latter attended to the less important Provinces (such as Ajmer-Merwara and the major Political Agencies such as Rajputana). Postage stamps were introduced at this time and the postal rates fixed by weight, dependent no longer also on the distance traveled in the delivery. The lowest inland letter rate was half anna for 1/4 tola, followed by one anna for 1/2 tola, and 2 annas for a tola, a great reduction from the rates of 17 years before. The Indian Post Office delivered letters, newspapers, postcards, book packets, and

parcels. These deliveries grew steadily in number; by 1861 (three years after the end of Company rule), a total of 889 post offices had been opened, and almost 43 million letters and over four and a half million newspapers were being delivered annually.

Before the advent of electric telegraphy, the word "telegraph" had been used for semaphore signaling. During the period 1820–30, the East India Company's Government in India seriously considered constructing signaling towers ("telegraph" towers), each a hundred feet high and separated from the next by eight miles, along the entire distance from Calcutta to Bombay. Although such towers were built in Bengal and Bihar, the India-wide semaphore network never took off. By mid-century, electric telegraphy had become viable, and hand signaling obsolete.

Dr. W. B. O'Shaughnessy, a Professor of Chemistry in the Calcutta Medical College, received permission in 1851 to conduct a trial run for a telegraph service from Calcutta to Diamond Harbour along the river Hooghly. Four telegraph offices, mainly for shipping-related business, were also opened along the river that year. The telegraph receiver used in the trial was a galvanoscope of Dr. O'Shaughnessy's design and manufactured in India. When the experiment was deemed to be a success a year later, the Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, sought permission from the Court of Directors of the Company for the construction of telegraph lines from "Calcutta to Agra, Agra to Bombay, Agra to Peshawar, and Bombay to Madras, extending in all over 3,050 miles and including forty-one offices." The permission was soon granted; by February 1855 all the proposed telegraph lines had been constructed and were being used to send paid messages. Dr. O'Shaughnessy's instrument was used all over India until early 1857, when it was supplanted by the Morse instrument. By 1857, the telegraph network had expanded to 4,555 miles of lines and sixty two offices, and had reached as far as the hill station of Ootacamund in the Nilgiri Hills and the port of Calicut on the southwest coast of India. During the Indian rebellion of 1857, more than seven hundred miles of telegraph lines were destroyed by the rebel forces, mainly in the North-Western Provinces. The East India Company was nevertheless able to use the remaining intact lines to warn many outposts of impending disturbances. The political value of the new technology was, thus, driven home to the Company and, in the following year, not only was the destroyed lines rebuilt, but the network was expanded further by 2,000 miles.

Dr. O'Shaughnessy's experimental set-up of 1851–52 consisted of both overhead and underground lines; the latter included underwater ones that crossed two rivers, the Hooghly and the Haldi. The overhead line was constructed by welding uninsulated iron rods, 13½ feet long and 3/8 inch wide, end to end. These lines, which weighed 1,250 pounds per mile, were held aloft by fifteen-foot lengths of bamboo, planted into the ground at equal intervals—200 to the mile—and covered with a layer each of coal tar and pitch for insulation. The bamboo supports were also strengthened by teak or sal posts at approximate intervals of a furlong (one-eighths of a mile); the conducting iron rods were attached to the posts by secure iron clamps. The underground line, which was laid in Calcutta and its suburbs, used conducting rods that were similar to the overhead line, but these were now wrapped in two layers of Madras cloth previously saturated with melted tar and pitch. The insulated line obtained in such manner was then pressed into a row of curved roofing tiles that, in turn, had been filled with melted sand and resin. The underwater cables had been manufactured in England and consisted of copper wire covered with gutta-percha. Furthermore, in order to protect the cables from dragging ship anchors, the cables were attached to the links of a 7/8-inch-thick (22 mm) chain cable. An underwater cable of length 2,070 yards was laid across the Hooghly River at Diamond Harbour, and another, 1,400 yards long, was laid across the Haldi at Kedgerree.



Work on the long lines from Calcutta to Peshawar (through Agra), Agra to Bombay, and Bombay to Madras began in 1853. The conducting material chosen for these lines were now lighter and the support stronger. The wood used for the support consisted of teak, sal, fir, ironwood, or Blackwood (*Terminalia elata*), and was either fashioned into whole posts, or used in attachments to iron *screw-piles* or masonry columns. Some sections had uniformly strong support; one such was the 322-mile Bombay-Madras line, which was supported by graniteobelisks sixteen feet high. Other sections had less secure support, consisting, in some cases, of sections of toddy palm, insulated with pieces of sal wood fastened to their tops. Some of the conducting wires or rods were insulated, the insulating material being either manufactured in India or England; other stretches of wire remained uninsulated. By 1856, iron tubes had begun to be employed to provide support, and would see increased use in the second half of the 19th century all over India.

The first Telegraph Act for India was the British Parliament's Act XXXIV of 1854. When the public telegram service was first set up in 1855, the charge was fixed at one rupee for every sixteen words (including the address) for every 400 miles of transmission. The charges were doubled for telegrams sent between 6PM and 6AM. These rates would remain fixed until 1882. In the year 1860–61, two years after the end of Company rule, India had 11,093 miles of telegraph lines and 145 telegraph offices. That year telegrams totaling Rs. 5 lakh in value were sent by the public, the working expense of the *Indian Telegraph Department* was Rs. 14 lakh, and the capital expenditure until the end of the year totaled Rs. 65 lakh.

## Railways

The first inter-city railway service in England, the Stockton-Darlington railway, had been established in 1825; in the following decade other inter-city railways were rapidly constructed between cities in England. In 1845, the Court of Directors of the East India Company, forwarded to the Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, a number of applications they had received from private contractors in England for the construction of a wide ranging railway network in India, and requested a feasibility report. They added that, in their view, the enterprise would be profitable only if large sums of money could be raised for the construction. The Court was concerned that in addition to the usual difficulties encountered in the construction of this new form of transportation, India might present some unique problems, among which they counted floods, tropical storms in coastal areas, damage by "insects and luxuriant tropical vegetation," and the difficulty of finding qualified technicians at a reasonable cost. It was suggested, therefore, that three experimental lines be constructed and their performance evaluated.

Contracts were awarded in 1849 to the East Indian Railway Company to construct a 120-mile railway from Howrah-Calcutta to Raniganj; to the Great Indian Peninsular Railway Company for a service from Bombay to Kalyan, thirty miles away; and to the *Madras Railway Company* for a line from Madras city to Arkonam, a distance of some thirty nine miles. Although construction began first, in 1849, on the East Indian Railways line, with an outlay of £1 million, it was the first-leg of the Bombay-Kalyan line—a 21-mile stretch from Bombay to Thane—that, in 1853, was the first to be completed.

The feasibility of a train network in India was comprehensively discussed by Lord Dalhousie in his *Railway minute of 1853*. The Governor-General vigorously advocated the quick and widespread introduction of railways in India, pointing to their political, social, and economic advantages. He recommended that a network of *trunk lines* be first constructed connecting the



inland regions of each presidency with its chief port as well as each presidency with several others. His recommended trunk lines included the following ones: (i) from Calcutta, in the Bengal Presidency, on the eastern coast to Lahore in the north-western region of the Punjab, annexed just three years before; (ii) from Agra in north-central India (in, what was still being called North-Western Provinces) to Bombay city on the western coast; (iii) from Bombay to Madras city on the southeastern coast; and (iv) from Madras to the southwestern Malabar coast (see map above). The proposal was soon accepted by the Court of Directors.

During this time work had been proceeding on the experimental lines as well. The first leg of the East Indian Railway line, a broad gauge railway, from Howrah to Pandua, was opened in 1854 (see picture of locomotive below), and the entire line up to Raniganj would become functional by the time of the Indian rebellion of 1857. The Great Indian Peninsular Railway was permitted to extend its experimental line to Poona. This extension required planning for the steep rise in the *Bor Ghat* valley in the Western Ghats, a section  $15\frac{3}{4}$  miles long with an ascent of 1,831 feet. Construction began in 1856 and was completed in 1863, and, in the end, the line required a total of twenty five tunnels and fifteen miles of gradients (inclines) of 1 in 50 or steeper, the most extreme being the *Bor Ghat Incline*, a distance of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles at a gradient of 1 in 37.

Each of the three companies (and later five others that were given contracts in 1859) was joint stock company domiciled in England with its financial capital raised in pound sterling. Each company was guaranteed a 5 per cent return on its capital outlay and, in addition, a share of half the profits. Although the *Government of India* had no capital expenditure other than the provision of the underlying land free of charge, it had the onus of continuing to provide the 5 percent return in the event of net loss, and soon all anticipation of profits would fall by the wayside as the outlays would mount.

The technology of railway construction was still new and there was no railway engineering expertise in India; consequently, all engineers had to be brought in from England. These engineers were unfamiliar not only with the language and culture of India, but also with the physical aspect of the land itself and its concomitant engineering requirements. Moreover, never before had such a large and complex construction project been undertaken in India, and no pool of semi-skilled labour was already organized to aid the engineers. The work, therefore, proceeded in fits and starts—many practical trials followed by a final construction that was undertaken with great caution and care—producing an outcome that was later criticized as being "built to a standard which was far in excess of the needs to the time." The Government of India's administrators, moreover, made up in their attention to the fine details of expenditure and management what they lacked in professional expertise. The resulting delays soon led to the appointment of a Committee of the House of Commons in 1857–58 to investigate the matter. However, by the time the Committee concluded that all parties needed to honour the spirit rather than the letter of the contracts; Company rule in India had ended.

Although, railway construction had barely begun in the last years of this rule, its foundations had been laid, and it would proceed apace for much of the next half century. By the turn of the 20th century, India would have over 28,000 miles of railways connecting most interior regions to the ports of Karachi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Chittagong, and Rangoon, and together they would constitute the fourth-largest railway network in the world.

## Canals

The first irrigation works undertaken during East India Company's rule were begun in 1817. Consisting chiefly of extensions or reinforcements of previous Indian works, these projects were limited to the plains north of Delhi and to the river deltas of the Madras Presidency. A small dam in the Kaveri river delta, built some 1,500 years before, and known as the *Grand Anicut*, was one such indigenous work in South India. In 1835–36, Sir Arthur Cotton successfully reinforced the dam, and his success prompted more irrigation projects on the river. A little farther north, on the Tungabhadra river, the 16th century Vijayanagara ruler, Krishna Deva Raya, had constructed several weirs; these too would be extended under British administration.

In plains above Delhi, the mid-14th century Sultan of Delhi, Firoz Shah Tughlaq, had constructed the 150 mile long *Western Jamna Canal*. Taking off from the right bank of the Jamna river early in its course, the canal irrigated the Sultan's territories in the Hissar region of Eastern Punjab. By the mid-16th century, however, the fine sediment carried by the Himalayan river had gradually choked the canal. Desilted and reopened several decades later by Akbar the Great, the *Western Jamna Canal* was itself tapped by Akbar's grandson Shah Jahan, and some of its water was diverted to Delhi. During this time another canal was cut off the river. The 129 mile *Eastern Jamna Canal* or *Doab Canal*, which took off from the *left* bank of the Jamna, also high in its course, presented a qualitatively different difficulty. Since it was cut through steeply sloped land, its flow became difficult to control, and it was never to function efficiently. With the decline of Mughal power in the 18th century, both canals fell into disrepair and closed. The Western Jamna Canal was repaired by British army engineers and it reopened in 1820. The *Doab Canal* was reopened in 1830; its considerable renovation involved raising the embankment by an average height of 9 ft. for some 40 miles.

Farther west in the Punjab region, the 130 mile long *Hasli Canal*, had been constructed by previous rulers. Taking off from the Ravi River and supplying water to the cities of Lahore and Amritsar, this left-bank canal was extended by the British in the Bari Doab *Canal* works during 1850–57. The Punjab region, moreover, had much rudimentary irrigation by "inundation canals." Consisting of open cuts on the side of a river and involving no regulation, the inundation canals had been used in both the Punjab and Sindh for many centuries. The energetic administrations of the Sikh and Pathan governors of Mughal West Punjab had ensured that many such canals in Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Muzaffargarh were still working efficiently at the time of the British annexation of the Punjab in 1849.

The first new British work—with no Indian antecedents—was the Ganges Canal built between 1842 and 1854. Contemplated first by Col. John Russell Colvin in 1836, it did not at first elicit much enthusiasm from its eventual architect Sir Proby Thomas Cautley, who balked at idea of cutting a canal through extensive low-lying land in order to reach the drier upland destination. However, after the Agra famine of 1837–38, during which the East India Company's administration spent Rs. 2,300,000 on famine relief, the idea of a canal became more attractive to the Company's budget-conscious Court of Directors. In 1839, the Governor General of India, Lord Auckland, with the Court's assent, granted funds to Cautley for a full survey of the swath of land that underlay and fringed the projected course of the canal. The Court of Directors, moreover, considerably enlarged the scope of the projected canal, which, in consequence of the severity and geographical extent of the famine, they now deemed to be the entire Doab region.

The enthusiasm, however, proved to be short lived. Auckland's successor as Governor General, Lord Ellenborough, appeared less receptive to large-scale public works, and for the duration of his tenure, withheld major funds for the project. Only in 1844, when a new Governor-General,

Lord Hardinge, was appointed, did official enthusiasm and funds return to the Ganges canal project. Although the intervening impasse had seemingly affected Cautley's health and required him to return to Britain in 1845 for recuperation, his European sojourn gave him an opportunity to study contemporary hydraulic works in the United Kingdom and Italy. By the time of his return to India even more supportive men were at the helm, both in the North-Western Provinces, with James Thomason as Lt. Governor, and in British India with Lord Dalhousie as Governor-General. Canal construction, under Cautley's supervision, now went into full swing. A 350-mile long canal, with another 300 miles of branch lines, eventually stretched between the headworks in Hardwar and—after splitting into two branches at Nanau near Aligarh—the confluence with the Ganges at Cawnpore (now Kanpur) and with the Jumna (now Yamuna) mainstem at Etawah. The Ganges Canal, which required a total capital outlay of £2.15 million, was officially opened in 1854 by Lord Dalhousie. According to historian Ian Stone:

It was the largest canal ever attempted in the world, five times greater in its length than all the main irrigation lines of Lombardy and Egypt put together and longer by a third than even the largest USA navigation canal, the Pennsylvania Canal.

### **Anti-British Revolts in the Second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

#### **Santhal Rebellion (1855-1856)**

The Santhal rebellion was tribal rebellion marked by tribal passions and strong anti-British feelings. Under the leadership of Sidhu and Kanhu thousands of Santhals revolted against the oppressive British and their local Indian collaborations. The Santhals attacked and destroyed the houses of landlords, moneylenders, planters and British officials. Other people from lower orders also joined them. They proclaimed the end of British rule. After a series of initial setbacks, the British authority could ultimately subdue the santhal rebellion but only with a military aid.

It was an armed insurrection of the Santals against zamindars, moneylenders, and the police. Though peace loving and docile like most other primitive people, the Santals had launched a highly organised armed insurrection against their oppressors who went into their realm to make themselves rich. The penetration of the colonial state and its consequent imposition of laws and regulations, rent and control, etc had originally led the Santals to leave their habitat in the hilly districts of Cuttack, Dhalbhum, Manbhum, Barabhum, Chhotanagpur, Palamau, Hazaribagh, Midnapur, Bankura and Birbhum; and settled in the plains of the Rajmahal Hills. They cleared large tracts of land, hitherto under forest, for cultivation. The colonial state agents came there to claim their proprietary dues. The Santals were forced to resist the colonial state penetration and uphold their natural rights. They believed that one who cleared the land first was its master. The Mughal government honoured this tradition and thus no problem arose then. But the colonial state had its own agents in the person of the zamindar to claim the ownership. Against the encroachment of their natural rights, there were uprisings in 1811, 1820 and 1831. But the most serious, the most organised and the most extensive was the great rebellion of 1855-56 to suppress which several rounds of military expeditions had to be sent.

The Santals used to call the Bengalis *moiras* and *dikus* whom they considered as their enemies, because it was they who were their zamindars, moneylenders, shopkeepers and railway labour contractors and were invariably oppressive. To get rid of the moiras and dikus, the Santals got organised in early 1855. The actual rebellion was triggered off when their leader, Bir

Singh, was summoned to the *kachari* of the Pakur Raj and mercilessly beaten and confined in chains in presence of his followers. The Santals took oath touching the *sal* tree, which they took as the symbol of unity and strength. The insurrection spread rapidly from June 1855. Like most popular insurrections, the Santals took the technique of guerilla fighting. Postal and railway communication was severed; the state agents were driven out of their clearings. Railway labour contractors, who forced Santal women to become labourers, were killed, if found. Rent payment to zamindars was totally stopped. Pledges to moneylenders were negated by a declaration.

At Pirpali the Santals roundly defeated the military expedition under Major Burroughs which encouraged them to become aggressive. Martial law was declared on 19 July 1855. Three regiments of forces were sent to subdue the Santals. The Rajmahal Hills were drenched with Santal blood. Santal villages were all raged. The captured Santals were made railway construction labour in chains. By the third week of February 1856 most of the leading Santals were captured and executed. The rebellion subsided at last in March 1856. To stop any future uprising on the part of the Santals large number of 'moiras and dikus' was settled in the Rajmahal Hills with proprietary rights.

### **THE BIRSA MUNDA MOVEMENT: 1895-1900**

This was the last of the heroic tribal movements of the 19th century in the Chotanagpur plateau. The mundas had been living in the Chotanagpur plateau for more than 2000 years and are one of the most ancient settlers in this land. The revolt essentially started as an economic one like many other tribal revolts but soon turned into a political one. They fought against the British who openly supported the exploiters namely the Zamindhars and money lenders who took advantage of the corrupt British and Indian officials. In 1856, there were in Bihar 600 Zamindhar dikus holding land ranging from a portion of a single village to even 150 villages each.

The introduction of rent for the land, a concept hitherto unknown to the tribals, infuriated them. Then there was collection of taxes for just about any reason. The British courts, unfamiliar with the tribal language had to depend upon the local interpreters to act as middle men. These people were only too pleased to help their powerful landowners. Thus, the tribals could not get justice from any direction and led them to believe that it rest upon themselves to rid the place of dikus. The dikus, unable to comprehend the social and political organization of the tribals simply dismissed them and replaced with limbs of modern governmental machinery. Worst of all, the tribal customs, practices and superstitions were dismissed lightly. Another important reason for the revolt was of course, the concept of Beth Begari, or what is known today as bonded labour. General poverty led many of the Mundas to leave their ancestral homes and shift to work in the Assam tea plantations and their earnings were spent mostly on liquor.

Though at first the struggle commenced by attacking the land-lords, later it was directed against the ruling British authorities and the Christian missionaries, as the Christian missionaries over emphasis on conversion irritated the Mundas. They now helped only the tribals who had converted and oppressed the non-converts and with the aid of the authorities, perpetuated atrocities against them. This resulted first in the Sardari Larai (1890).

The hero of the revolt had been Birsa Munda, who on account of piety, virtuous life and reputation for possessing psychic powers which enabled him to have communion with God, came to be known as Birsa Bhagwan. His followers came to be known as Birsite Bhagats. He believed that the Mundas will be able to regain their lost kingdom with the annihilation of the

enemies. He then wanted to establish Birsaite Raj in which he would be the King. He had, by now, a firm belief that he was a divine incarnation fit to lead his people.

The core of Birsa's message had initially been social and religious. He called upon the Mundas to uproot superstition, abjure animal sacrifice, cease taking intoxicants. Birsa Munda continuously infused the tribals with a sense of their destiny with many of the ancient myths that lay embedded in the popular consciousness. He advised people to not to obey the police, the magistrates and the landlords and to boycott the 'beth begari system'. He spoke against unlawful land acquisition and tried to unite his people against the diabolic exploitative triad of zamindhar, foreigner and traders.

In 1895, Arson and arrow firing against the Christian missionaries and few police stations started in an epidemic scale under the leadership of the Birsa. There were secret meetings held on the hill tops where they would plan their next attacks which would be carried out sincerely by the Mundas. 3-4 revolts later, the police got a tip off on the next location and surrounded the Dombari hill. The arrows were met with the bullets, yet surprisingly the toll was not alarming. Then, the police systematically arrested the disciples of Birsa, who had by now absconded into the thick of the forests.

The Mundas were galvanized into martial fury and carried out their revolts with great courage and determination. The results were, however, the same whenever the tribals fought the mighty British: they were crushed. Birsa was captured, released and finally recaptured after his forces suffered a terrible crushing by the British army in 1900. With his death, the Birsa movement slipped into oblivion but he had succeeded in giving them a solidarity which was missing before. Again, some temporary measures were taken.

### **Pabna Peasant Uprising**

**Pabna Peasant Uprising** is a resistance movement against the oppression of the zamindars. It originated in the Yusufshahi pargana, which is now the Sirajganj district within greater Pabna. The zamindars routinely collected money from the peasants by the illegal means of forced levy, *abwabs* (cesses), enhanced rent and so on. Peasants were often evicted from land on the pretext of non-payment of rent.

The new zamindars who purchased part of the Natore Raj zamindari in the Yusufshahi pargana in Sirajganj indulged in frequent acts of violence in order to realise enhanced rent and to collect illegal cesses under various names. Act of 1859 allowed the zamindars to enhance rent only on three specific grounds: (a) if the raiyats paid less rent than what is paid for the same type of land in the neighboring areas; (b) if the value of produce increased; and (c) if the raiyats paid rents for less land than they actually held. The zamindars were powerful enough to circumvent these provisions and enhance rent with impunity.

The immediate background of the present rising in Pabna was a case filed by zamindars against 43 leading raiyats of Urkandee village. These raiyats refused to pay the enhanced rent, which they claimed to be illegal. The raiyats had deposited the rent with the court. In support of their demands, the zamindars produced documents and claimed that the raiyats had been paying the rent demanded of them for one decade. The Munsiff of Shazadpur Court decreed in favour of the zamindars in April 1872, but the Civil Judge of Rajshahi reversed the decision in December



1872, believing that the zamindars had "concocted" the documents. The Judgement of the appellate court was looked upon by the raiyats as their moral victory over the zamindars.

The introduction of jute as a cash crop had played an important role in the Pabna uprising. The jute economy led to the rise of a new rural middle class of raiyats who could well assert themselves against the landlords. Jute fetched a good income for peasants until the great slump of 1873. The zamindars were not prepared to recognise the distress of the peasants and reduce their demands. Due to the slump in the jute market the raiyats were beset with a near-famine situation because of the loss of purchasing power. Under such a situation some Sirajganj landlords declared an enhancement of rent and that triggered the rebellion.

The Pabna Raiyats' League came into existence in May 1873, and gradually spread its influence over a large part of the district. One of the leaders of the League was Ishan Chandra Roy, commonly known as *Ishan Raja*. Koodi Molla and Shambhu Nath Pal were prominent among his followers. They declared their parganas independent of zamindari control and fancied setting up a local government. They even set up a 'rebel army' to fight the zamindari *lathials* (clubmen). Trusted deputies were placed in charge of various departments. Several persons were in charge of the 'rebel army', and were stationed at different strategic parts of the district. The Pabna movement, in its formative phase, was lawful and non-violent, but as the League grew stronger, it became more violent. When the League activities threatened public peace, the government intervened to restore peace. In a proclamation of 4 July 1873 Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, declared his determination to protect the people from all coercion and extortion, and advised the zamindars to assert their claims by legal means only. The movement subsided in the face of police action and a famine that broke out in 1873-74.

### **The Indigo revolt**

The Indigo revolt was a peasant movement and subsequent uprising of indigo farmers against the indigo planters that arose in Bengal in 1859. The back stage of the revolt goes back half a century when the indigo plantation act was established. After the courageous fight by the Sepoy for independence in 1857 it was in February–March 1859 when the farmers refused to sow a single seedling of indigo plant. The strength of the farmers' resolutions was dramatically stronger than anticipated from a community victimized by brutal treatment for about half a century. Most importantly it was a revolt of both the major religious groups of farmers in Bengal, notably a farmer Haji Molla of Nischindipur said that he would "rather beg than sow indigo". The farmers were in no possession of any types of arms, it was totally a nonviolent resistance.

#### **Causes of the revolt**

Indigo planting in Bengal dated back to 1777. Louis Bonard was probably the first indigo planter. With expansion of British power in the Nawabate of Bengal, indigo planting became more and more commercially profitable due to the demand for Blue Dye in Europe. It was introduced in large parts of Burdwan, Bankura, Birbhum, Murshidabad, etc. The indigo planters left no stones unturned to make money. They mercilessly pursued the peasants to plant indigo instead of food crops. They provided loans, called *dadon* at a very high interest. Once a farmer took such loans he remained in debt for whole of his life before passing it to his successors. The price paid by the planters was meagre, only 2.5% of the market price. So the farmers could make



no profit by growing indigo. The farmers were totally unprotected from the brutal indigo planters, who resorted to mortgage or destruction of their property if they were unwilling to obey them. Government rules favoured the planters. By an act in 1833, the planters were granted a free hand in oppression. Even the zamindars, money lenders and other influential persons sided with the planters. Out of the severe oppression unleashed on them the farmers resorted to revolt. The Bengali middle class supported the peasants whole-heartedly. Harish Chandra Mukhopadhyay thoroughly described the plight of the poor peasants in his newspaper *The Hindu Patriot*. However every such contribution was overshadowed by Dinabandhu Mitra, who gave a perfect account of the situation.

### **The revolt**

The revolt started from Nadia where Bishnucharan Biswas and Digambar Biswas first took up arms against the planters. It spread like wildfire in Murshidabad, Birbhum, Burdwan, Pabna, Khulna, Narail, etc. Indigo planters were put into public trial and executed. The indigo depots were burned down. Many planters fled to avoid being caught. The zamindars were also a target of the revolting peasants. The revolt was ruthlessly suppressed. Large forces of police and military backed by the British Government and the zamindars mercilessly slaughtered a number of peasants. In spite of this the revolt was fairly popular, involving almost the whole of Bengal. The Biswas brothers of Nadia, Kader Molla of Pabna, and Rafique Mondal of Malda were popular leaders. Even some of the zamindars supported the revolt, the most important of whom was Ramratan Mullick of Narail.

### **The effect on the British rulers in India**

The historian Jogesh Chandra Bagal describes the revolt as a non-violent revolution and gives this as a reason why the indigo revolt was a success compared to the Sepoy Revolt. R.C. Majumdar in "History of Bengal" goes so far as to call it a forerunner of the non-violent passive resistance later successfully adopted by Gandhi. The revolt had a strong effect on the government, which immediately appointed the "Indigo Commission" in 1860. In the commission report, E. W. L. Tower noted that "not a chest of Indigo reached England without being stained with human blood". Evidently it was a major triumph of the peasants to incite such emotion in the Europeans' minds even though the statement might have been an overstatement.

### **Cultural effects**

Dinabandhu Mitra's 1859 play Nil Darpan is based on the revolution. It was translated into English by Michael Madhusudan Dutta and published by Rev. James Long. It attracted much attention in England, where the people were stunned at the savagery of their countrymen. The British Government sent Rev. Long to a mock trial and punished him with imprisonment and fine. Kaliprasanna Sinha paid the fine for him. The play is the first play to be staged commercially in the National Theatre in Kolkata.

## **The Mappila Uprisings in Malabar (19<sup>th</sup> century)**

The Muslims of Malabar were generally known as Mappilas. Under Tipu's administration, the peasants, whether they were Hindus or Muslims, were recognized as owners of the land. The land revenue was collected directly from them by the officers appointed by Tipu. This practice

was quite different from the prevailing system. Under the old system the peasants were not recognized as owners of the land. The land was owned by temples (*Dewaswam*), Brahmins (*Brahmaswam*) and the princes (*Cherikkal*). The real cultivators were mere tenants and were subjected to exploitations. During Tipu's invasion, the Brahmins, princes and other local chieftains fled to the South. It was in this context that Tipu fixed the revenue with the peasants directly.

Tipu was defeated in the third Anglo-Maratha war by the British. According to the terms of the treaty of Srirangapattanam, Malabar was ceded to the British. The run away Brahmins and princes returned to Malabar. They were once again recognized as land owners by the British. Thus the peasants, who were enjoying both ownership and possession rights under Tipu, were deprived of their rights. This provoked them and they turned against the British and their henchmen. The entire peasants of Malabar did not rise up in arms. The Hindu peasants kept aloof from the struggle. The hierarchical caste organization prevented the Hindu peasants from revolting against the upper caste land owners. Thus the revolt confined itself to the Muslim peasantry.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century intermittent uprisings occurred in Malabar, especially in the Ernad and Valluvanad taluks. Twenty two such riots were reported from different parts of Malabar. The denial of tenancy rights, introduction of English law and punishments according to it and police repression infuriated the Mappilas. It was to suppress this uprising that the notorious Malabar Special Police (MSP) was organized in 1854. The violent Mappilas stormed the bungalow of the District Magistrate H.V. Connolly and murdered him in 1855. As the unrest continued unabatedly, the Madras government appointed William Logan, the collector of Malabar as special commissioner to enquire into the causes of the uprisings and recommend remedial measures. Logan pointed out that the Mappila uprisings were caused by dissatisfaction of the peasantry and had nothing religious in it. It was not an uprising of Muslims against the Hindus as was interpreted by some British officers. The culmination of the series of the uprisings was the Mappila revolt of 1921.

#### UNIT-IV

### SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

#### Factors responsible for the growth of Indian Nationalism

The British conquest of India was followed by the establishment of a centralised government which brought about political and administrative unification. In the pre-colonial India the people were not socially and economically integrated in the absence of a unified national economy and efficient and extensive means of communication. Common subjection, common institutions,

common laws began to unite India in a common bond. In the words of Edwyn Bevan, "the British Raj was like a steel-frame which held the injured body of India together till the gradual process of internal growth had joined the dislocated bones, knit up the torn fibres and enabled the patient to regain inner coherence and unity". Thus establishment of political unity, uniform system of administration, uniform reign of law and a uniform currency system generated the idea of India as a nation.

### **1. Development of Means of Communication and Transport**

Administrative convenience, military defence and economic exploitation were the factors that urged the British government to have planned development of modern means of transport. The British constructed a modern postal system and electric telegraph all over the country. In the words of Edwin Arnold, "Railways may do for India what dynasties have never done what the genius of Akbar the Magnificent could not affect by government, not the cruelty of Tipu Saheb by violence, they have made India a nation." The modern means of communications and transport enabled people living in different parts of the country to maintain regular contacts with one another which provided them not only a sense of unity but also the facility to organise an all-India movement.

### **2. Impact of Western Education**

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the British rule to the growth of India nationalism was the introduction of western education in India. It brought about a profound intellectual transformation in India. Western education brought the Indians into touch with the works of great European thinkers and writers like Milton, Thomas Paine, Burke, J.S. Mill, Spencer, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau and Mazzini and helped them imbibe the ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, democracy and national freedom. The pioneers of Indian nationalism were moved by the aspirations for self-government, for political power and representative institutions.

The study of English language not only helped build up a democratic and national outlook, it also did a great service to the cause of Indian nationalism by providing a medium of communication for the educated Indians throughout India to exchange views on a national scale. It cut across personal barriers and served as a lingua franca. Educated Indians began to meet and discuss common problems through the medium of English and to meet on a common platform to devise plans for independence of the country.

### **3. Economic Exploitation of India**

The British economic policy in India led to impoverishment of the country. The main object of British policies was a systematic destruction of traditional Indian economy. The Indian reaction to the discriminatory economic policy of the British government was the rise of economic nationalism in India. India became a supplier of raw materials to the British industries, a market for the sale of British goods and a place for investment of British capital. Indian economy was sacrificed for British economic interests. Economic exploitation by the British was increasing India's poverty. The British Indian administration was extremely costly. Systematic attempts were made to destroy the indigenous industries of India to make room for manufactured goods from England. Gradually the people realised that it was drain of wealth from India which made India poor. As all classes suffered economically because of the British rule, they realised

the necessity of uprooting the British rule from India. It gave a great impetus to the spirit of nationalism.

#### **4. Socio-Religious Reform Movements**

The socio-religious reform movements also known as the Indian Renaissance were the first expression of national awakening. They represented attempts to revise the old religion in the spirit of the new principles of nationalism and democracy. To quote or Zacharias; "The Indian national movement was a part of the Indian Renaissance of India which manifested in the form of a general reform movement and produced striking religious and social reforms long before it issued in a movement for political emancipation." The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Theosophical Society in their own respective ways, revived the glory of ancient India, generated faith in Indian culture and religion and tried to strengthen them by removing the evils.

Similarly revivalism among the Muslims was provided by the wahabi Movement on the one side and by the personality of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan on the other. These movements breathed a new life into the degenerated Hindu and Muslim communities. They created self-confidence and inculcated a sense of self-respect which in its turn brought dissatisfaction against the British rule. They preached love for India and everything Indian. It promoted pa-Indian feelings and spirit of nationalism.

#### **5. Emergence of Modern Press and Nationalist Literature**

Indian press played an equally important role in building and developing Indian nationalism. It is through press that the Indian nationalists spread the message of patriotism and modern economic, social and political ideas among the people. The Indian press has played a notable role in mobilising public opinion, organising political movements and promoting nationalism. Despite government restrictions news papers like the Indian mirror, Amrit Bazar Patrika, the Pioneer, The Hindu, the Maratha, Keshari, Bombay Samachar, Samachar Darpan, Andhra Prakasika etc. became a powerful instrument of political education for the middle class and stimulated the growth of national feeling by making public the grievances of the people and also by exposing the failings and deficiencies of the foreign rule. B.B. Majumdar has mightily remarked, "Western education and the Indian press were the two of the most important agencies destined to infuse into the people of India the spirit of national unity and to inspire them to achieve independence without bloodshed."

Nationalist literature in the form of novels, essays and patriotic poetry played an important role in creating national consciousness. Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath Tagore, Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, Subramanyam Bharati and Altaf Hussain Hali were some of the writers who infused the spirit of patriotism in the minds of the common people.

#### **6. Racial arrogance of the British**

Racial arrogance of the British united the Indian people against the foreigners. Earlier foreigners like the Turks, the Afghans and the Mughals who came to India accepted India as their motherland and settled here. But the British remained perpetual foreigners in India. Because of the white colour of the skin they adopted a feeling of racial superiority in dealing with Indians. They branded all Indians irrespective of their caste, religion or clan with the badge of inferiority. They were kept out of European clubs, restaurants and were not allowed to travel

in the same compartments. There were placards saying "Indians and Dogs are not allowed." This type of behaviour hurt the sentiments of the Indian people and they became conscious of this national humiliation and became united against the foreigners.

### **7. Denial of Higher Jobs to deserving Indians**

The charter Act of 1833 laid down that fitness was to be the criterion of eligibility for jobs. It was again reiterated in the Queen's proclamation of 1858. But deliberate attempts were made by the British to debar Indians from higher posts specially the Indian Civil Service. S.N. Banerjee, Aurobindo Ghosh etc. were denied entry into Indian Civil Service on flimsy grounds. In 1877 the entrance age to ICS was reduced from 21 to 19 just to reduce the prospects of Indian candidates from the Indian Civil Service. This decision led to a countrywide agitation and marked the beginning of the unity of action and solidarity of purpose. S.N. Banerjee started an all-India campaign for restoring the entrance age of 21 and for simultaneous ICS examination in India. It helped the educated Indians to unite for promoting their interests.

### **8. Revival of the Glory of India.**

Western scholars like Max Muller, William Jones, Charles Wilkinse etc through their researches tried to rediscover India's past. They established the fact that the ancient Indian Culture surpassed every other culture and Indian philosophy has no match in the world. Many nationalist leaders tried to arouse the self-confidence and self-respect of the people by pointing to the cultural heritage of India. No doubt, great harm was done by this tendency of looking up only to the heritage of ancient India while ignoring the medieval period. It led to the rise of communal feelings among both Hindus and Muslims. But this rediscovery of Indian's past created self-confidence among the Indians and inspired them with a new spirit of patriotism and nationalism.

### **9. Impact of contemporary European Movements**

The knowledge of certain contemporary events and movements abroad between 1861 and 1884 such as unification of Italy and Germany, independence movements in Romania, Serbia, Greece and Ireland, coming up of national states in South America deeply stirred the emotion of Indians. Thus European nationalist movements led to development of nationalism in India.

### **10. Reactionary Regime of Lytton and the Ilbert Bill Controversy**

The regime of Lord Lytton as Governor General (1876-80) was full of reactionary measures. Lytton held an Imperial Durbar at Delhi in 1877 to announce Queen Victoria as the Empress of India at a time when a large part of the country was in the grip of a severe famine. He put on the statute book two obnoxious measures the vernacular press Act and the Indian Arms Act. While the press Act intended to restrict the freedom of the vernacular press, the Arms Act aimed to disarm the Indian people. Another discriminatory measure was the reducing of the import cotton duties by five percent to appease the Lancashire mill-owners. Then he reduced the entrance age to ICS from 21 to 19 which antagonised the educated Indians.

The Ilbert Bill controversy during the period of Lord Ripon exposed the racial bitterness of the British and united the Indians. Ripon tried to abolish judicial disqualification based on race

distinctions. The Ilbert Bill sought to give equal power to the Indian members of the Judiciary along with the Europeans. The Indian session judges and Magistrates were not empowered to try European offenders.

The Bill raised a vehement agitation among the members of the European community and they all stood united against the Bill. Ripon had to modify the bill which almost defeated the original purpose. The whole episode became an eye-opener for Indians. They became fully conscious of the degradation to which foreign rule had reduced them. They realised the importance of united and concerted political action. The Indian leaders learnt the lesson that the way to improve their condition was to organise, agitate and press their demands rather than rely on benevolence of the government. Consequently, demands began to arise for a permanent nationwide organisation to ventilate the grievances of the people.

To quote A.R. Desai, "Indian nationalism was the outcome of the new material conditions created in India and the new social forces which emerged as a result of the British conquest. It was the outcome of the objective conflict of interests, the interest of Britain to keep India politically, economically subjected to her and the interest of the Indian people for a free political economic and cultural evolution of the Indian society, which was intruded by the British rule."

### **Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833)**

Raja Ram Mohan Roy is known as the 'Maker of Modern India'. He was the founder of the Brahma Samaj, one of the first Indian socio-religious reform movements. He played a major role in abolishing the role of Sati. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a great scholar and an independent thinker. He advocated the study of English, Science, Western Medicine and Technology. He was given the title 'Raja' by the Mughal Emperor.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was born on May 22, 1772 in village Radhanagar in the District of Hooghly in Bengal. His father Ramkanto Roy was a Vaishnavite, while his mother, Tarini, was from a Shakta background. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was sent to Patna for higher studies. By the age of fifteen, Raja Ram Mohan Roy had learnt Bangla, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was against idol worship and orthodox Hindu rituals. He stood firmly against all sort of social bigotry, conservatism and superstitions. But his father was an orthodox Hindu Brahmin. This led to differences between Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his father. Following differences he left the house. He wandered around Himalayas and went to Tibet. He traveled widely before returning home.

After his return Raja Ram Mohan Roy's family married him in the hope that he would change. But this did not have any effect on him. Raja Ram Mohan Roy went to Varanasi and studied the Vedas, the Upanishads and Hindu philosophy deeply. When his father died in 1803 he returned to Murshidabad. He then worked as a moneylender in Calcutta, and from 1809 to 1814; he served in the Revenue Department of the East India Company. In 1814, Raja Ram Mohan Roy formed Atmiya Sabha. Atmiya Sabha tried to initiate social and religious reforms in the society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy campaigned for rights for women, including the right for widows to remarry, and the right for women to hold property. He actively opposed Sati system and the practice of polygamy.

He also supported education, particularly education of women. He believed that English-language education was superior to the traditional Indian education system, and he opposed the



use of government funds to support schools teaching Sanskrit. In 1822, he founded a school based on English education.

In 1828, Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the 'Brahma Samaj'. Through 'Brahma Samaj', he wanted to expose the religious hypocrisies and check the growing influence of Christianity on the Hindu society. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's efforts bore fruit when in 1829, the Sati system was abolished. In November 1830 Ram Mohan Roy traveled to the United Kingdom as an ambassador of the Mughal emperor to plead for his pension and allowances. Raja Ram Mohan Roy passed away on September 27, 1833 at Stapleton near Bristol due to meningitis.

### **Brahma Samaj**

In 1828, a man named Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded an organization called 'Brahma Samaj'. Indian historians consider this organization forerunner which paved the way for reformation in India and its establisher as the 'father of modern India'. Raja Ram was a Brahman from Bengal. He was a British civil servant in India. He saw in British rule of India the best things that were beneficial to India. He adored the west European philosophy of democracy, liberalism and humanism. He had a great interest in non- Indian cultures and religions. He was especially impressed by Christianity and other religions which preached the existence of one Almighty God.

Raja Ram tried to create a new Hindu religion philosophy and enfolded in it the existence of one God and other beliefs, which were then not the predominant features in Hinduism. He attacked some Hindu traditions and features among them caste system, child marriages, Sati - burning of the live wife over her dead husband's pyre, idolatry and other beliefs. He tried to change the popular Hindu traditions and claimed that the popular Hindu traditions were different from the real Hindu beliefs.

Raja Ram and his organization 'Brahma Samaj' tried to change the social order of India. He established newspapers and schools all around India. He convinced the British in 1829 to outlaw Sati. But during that period there wasn't yet an Indian ethos among the Indians. Indians were never one nation but always a collection of different entities. They were used to different rulers including non- Indians. From their point of view the British were just another ruler over them. But the main contribution of the Brahma Samaj to the society of India was that it evoked issues that were common to people all around the Indian sub-continent. The notions of this organization were the inspiration for other organizations and various secular political parties, like the Indian National Congress, which were later on created in India.

### **Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883)**

Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati was an important Hindu religious scholar, reformer, and founder of the Arya Samaj, a Hindu reform movement. He was the first to give the call for Swarajya- "India for Indians" – in 1876, later taken up by Lokmanya Tilak. Denouncing the idolatry and ritualistic worship prevalent in Hinduism at the time, he worked towards reviving Vedic ideologies. Subsequently the philosopher and President of India, S. Radhakrishnan, called him one of "makers of Modern India," as did Sri Aurobindo.

One of his notable disciples was Shyamji Krishna Varma, who founded India House in London and guided other revolutionaries. Others who were influenced by and followed him included Madam Cama, Pransukh Yadav, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Lala Hardyal, Madan Lal Dhingra, Bhagat Singh, Swami Shraddhanand, Sukhabodhananda, [Mahatma Hansraj and Lala Lajpat Rai. One of his most influential works is the book Satyarth Prakash, which contributed to the Indian independence movement. He was a sanyasi (ascetic) from boyhood, and a scholar, who believed in the infallible authority of the Vedas.

Dayananda advocated the doctrine of karma and skepticism in dogma, and emphasized the ideals of brahmacharya (celibacy) and devotion to God. The Theosophical Society and the Arya Samaj were united from 1878 to 1882, becoming the Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj. Among Maharishi Dayananda's contributions are his promoting of the equal rights of women, such as the right to education and reading of Indian scriptures, and his translation of the Vedas from Sanskrit into Hindi so that the common person might be able to read them.

### **Early life**

Dayananda was born on February 12 in 1824, in the town of Tankara, near Morvi (Morbi) in the Kathiawar region (since India's independence in 1947 Rajkot district) of the princely state of Gujarat, into the affluent and devout Saryupareen Brahmins family of Karshanji Lalji Tiwari and his wife Yashodabai. Since he was born under MulNakshatra, he was named "Mulshankar", and led a comfortable early life, studying Sanskrit, the Vedas and other religious texts to prepare himself for a future as a Hindu priest.

A number of incidents in early childhood resulted in Dayananda's questioning the traditional beliefs of Hinduism and inquiring about God. While still a young child, when his family went to a temple for overnight worship on the night of Maha Shivratri, he stayed up waiting for Lord Shiva to appear to accept the offerings made to his idol. While his family slept, Dayananda saw a mouse eating the offerings. He was utterly surprised and wondered how a God who cannot protect even his own offerings would protect humanity. He argued with his father that they should not be worshipping such a helpless God.

The deaths of his younger sister and his uncle from cholera caused Dayananda to ponder the meaning of life and death and he started asking questions which worried his parents. He was to be married in his early teens, as was common in nineteenth-century India, but he decided marriage was not for him and in 1846 ran away from home.

Dayananda was disillusioned with classical Hinduism and became a wandering monk. He learned Panini's grammar to read Sanskrit texts, and understood from them that God can be found. After wandering in search of God for over two decades, he found Swami Virajananda near Mathura, Uttar Pradesh who became his guru. Swami Virajananda told him to throw away all his books, as he wished Dayananda to start from a clean slate and learn directly from the Vedas, the oldest and most foundational scriptures of Hinduism. Dayananda stayed under Swami Virjananda's tutelage for two and a half years. After finishing his education, Virjananda asked him to spread the knowledge of the Vedas in society as his gurudakshina, or tuition-dues.

### **Dayanand's mission**

Aum or Om is considered by the Arya Samaj to be the highest and most proper name of God. Dayananda set about the difficult task of reforming Hinduism with dedication despite attempts on his life. He traveled the country challenging religious scholars and priests to discussions and won repeatedly on the strength of his arguments. He believed that Hinduism had been corrupted by divergence from the founding principles of the Vedas and that Hindus had been misled by the priesthood for the priests' self-aggrandizement. Hindu priests discouraged the laity from reading Vedic scriptures and encouraged rituals, such as bathing in the Ganges River and feeding of priests on anniversaries, which Dayananda pronounced as superstitions or self-serving practices. By exhorting the nation to reject such superstitious notions, his aim was to educate the nation to go back to the Vedas. While he wanted the people to follow the Vedic life, he also exhorted the nation to accept social reforms like the abolition of untouchability, sati, and dowry, as well as the adoption of Hindia's national language. Through his teachings, preachings, sermons and writings he inspired the nation to aspire to *Swarajya* (self governance), nationalism, and spiritualism. He advocated the equal rights and respects to women and advocated the full education of a girl child.

Far from borrowing concepts from other religions, as Raja Ram Mohan Roy had done, Swami Dayananda was critical of Islam and Christianity as well as of other Indian faiths like Jainism and Buddhism, in addition to denouncing idolatry in Hinduism, as may be seen in his book *Satyartha Prakash*. He was against what he considered to be the corruption of the pure faith in his own country. Unlike many other reform movements within Hinduism, the Arya Samaj's appeal was addressed not only to the educated few in India, but to the world as a whole as evidenced in the sixth principle of the Arya Samaj. In fact his teachings professed universalism for the all living beings and not for any particular sect, faith, community or nation.

Arya Samaj allows and encourages converts to Hinduism. Dayananda's concept of dharma is stated in the "Beliefs and Disbeliefs" section of *Satyartha Prakash*. He said, "I accept as Dharma whatever is in full conformity with impartial justice, truthfulness and the like; that which is not opposed to the teachings of God as embodied in the Vedas. Whatever is not free from partiality and is unjust, partaking of untruth and the like, and opposed to the teachings of God as embodied in the Vedas—that I hold as adharma". He also said "He, who after careful thinking, is ever ready to accept truth and reject falsehood; who counts the happiness of others as he does that of his own self, him I call just".

Dayananda's Vedic message was to emphasize respect and reverence for other human beings, supported by the Vedic notion of the divine nature of the individual—divine because the body was the temple where the human essence (soul or "atma") had the possibility to interface with the creator ("Paramatma"). In the ten principles of the Arya Samaj, he enshrined the idea that "All actions should be performed with the prime objective of benefiting mankind", as opposed to following dogmatic rituals or revering idols and symbols. In his own life, he interpreted mokshato be a lower calling (due to its benefit to one individual) than the calling to emancipate others. Dayananda's "back to the Vedas" message influenced many thinkers. Taking the cue from him, Sri Aurobindo decided to look for hidden psychological meanings in the Vedas.

### **Arya Samaj**

Swami Dayananda's creation, the Arya Samaj, unequivocally condemns idol worship, animal sacrifice, ancestor worship, pilgrimages, priest craft, offerings made in temples, the caste system, untouchability, child marriages and discrimination against women on the grounds that

all these lacked Vedic sanction. The Arya Samaj discourages dogma and symbolism and encourages skepticism in beliefs that run contrary to common sense and logic. To many people, the Arya Samaj aims to be a "universal society" based on the authority of the Vedas.

## **Death**

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

"A man of spirit has passed away from India. Pandit Dayananda Saraswati is gone, the irrepressible, energetic reformer, whose mighty voice and passionate eloquence for the last few years raised thousands of people in India from, lethargic, indifference and stupor into active patriotism is no more." – *Col Henry Steel Olcott*. "Swami Dayananda Saraswati is certainly one of the most powerful personalities who has shaped modern India and is responsible for its moral regeneration and religious revival". – *Subhas Chandra Bose*.

## **Works**

Dayananda Saraswati wrote more than 60 works in all, including a 14 volume explanation of the six Vedangas, an incomplete commentary on the Ashtadhyayi (Panini's grammar), several small tracts on ethics and morality, Vedic rituals and sacraments and on criticism of rival doctrines (such as Advaita Vedanta, Islam and Christianity). Some of his major works are *Satyarth Prakash*, 1875 (*Light of Truth* – first English translation 1908), *Sanskarvidhi*, *Rigvedadi Bhashya Bhumika*, *Rigved Bhashyam* and *Yajurved Bhashyam*. The *Paropakarini Sabha* located in the Indian city of Ajmer was founded by the Swami himself to publish and preach his works and Vedic texts.

## **Reforms among the Sikh community**

### **1. Nirankari Movement (1850's)**

After the fall of kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, there were several attempts to raise the old glory of the Khalsa. Several movements to reform the Sikhism were started. First one is Nirankari movement, which was started by Baba Dyal (1783-1855). He was contemporary of Ranjit Singh. A man of humble origin, he preached against the rites and rituals that were creeping into Sikhism. He saw that Sikhism was being assimilated into Hinduism in front of his

eyes. His main target was the worship of images against which he preached vigorously. He re-emphasized the Sikh belief in Nirankar the Formless One. From this, the movement originating from his message came to be known as the Nirankari movement.

Situation after the fall of Sarkar Khalsa was such that to quote Sardar Harbans Singh in Heritage of the Sikhs he says "The Sikhs were deeply galled at the fall of their kingdom, but not unduly dismayed. They attributed the outcome of their contest with the English to the chances of war. They were also aware that, despite the deceitfulness of courtiers such as Lal Singh and Tej Singh, they had fought the feringhi squarely, and maintained their manly demeanour even in defeat. In this mood, it was easier for them to be reconciled to their lot after normalcy was restored. The peaceful spell which followed, however, produced an attitude of unwariness. Conventional and superstitious ritual which, forbidden by the Gurus, had become acceptable as an adjunct of regal pomp and ceremony during the days of Sikh power gained an increasing hold over the Sikh mind. The true teachings of the Gurus which had supplied Sikhism its potent principle of reform and regeneration were obscured by this rising tide of conservatism. The Sikh religion was losing its characteristic vigour and its votaries were relapsing into beliefs and dogmas from which the Gurus' teaching had extricated them. Absorption into ceremonial Hinduism seemed the course inevitably set for them."

Two factors which separated the Sikhs from other Punjabis were the outward marks of their faith, especially the kesas. Baba Dyal's influence was confined to the north-western districts of the Punjab. In 1851, he founded at Rawalpindi the Nirankari Darbar and gave this body the form of a sect. On his death, four years later, he was succeeded in the leadership of the community by his son, Baba Darbara Singh. The latter continued to propagate his father's teachings, prohibiting idolatrous worship, the use of alcohol and extravagant expenditure on weddings. He introduced in the Rawalpindi area the anand form of marrying rite. Anand, an austere simple and inexpensive ceremony, became a cardinal point with leaders of subsequent Sikh reformation movements.

Sardar Harbans Singh ji further quote "What an unambiguous, crucial development the Nirankari movement was in Sikh life will be borne out by this excerpt from the annual report of the Ludhiana Christian Mission for 1853:

"Sometime in the summer we heard of a movement . . . which from the representations we received, seemed to indicate a state of mind favourable to the reception of Truth. It was deemed expedient to visit them, to ascertain the true nature of the movement and, if possible, to give it proper direction. On investigation, however, it was found that the whole movement was the result of the efforts of an individual to establish a new panth (religious sect) of which he should be the instructor.... They professedly reject idolatry, and all reverence and respect for whatever is held sacred by Sikhs or Hindus, except Nanak and his Granth... They are called Nirankaris, from their belief in God, as a spirit without bodily form. The next great fundamental principle of their religion is that salvation is to be obtained by meditation of God. They regard Nanak as their saviour, inasmuch as he taught them the way of salvation. Of their peculiar practices only two things are learned. First, they assemble every morning for worship, which consists of bowing the head to the ground before the Granth, making offerings and in hearing the Granth read by one of their numbers, and explained also if their leader be present. Secondly, they do not burn their dead, because that would make them too much like Christians and Musalmans, but throw them into the river."

Many people at this time held the view that British were trying to favour Sikhs by making sure that Sikhs were building institutions. The above comment by Ludhiana mission in 1853 discredits any such accusations since at that time British and Sikhs had just fought two lengthy wars. Also Nirankari movement was started four years after Anglo-Sikh war when relations between Sikhs and British were very bad. British only favoured Sikhs in early part of twentieth century when money and land for Khalsa college and other such institutions was granted by British (British also helped create institutions like Aligarh Muslim university and Benaras Hindu university, so Sikhs were not favoured on the expense of others).

This Nirankari movement in late 20th century was hijacked by Arya Samajists and other neo Hindu fanatics who wanted Sikhs to drop all their symbols and assimilate into their religion. These New Neo Nirankaris who believed in "Living Gurus" confronted Sikhs at Amritsar in 1979 on the Baisakhi day when their living guru "Gurbachan" was trying to create Seven Stars just like Guru had created five beloved one's, obviously to prove to the Sikhs that he is more or less like Guru Gobind Singh (a very serious blasphemy for Sikhs, it is like telling Christians or Muslims that "I am Christ" or "I am Mohammad").

Sikhs under Akhand Kirtani Jatha started their march from Akal Takht to stop Gurbachan but were greeted by bullets. This whole incident was solely responsible for the turmoil in Punjab in 1980's. These new nirankaris have been aptly named "Naqli Nirankaris" or the "False Nirankaris".

## **2. Namdhari Movement**

After the fall of kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, there were several attempts to raise the old glory of the Khalsa. Several movements to reform Sikhism were started. The Namdhari movement, which was started by Baba Ram Singh Namdhari after the Anglo-Sikh wars. He was a soldier in Khalsa army.

Like the Nirankari, this second reform movement known as the Namdhari, or Kuka, movement also had its origin in the north-west corner of the Sikh kingdom, away from the places of royal pomp and grandeur. It harked back to a way of life more in keeping with the spiritual tradition of the community. Its principal object was to spread the true spirit of Sikhism shorn of tawdry customs and mannerism, which had been growing on it since the beginning of Sikh monarchy. In the midst of national pride born of military glory and political power, this movement extolled the religious obligation for a pious and simple living. They were called "Kukas" because of their peculiar style they used in reciting Gurbani (Sayings of the Gurus). This style was in a high pitched voice, called Kook in Punjabi, and thus Namdhari Khalsa's were named Kukas.

Bhai Balak Singh (1799-1862) of Hazro, was a holy man whose noble example and sweet persuasive manner won him a number of followers. The most prominent among them was Baba Ram Singh who undertook the direction of the movement after Bhai Balak Singh, giving it a more positive orientation.

Baba Ram Singh, born at Bhaini, in Ludhiana district in 1816, was a soldier in the Sikh army. With his regiment he once happened to visit Hazro where he fell under the influence of Bhai Balak Singh. He became his disciple and dedicated himself to his mission. For his religious pursuits he had ample time in the army which, towards the end of Ranjit Singh's day, was



comparatively free from its more arduous tasks. In the 1845 Anglo-Sikh war, Baba Ram Singh fought against the English at Mudki.

He gave up service after the occupation of Lahore and returned to his village, Bhaini, which became another important centre of the Namdhari faith. Upon Baba Balak Singh's death, in 1862, the chief responsibility passed on to Baba Ram Singh, whose growing influence helped in the extension of the movement in central and eastern Punjab. An elaborate agency for missionary work was set up. The name of the head in a district-Suba, meaning governor- had a significant, though remote, political implication. There were altogether twenty-two such Subas, besides two Jathedars, or group leaders, for each tahsil and a Granthi, Scripture-reader or priest, for each village.

In the government papers of that period, Baba Ram Singh's mission is described thus:

He abolishes all distinction of caste among Sikhs;  
advocates indiscriminate marriage of all classes;  
enjoins the marriage of widows;  
enjoins abstinence from liquor and drugs,  
exhorting his disciples to live cleanly and tell the truth.

To the points mentioned above he also advocated reverence for the cow, simpler wedding ceremonies and abolition of infanticide (male and female infants equally). Baba Ram Singh never reconciled himself to British rule. His prediction about its early demise was implicitly believed by his followers, who were forbidden to join government service, to go to courts of law or even learn the English language. The movement thus acquired a strong political bias. Its chief inspiration was, in fact, derived from opposition to foreign rule and anything that implied it was ignored and anyone recognizing it was shunned by his followers. English education, mill-made cloth and other imported goods were boycotted. In its advocacy of the use of the Swadeshi, the Kuka movement forestalled, in the sixties of the last century, an important feature of the nationalist struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

Kukas even avoided use of the post of fives established by the British and depended upon their own system of postal communication. Messages from their leader were conveyed with special despatch and alacrity. A fast-riding follower would carry the letter to the next village where another devotee, setting all other work aside, would at once speed on with it. Riders would even leave their meals unfinished to hurry a message to the next post.

A spirit of fanatical national fervour and religious enthusiasm grew among the Kukas and the personality of Baba Ram Singh became the focal point of a close and well-organized order. The government, after the incidents of 1857, kept a keen eye on Baba Ram Singh. In 1863, when the civil authority found out that Baba Ram Singh was planning to travel to Amritsar for Baisakhi celebrations to which he had invited his followers from all over the Punjab, they became very alarmed. The Lieutenant-Governor ordered the Deputy Inspector-General of Police and the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar to find out just what Baba Ram Singh and his companions were up to. The officials were not in favour of imposing any restrictions, especially on the

occasion of a religious fair. But two months later, when the Kukas announced a meeting to be held at Khote, a village in Ferozepore district, prohibitory orders were issued banning all Kuka meetings.

The Kuka organization was subjected to strict secret vigilance, and intelligence officers in the districts sent in alarming reports about Kuka aims and activities. It was bruited about that Baba Ram Singh was raising an army to fight the English. Bhaini and Hazro were kept under continual surveillance and Baba Ram Singh was arrested, charged with treason and given a life sentence and quickly shipped off to the dreaded Andaman Islands, from which he wrote letters to his disciples in Punjab and other places. A selection of these letters was published by Dr Ganda Singh a few years ago. They reveal to us, Baba Ram Singh's undying faith, his strength of character and his love for his followers. While an occasional note of loneliness appears in these letters, his spirit of patient fortitude always proves stronger.

Baba Ram Singh passed away on November 29, 1885. But many of his followers did not believe that he was dead. They continued to hope that he would one day come to the Punjab and free India from the shackles of the English.

The Kuka movement marked a significant stage in the development of a national consciousness in the country. In the years after the revolt of 1857, when the loyal Sikh units had helped to put a quick end to the scattered rebellion the machinations of the Namdharis were watched very closely.

Like the Nirankaris, Namdharis also formed themselves into a separate sect. Today, they form a distinctly cohesive group among the Sikhs. Two things immediately mark them off from the latter—the style of their headgear and their adherence to the personality of their leader, Baba Jagjit Singh. Appareled in immaculate, white homespun, they wind round their heads mull or longcloth without any semblance or embellishment and without giving it any sharp, emphatic lines.

### **Their sudden busts or shouts, lend them a name**

While chanting the sacred hymns, they work themselves up to such ecstatic frenzy that they begin dancing and shouting. From these shouts and shrieks-kuk, in Punjabi—some humorously inclined youth in a Ludhiana village called them Kukas, little knowing that they were conferring upon the newly developing order a name which would be widely accepted and which would outlive the more carefully chosen appellations adopted by its authors.

The growth of the Kukas was shadowed by a secret campaign which aspired to return Maharaja Duleep Singh, the youngest son of the fabled ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh, last Sikh ruler of the Punjab who had been exiled by the British and baptized into the Church of England. In the 1880's, Punjab was certainly astir with rumour—anticipation filled the air. Reports were studiously kept in circulation that Duleep Singh would lead a Russian invasion into India and overthrow the British. A network of secret communication was laid out. Duleep Singh's emissaries kept infiltrating into India in spite of government vigilance. His statements and proclamations—as from "the Sovereign of the Sikh nation and Implacable Foe of the British Government"—were smuggled into the country for distribution. But after several attempts to return to India he died in a hotel in Paris. Dilip Singh, youngest son of Ranjit Singh had 6 children, 5 daughters and one son all died issueless.

### 3. Singh Sabha Movement

The Singh Sabha intended to restore Sikhism to its past purity by publishing historical religious books, magazines and journals, to propagate knowledge using Punjabi, to return Sikh apostates to their original faith, and to involve highly placed Englishmen in the educational programme of the Sikhs. After the Nirankari and Namdhari movements of 19th Century, a fresh century was about to be started with a new movement called Singh Sabha. Nirankari and Namdhari movements could not encourage the Sikh people to a considerate point and because of the limited scope and schismatic character they acquired. Once Sardar Harbans Singh said that the Singh Sabha that followed them, had a much deeper effect and it influenced the entire Sikh Community and reoriented its attitude and spirit. Ever since the emergence of the Gurus nothing so important event had taken the effort to nurture the consciousness of the Sikhs. The Singh Sabha by leavening the intellectual and cultural processes brought a new way of outlook to the personal life of the community and thus its heritage. Starting in the seventies of the last century, it marked a turning point in the history of the Sikhs. The Singh Sabha touched Sikhism to its very roots, and revived the religion once again. The incentive it provided has shaped the Sikhs' attitude and ambition for more than past one hundred years.

The people who helped to establish the Singh Sabha were Kanwar Bikram Singh of Kapurthala, Sir Khem Singh Bedi, Giani Gian Singh and Thakur Singh Sandhawalia. Sandhawalia became its president and Giani Gian Singh its secretary, when it was formed. An Executive Committee consisting of the president and secretary plus a few members directed the Singh Sabha. As the Sabha expanded, new officers were appointed, a vice-president, assistant secretary, a giant (scholar of the Sikh scriptures), an updeshak or preacher, a treasurer and a librarian. They were elected each year and there was the provision of re-election. Members had to be Sikhs with a strong belief in the teachings of the gurus. The members paid a monthly subscription and were asked to oath themselves to serve the community and to be loyal to Sikhism till death. All the original members were baptized Sikhs, although no obligation for this was written into the constitution of the Sabha. They held a meeting every two weeks and also held anniversary celebrations. They arranged special meetings on festival days or in response to specific challenges by other religious groups. The Sabha soon began to issue records of its decisions and also kept records of its earnings and expenditures, and produced annual reports.

The cause behind the success of the Singh Sabha was the motivation to search for Sikh individuality and self-assertion that we are not just another part of Hinduism. Earlier, Hindu philosophers thought Sikhs to be another sect of Hinduism and 2500 years ago, same thing was applicable for Buddhism. In those days, Buddha was believed to be as the re-embodiment of Vishnu by Brahmins, thus ending Buddhism in India. Singh Sabha remembered this and started their campaign of development for pastoral Khalsa that eventually came under the direct threat of Christian Missionaries, Muslim Maulalivis and Arya Samajis. Khalsa's ethical force and dynamic energy was rediscovered and Singh Sabha was inspired by its history and tradition with clear and self-judicious eye.

Everything that went against Gurus teaching was discarded. Rites and customs were regarded as regular and steady with Sikh principles and traditions were established. For some, legal sanction was kept secured through government rule. With this came the restructuring of Sikh Shrines. Later in 1920's Sikh Historic Shrines like Golden Temple, Nankana Sahib, TarnTaran Sahib, Punja Sahib and others were freed from the hold of traditional Mahants. These mahants used to practice rites and ritual conflicting with Sikhism, such as not letting people of "lower

caste" enter the Gurdwaras, publicly smoking, idol worshipping of various Gods and Goddesses, and holding Shraddhas and other rituals that were strictly forbidden by the Sikh Gurus.

This period of the Singh Sabhas also witnessed the modern development and emergence of new cultural and political aspirations. The Sikhs properly achieved higher level of literacy. Famous Khalsa College at Amritsar and hundreds of Khalsa Schools were established all across Punjab. Many Sikhs went outside India at this period and settled at Malaysia, Canada, U.K, Africa and USA. The first anniversary of the Lahore Singh Sabha was on April 22, 1905. Singh Sabha movement not only reformed the Sikh institutions of the customs and rites like casteism but also ensured that in future, these rituals would not come back into the society.

The Singh Sabha was an idiom of the impulse of the Sikh community to clear itself of the base adulterations and accretions, which were draining away its energy, and to revive the foundations of its actual inspiration. Unlike other Indian reform movements of the period that were the creation of the privileged class, the Singh Sabha was a mass expansion.

The Singh Sabha represented the leaders of the Sikh community. It was united by members of the landed gentry, the aristocracy, and by various types of temple servants. The Sabha prepared a calendar that had listed the correct dates of the births and deaths of the ten gurus. They embarked on the creation of an ultimate text of the Dassam Granth; however, this task proved so difficult that a separate organization, the Gurmat Granth Pracharak Sabha was also founded to complete it. The Singh Sabha published numerous tracts and books and in 1894 organized the Khalsa Tract Society to make the Punjabis popular, the Gurmukhi script, and to issue monthly publishing on the Sikh religion. Soon the Singh Sabha of Amritsar was followed by new organizations that also proved to be competitors for leadership within the Sikh community.

### **Assertion of Backward classes**

#### **Jyotiba phule (11 April, 1827-28 November 1890)**

Jyotiba Phule was one of the prominent social reformers of the nineteenth century India. He led the movement against the prevailing caste-restrictions in India. He revolted against the domination of the Brahmins and for the rights of peasants and other low-caste fellow. Jyotiba Phule was believed to be the first Hindu to start an orphanage for the unfortunate children. Jyotirao Phule was born in Satara district of Maharashtra in 1827. His father, Govindrao was a vegetable-vendor at Poona. Originally Jyotirao's family belonged to 'mali' caste, considered as inferior by the Brahmins. Since, Jyotirao's father and uncles served as florists, the family came to be known as 'Phule'. Jyotirao's mother passed away when he was nine months old. Jyotirao was an intelligent boy but due to the poor financial condition at home, he had to stop his studies at an early age. He started helping his father by working on the family's farm. Recognizing the talent of the child prodigy, few months later, a neighbor persuaded his father to send him to school. In 1841, Jyotirao got admission in the Scottish Mission's High School, Poona. There, he met Sadashiv Ballal Govande, a Brahmin, who remained his close friend throughout his life. Jyotirao, was married to Savitribai, when he was thirteen years old.

In 1848, an incident took place in his life that later sparked off the dalit-revolution in the Indian society. Jyotirao was invited to attend a wedding of one of his Brahmin friends. Knowing that he belonged to inferior caste, the relatives of the bridegroom insulted and abused him. Jyotirao left the procession and made up his mind to defy the prevailing caste-system and social

restrictions. He then started his campaign of serving the people of lower caste who were deprived of all their rights as human beings. After reading Thomas Paine's famous book 'The Rights of Man', Jyotirao was greatly influenced by his ideas. He believed that enlightenment of the women and lower caste people was the only solution to combat the social evils. Therefore, in 1848, he along with his wife started a school for the girls.

The orthodox Brahmins of the society were furious at the activities of Jyotirao. They blamed him for vitiating the norms and regulations of the society. Many accused him of acting on behalf of the Christian Missionaries. But Jyotirao was firm and decided to continue the movement. Interestingly, Jyotirao had some Brahmin friends who extended their support to make the movement successful. Jyotirao attacked the orthodox Brahmins and other upper castes and termed them as "hypocrites". He campaigned against the authoritarianism of the upper caste people. He urged the "peasants" and "proletariat" to defy the restrictions imposed upon them. In 1851, Jyotirao established a girls' school and asked his wife to teach the girls in the school. Jyotirao, later, opened two more schools for the girls and an indigenous school for the lower castes, especially the Mahars and Mangs. Viewing the pathetic condition of widows and unfortunate children Jyotirao decided to open an orphanage. In order to protect those widows and their children, Jyotirao established an orphanage in 1854. Many young widows, from the upper-caste spent their days in the orphanage, Satya Shodhak Samaj. After tracing the history of the Brahmin domination in India, Jyotirao blamed the Brahmins for framing the weird and inhuman laws. He concluded that the laws were made to suppress the "shudras" and rule over them. In 1873, Jyotirao formed the Satya Shodhak Samaj (Society of Seekers of Truth). The purpose of the organization was to liberate the people of lower-castes from the suppression of the Brahmins. The membership was open to all and the available evidence proves that some Jews were admitted as members. In 1876 there were 316 members of the 'Satya Shodhak Samaj'. In 1868, in order to give the lower-caste people more powers Jyotirao decided to construct a common bathing tank outside his house. He also wished to dine with all, regardless of their caste.

Jyotirao Phule devoted his entire life for the liberation of untouchables from the exploitation of Brahmins. He revolted against the tyranny of the upper castes. On 28 November, 1890, the great reformer of India, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, passed away.

### **Sri Narayana Guru (1856-1928)**

Sri Nārāyana Guru, also known as Sree Nārāyana Guru Swami, was a Hindu saint, sadhu and social reformer of India. The Guru was born into an Ezhava family, in an era when people from backward communities like the Ezhavas faced much social injustices in the caste-ridden Kerala society. *Gurudevān*, as he was fondly known to his followers, led Reform movement in Kerala, revolted against casteism and worked on propagating new values of freedom in spirituality and of social equality, thereby transforming the Kerala society and as such he is adored as a prophet. Nārāyana Guru is revered for his Vedic knowledge, poetic proficiency, openness to the views of others, non-violent philosophy and his unrelenting resolve to set aright social wrongs. Nārāyana Guru was instrumental in setting the spiritual foundations for social reform in today's Kerala and was one of the most successful social reformers who tackled caste in India. He demonstrated a path to social emancipation without invoking the dualism of the oppressed and the oppressor. Guru stressed the need for the spiritual and social upliftment of the downtrodden by their own efforts through the establishment of temples and educational institutions. In the



process he brushed aside the superstitions that clouded the fundamental Hindu religious convention of Chaturvarna.

### **Family and Early life**

Narayana Guru was born on August 22, 1856, in the village of Chempazhanthi near Thiruvananthapuram, the son of Madan Asan, a farmer, and Kutti Amma. The boy was dotingly called *Nanu*. Madan was also a teacher ("Asan") who was learned in Sanskrit and proficient in Astrology and Ayurveda. He had three sisters. As a boy, Nānu would listen to his father with keen interest when he narrated stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata to the simple folks of his village. Nānu was initiated into the traditional formal education *Ezhuthinirithal* by Chempazhanthi Pillai, a local schoolmaster and a village officer. Besides schooling, young Nānu continued to be educated at home, under the guidance of both his father and uncle Krishnan Vaidyan who was a reputed Ayurvedic physician and a Sanskrit scholar, where he was taught the basics of the Tamil and Sanskrit languages and traditional subjects such as *Siddharupam*, *Bālaprobhodhanam* and *Amarakosam*.

As a child, Nanu was very reticent and was intensely drawn to worship at the local temple. He would criticise his own relatives for social discrimination and the apartheid-like practice of segregating children from, supposedly, lower castes. He preferred solitude and would be found immersed in meditation for hours on end. He showed strong affinity for poetics and reasoning, composing hymns and singing them in praise of God. He lost his mother when he was 15. Nānu spent the most part of his early youth assisting his father in tutoring, and his uncle in the practice of Ayurveda, while devoting the rest of his time for devotional practices at the temples nearby.

### **Transformation as master, yogi and seeker of truth**

The young Nanu had a keen mind and was sent to a famous scholar, Kummampilli Rāman Pillai Asan at Karunagapally, a village fifty miles away from his home, at the age of 21. Living as a guest in a family house *Varanapally* near Kayamkulam, Nānu, along with other students, was taught Sanskrit language and poetry, drama and literary criticism, and logical rhetoric. He studied the Vedas and the Upanishads. He also began teaching in a near-by school. His knowledge earned him the respect of many and he came to be known as "Nanu Asan". Nanu returned home to spend some time with his father, who was on the death bed. For a short period he ran a village school for the children of his neighbourhood. While continuing his quest for "the ultimate truth", Nanu would often spend time in the confines of temples, writing poems and hymns and lecturing to villagers on philosophy and moral values.

### **Married life**

Under pressure from his family, Nanu married Kaliamma, the daughter of a traditional village doctor. The marriage was a simple affair with the groom's sisters themselves investing the bride with the 'Thaali' (wedding knot) on his behalf. The bride remained with her parents, since Nanu became a wanderer not long after.

### **'Parivrajaka' (A Spiritual Wanderer)**

After the demise of his father and wife, Nanu Asan continued his life of a wandering Sanyasi. He became a 'Parivrajaka' (one who wanders from place to place in quest of Truth). It was



during one of these days that Nanu met Kunjan Pillai, who later came to be known as Chattampi Swamikal. Kunjan Pillai, who discovered and appreciated Nānu Āśān's philosophical genius and passion for Yoga, introduced him to *Thycattu Ayyaavu*, a 'Hatha yogi'. Under the Yogi, Nānu Āśān mastered various Yogic practices including Hatha Yoga. The exposure gained from these scholars had a lasting impact on the later life and philosophy of Nārāyana Guru.

### **Enlightenment and its poetic expression**

Nānu moved to his hermitage deep inside the hilly forests of Maruthwāmala, where he led an austere life immersed in meditative thought and yoga and subjected himself to extreme sustenance rituals. This phase of solitude lasted for 8 long years. After an unpretentious life of over thirty years abounding in knowledge and harsh experiences, this epoch is considered the culmination of the meditative recluse; the point at which Nārāyana Guru is believed to have attained a state of Enlightenment. Nārāyana Guru's later literary and philosophical masterpiece *Atmopadesa Satakam* (*one hundred verses of self-instruction*, written in Malayalam circa 1897) is considered a fertile poetic expression, encapsulating the Guru's philosophy of egalitarianism, emanating from the author's attainment of an experienced state of primordial knowledge and quintessence of the Universe; and his ensuing ability to view the human race, from a dignified and elevated perspective, as nothing but one of a genus, in unqualified equality and without any racial, religious, caste or other discriminations whatsoever.

### **Consecration of *Siva Lingam* at Aruvippuram**

Learning from the sacred books and the practice of Yoga did not quench the thirst of Nanu. He continued his wanderings in quest of Truth. By and by, he came to a beautiful place called Aruvippuram. It was a forest area. There were hills around. A gurgling rivulet (of river Neyyar) also flowed there. As more people sought him out for healing or advice, he and his disciples felt the need for a regular temple for worshipping Shiva. At a beautiful spot near the river, he had his followers build a small canopy of coconut leaves and mango leaves over an altar on a rock jutting out in the water. The year was 1888. They improvised lamps with shells and arranged them in rows. They were lighted at dusk and a piper began to play devotional tunes. The whole place was soon filled with pious village folk. Gurudevan, who had been sitting apart and meditating all night, stood at midnight and walked into the river. As thousands watched silently (*If silence had music, the atmosphere was filled with it*, wrote one correspondent) he descended into the river and then reemerged, holding an idol of Shiva. He stood beneath the canopy with it in his arms for three hours, totally lost in meditation, tears flowing down his cheeks. Finally, at three in the morning, he installed the idol on the pedestal. His action was equivalent of overturning the tables of the money changers, or refusing to give up a seat on the bus. From the beginning of time, so far as anyone knew, only Brahmins had ever installed an idol. Yet when Gurudevan performed the sacred rite it appeared so natural for him to pick up a small rock and install it. When Brahmins challenged his right to consecrate, he replied in his famous quote: I installed my siva; not a brahmin siva. To those who questioned the timing of the consecration saying it was not an astrologically auspicious time, he replied: Horoscope is to be cast after the birth of a child, not before. He instructed to place a plaque containing a motto on the temple wall which read as:

*Devoid of dividing walls of Caste*

*Or hatred of rival faith,*

*We all live here*

*In Brotherhood,*

*Such, know this place to be!*

*This Model Foundation!*

A new phase began in the Guru's life in 1904. He decided to give up his wandering life and settle down in a place to continue his Sadhana (spiritual practice). He chose Sivagiri, twenty miles north of Thiruvananthapuram. Goddess 'Amba' became his deity of worship. Next, he started a Sanskrit school in Varkala. Poor boys and orphans were taken under his care. They were given education regardless of caste distinctions. Temples were built at different places - Thrissur, Kannur, Anchuthengu, Tellicherry, Calicut, Mangalore. A temple was built for Sharada Devi in 1912, at Sivagiri. Worship at such temples helped reduce to a large extent superstitious beliefs and practices. One of the temples built in Thrissur is the Sri Narayana Temple at Koorkenchery. The temple has a school in its compound named Sri Narayana School. The School encourages students' talents by organizing talent competitions. These competitions, regularly held every year, have been a platform for youngsters to stand up and recognize their talents.

In 1913, he founded the Advaita Ashram at Aluva. This was an important event in his spiritual quest. This Ashram was dedicated to a great principle - *Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra* (all men are equal in the eyes of God). This became the motto of the new Ashram. When Nārāyana Guru attained the age of sixty, his birth day was observed throughout the west-coast from Mangalore to Sri Lanka. Between 1918 and 1923 he visited Sri Lanka many times. In 1921, a Conference of Universal Brotherhood was held at Aluva. Again in 1924, a conference of all religions was held there. Guru stressed the need for a *Brahma Vidyalaya* for a comparative study of different religious faiths. Sree Nārāyana Guru had many followers and disciples. Nataraja Guru, a notable disciple of Sree Nārāyana Guru, introduced Guru's visions and ideals to the western world. He established Narayana Gurukulam in 1923 in the Nilgiri Hills with the blessings of Nārāyana Guru.

### **Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra (The Brotherhood of All)**

In 1913, the Guru founded an Ashram at Aluva. It was called the *Advaita Ashram*. This was an important event in the life of the Guru. The Ashram was dedicated to a great principle - *Om Sahodaryam Sarvatra* (all human beings are equal in the eyes of God). In 1921, a Conference of Universal Brotherhood was held at Aluva. Again in 1924, a conference of all religions was held there. The Guru stressed the need for a *Brahma Vidyalayam* for the comparative study of various religious faiths. An institution called *Narayana Gurukulam* was established in the Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu by Bodhananda Swamikal and later handed over to Nataraja Guru.

### **Final Ceylon Journey**

Gurudevan visited Ceylon again in 1926. He had some moving experiences while travelling in Tamil Nadu in connection with his journey to Ceylon. While he was in Sree Ganapathi temple in heavy rain he said, "If there is anyone writing my biography, these experiences should not be missed, they should be recorded." After that journey to Ceylon, Gurudevan did not want to return. He went back only after repeated requests of his disciples and devotees.

### **Message to Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam**

In a message to the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam in 1926 Gurudevan declared, *No community can make progress except through organization.* He further said in that message, *the name Ezhava does not denote a caste or a religion and he made temple rights to everyone. Therefore people can be admitted to this organization without paying heed to differences of caste.* On June 14, 1927 Sree Narayana Guru consecrated a mirror - with the message "Om shanti" written on the surface - in a temple in Kalavankode. The prathishta of the mirror is symbolic in that Advaita Vedantainterprets the mirror as the visible symbol of the unity of the Finite and the Infinite. That was the last prathishta that the Guru would do. Schools rather than temples are to be preferred, he exhorted in a dramatic shift of focus. Gurudevan participated in the anniversary of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam held at Palluruthy in 1927. It was a splendid meeting which demonstrated the sincere, devout faith of the people in Gurudevan. T. K. Madhavan was one of the chief architects of this meeting. In 1928 Gurudevan took part in the special meeting of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam at Kottayam and gave away registration certificates to the branch organizations.

Even though Guru started SNDP as a forum to lead the activities for social equality and caste less society, eventually SNDP turned out to be a forum of Ezhava caste, which is a contradiction to Guru's vision. Various factions in the SNDP Yogam accuse others of financial irregularities and corruption. There are allegations that liquor barons are controlling the SNDP Yogam. It is an irony that today SNDP Yogam represents exactly those things/ideas which Guru opposed.

### **Sivagiri pilgrimage**

*Sivagiri pilgrimage* was conceived by Vallabhasseri Govindan Vaidyar and T K Kittan Writer. It was duly approved by Gurudevan on January, 1928. The setting was SNDP's Nagambadam Shiva temple. It was 3 pm and Gurudevan was resting under a mango tree when the two presented the concept of Sivagiri pilgrimage. Before giving its his blessings he set out the goals of such a pilgrimage. He said: "Let the pilgrims congregate at the beginning of the Gregorian calendar year. It should be Dhanu 16-17 in Malayalam calendar. Let the pilgrims observe 10 days'self-purification according to Sri Buddha's principles of five purities - body, food, mind, word, and deed called as Pancha Dharma.

He ruled that pilgrims could wear yellow clothes - the colour of the garments Sri Buddha wore. *Let no one purchase yellow silk because we have recommended yellow garments. Not even new clothes are required on the pilgrimage. A pilgrim can dip a white garment in turmeric water and wear after drying. The pilgrimage should be conducted with simplicity and preferably be accompanied by the chanting of hymns. There should be no shouting and pilgrims should scrupulously avoid trappings of ostentation.*

To Govindan Vaidyar and Kitten Writer, Gurudevan counted on his fingers the goals of the pilgrimage, explaining how to achieve them. The goals were the promotion of

1. Education,
2. Cleanliness,
3. Devotion to God,
4. Organization,
5. Agriculture,
6. Trade,
7. Handicrafts,
8. Technical training.

He advised them to organize a series of lectures on the themes with experts conducting them. The lectures should be listened to attentively. More important, the principles should be put into practice. Success must accompany efforts. Only then will the country and the people benefit. This must be the core purpose of Sivagiri pilgrimage. Finally; it was decided to start the first pilgrimage from the village of Elavumthitta in Pathanamthitta District. The S N D P unit No.76 of Elavumthitta selected 5 youngsters for the pilgrimage, namely, P.K.Divakara Panicker, P.K.Kesavan, P.V.Raghavan, M.K.Raghavan, and S.Sankunni. All the 5 pilgrims wore bright yellow dress, as suggested by Sree narayana Guru. All the way to Sivagiri, they were reciting 'Swaathanthrya gadha' – written by the great poet Kumaranaasan. They were teased with the words 'Manjakkilikal' –meaning yellow birds. They never got provoked, with a smile they moved on. The dominant thought in their mind was the mission to fulfil, will have to reach Sivagiri, a great responsibility bestowed on their shoulders by the Sreenarayana devotees. Their mission was a great success. Today thousands are following the way they have shown.

The Palluruthi event in 1927 was the last anniversary of the Yogam which Gurudevan attended. It was also the last public function Gurudevan attended. Gurudevan went to Vellur Mutt at Vaikom to rest. There he was taken ill. He went to Alwaye and later to Trichur for treatment. Dr. Krishnan took Gurudevan to Palghat. From there Gurudevan travelled to Madras for treatment.

### **Death**

Guru became seriously ill in September 1928. He remained bedridden for some time. Devotees came in large numbers to have a glimpse. The same year, Gurudevan's birthday was celebrated in many places, mostly in Kerala, Madras, Mangalore, Srilanka and Europe. On 20 September, Guru died.

### **Nārāyana Guru's philosophy**

Hailing from the land of Adi Shankara, Sree Nārāyana Guru was a great proponent and re-evaluator of Advaita Vedanta. Guru's philosophy, which is fundamentally of Advaitic and non-dual wisdom in principles, further extended Advaitic concepts into practical modes of self-realisation through spiritual education, compassion and peaceful co-existence of humanity, whilst promoting social equality and universal brotherhood. His philosophy strongly denounced discrimination in the name of caste or religion, and emphasised focusing on education and private enterprise for the ongoing upliftment of the quality of life. Guru's philosophy emphasised the consistency between true existence of the "common reality" on Earth and one Divine behind the creation and sustenance of the Universe.

Guru's philosophy is exemplified in his mystical writings that are truly interchanging warps and wefts of ethics, logic, aesthetics and metaphysics woven into masterpieces of silken rich poetry.

Guru's literary works in Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil are of a conceptual and aesthetic quality at par with the Upanishads.

At the time of its conception, Nārāyana Guru's philosophy was in many respects ahead of its time and focused on a futuristic world order that could be shaped from his philosophical connotations that are underlain with transcendental aesthetics and logic embodied in knowledge and pure reason. Most of the serious scholars of Nārāyana Guru's philosophy have been from generations beyond his lifetime; and this list keeps growing.

### **Tolerance toward others**

Guru had followers from all walks of life. Some of these were atheists. An Advaitin to the core, he did not differentiate people on the basis of their religion, caste, colour or beliefs. He was tolerant toward all philosophies that stood for the progress of mankind.

To avoid the attempts made by a section of his followers to identify him with the community he was born into, Nārāyana Guru was forced to state explicitly that he did not belong to any particular caste or religion. Through a message he sent in the year 1916, he proclaimed: *It is years since I left castes and religions. Yet some people think that I belong to their caste. That is not correct. I do not belong to any particular caste or religion.*

### **The Guru's influence on other social thinkers**

Concerning the caste system, Gandhi said the following to Nārāyana Guru: *"The caste-Hindus and the low caste-Hindus are both the sons of Hinduism. The caste-Hindu is the elder brother who shoulders responsibility, and he therefore exercises certain privileges. The low caste-Hindu is his younger brother who is to be cared for. If the elder brother turns out to be somewhat rough and aggressive that should not make the younger brother a runaway from his mother Hinduism."* Nārāyana Guru, however, disagreed, and voiced his tolerance for those who converted to other religions, with the argument that one should follow what one truly believes in. He also questioned the logic of Gandhi's argument, arguing that caste in India was a socio-economic issue.

### **Guru's Famous Teachings**

- One Jati(Caste) One Religion, One God for Man
- *All are of one Self-fraternity Such being the dictum to avow, In such a light how can we take life And devoid of least pity go on to eat*
- *Ask not, Say not Think not caste. Think only Gods.*
- *Acts that one performs For one's own sake Should also aim for the good Of other men*
- *Love of others is my happiness, Love that is mine is happiness for others. And so, truly, deeds that benefit a man Must be a cause for other's happiness too.*
- *Grace, Love, Mercy -all the three - Stand for one same reality- Life's Star. He who loves is who really lives.*

- *Whatever may be the difference in men's creed, religion, dress, language etc. because they all belong to the same kind of creation, there is no harm at all in their dining together or having marital relation with one another.*
- *Liquor is poison Make it not Sell it not Drink it not.*
- *Devoid of dividing walls Of caste or race Or hatred, We all live here In Brotherhood*
- *Progress through education. Strengthen through organisation.*

### **Public acceptance, honours and veneration**

Since his lifetime Nārāyana Guru has been conferred formal recognitions and honours by the State, intelligentsia and society. In 1901 the State Census Manual of Travancore recorded Sree Nārāyana as a revered "Guru" and an erudite Sanskrit scholar. A sharp drop in the statistics of the commission of crime was also attributed to the correcting and moralizing influence of Nārāyana Guru on the society. In 1904 the then Maharajah of Travancore exempted Nārāyana Guru from personal appearances in court, an honour recognizing the Guru as a distinguished living personality.

The first statue of the Guru was conceived by Moorkoth Kumaran and sculpted by an Italian sculptor Prof. Tavaroli whilst the Guru was still alive. The bronze statue, which took 14 months to complete, was installed at the Jaggannaatha temple at Thalassery and unveiled on 13 March 1927, after the consecration of the statue by Bodhananda Swamikal, the disciple and then spiritual successor-designate to Nārāyana Guru.

On the Guru's death, the famed Jnanapith award winner poet Mahakavi G. Sankara Kurup paid tribute to Nārāyana Guru by writing a Malayalam verse venerating the Guru as The Second Buddha. Sree Nārāyana Guru's legacy continues to be revered at esteemed levels within social, intellectual and spiritually organised communities worldwide.

Jagadguru Swami Sathyananda Saraswathi, the renowned spiritual teacher reckoned as the greatest karmayogi to uphold Sanatana Dharma since Swami Vivekananda drew inspiration from the guru's life and teachings and popularised it through his long oratories across the length and breadth of Kerala. He can be regarded as a political successor of the guru who enshrined the guru's vision in the setting up of Hindu Aikya Vedi uniting all the Hindu organisations in Kerala under the aegis of a single organisation brushing aside caste distinctions and uniting the two major groups of Hindus in the state, respectively the savarna Nairs and Ezhavas. As noted by Nair, Dr Balakrishnan (1999). *Socio-Spiritual Movements in Kerala*.

All across the State of Kerala, and outside of the State, hundreds of small chapel-like *Guru Mandirams* are devoted to the reverence and worship of Sree Nārāyana Guru. Most recently, a distinctively styled iconographic statue of Nārāyana Guru named the Jnana Vighram was conceived and created by a team of artists, as a suggestive model for the future, to improve the aesthetic quality of statues of Nārāyana Guru kept in homes and placed in *Guru Mandirams* worldwide.

At the turn of the 21st Century, Sree Nārāyana Guru was named as The Malayalee of the Century by Kerala's leading daily Malayala Manorama. The full cover-page spread of the



newspaper was dedicated to Nārāyana Guru in its last issue of the Century on 31 December 1999. So also Nārāyana Guru was featured first among the "100 great lives" nominated by Malayala Manorama on the occasion of Malayala Manorama's centenary celebrations in the year 1988.

## **Works**

### **In Malayalam**

1. *Swanubavageethi*
2. *Atmopadesa Śatakam*
3. *Advaita Deepika*
4. *Arivu*
5. *Daiva Dasakam*
6. *Jeevakarunya Panchakam*
7. *Anukamba Dasakam*
8. *Jathi Nirnayam*
9. *Jathi Lakshanam*
10. *Chijjada Chinthanam*
11. *Daiva vichinthanam - 1 & 2*
12. *Athma Vilasam*
13. *Shiva Shathakam*
14. *Kolatheereshastavam*
15. *Bhadraakalyashtakam*

### **In Sanskrit**

1. *Darsana Mala*
2. *Brahmavidya Panchakam*
3. *Nirvruthi Panchakam*
4. *Slokathrayi*
5. *Vedantha Suthram*
6. *Homa Manthram*
7. *Municharya Panchakam*
8. *Asramam*
9. *Dharmam*
10. *Charama Slokangal*
11. *Homa Mantram*
12. *Chidambarashtakam*
13. *Guhashtakam*

14. *Bhadrakaliashtakam*
15. *Vinayaka Ashtakam*
16. *Sree Vasudeva Ashtakam*
17. *Genani Navaratna Manjari "*

### **In Tamil**

1. *Thevarappathinkangal*

### **Translations**

1. *Thirukural*
2. *Isavasyo Upanishad*
3. *Ozhivil Odukkam*

His knowledge earned him the respect of many and he came to be known as "Nanu ashan"

### **Aligarh Movement and Sir Saiyad AhmadKhan**

"There are two kind of people came to this world, one who work to live and the other who live to work". Sir Saiyad lived to work

Born: 17th October 1817 Delhi

Died: 27th March 1898, Aligarh

Father: Saiyad Muhammad Muttaqi,

Mother : Azizun Nisa Begum

Wife : Parsa Begum(Mubarak) Married : 1836

Children : Saiyad Hamid, Saiyad Mahmud and Amina.

"Sir Saiyad was a prophet of education" (Mahatma Gandhi)

"The real greatness of the man (Sir Saiyad) consists in the fact that he was the first Indian Muslim who felt the need of a fresh orientation of Islam and worked for it" (Sir AllamaIqbal)"Sir Saiyad was an ardent reformer and he wanted to reconcile modern scientific thought with religion by rationalistic interpretations and not by attacking basic belief. He was anxious to push new education. He was in no way communally separatist. Repeatedly he emphasized that religious differences should have no political and national significance". (Jawaharlal Nehru, Founder Prime Minister of India)

"Sir Saiyad's vision and his laborious efforts to meet the demands of challenging times are highly commendable. The dark post 1857 era was indeed hopeless and only men like Raja Mohan Roy and Sir Saiyad could penetrate through its thick veil to visualize the Nation's destinies. They rightly believed that the past had its merits and its legacies were valuable but it was the future that a society was called upon to cope with.I offer my homage to Sir Saiyad for

his vision and courage that withstood all obstructions both from the friends and the foes”(Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral, Former Prime Minister of India).

### **The Founder**

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, one of the architects of modern India was born on October 17, 1817 in Delhi and started his career as a civil servant. The 1857 revolt was one of the turning points of Syed Ahmed’s life. He clearly foresaw the imperative need for the Muslims to acquire proficiency in the English language and modern sciences if the community were to maintain its social and political identity, particularly in Northern India.

He was one of those early pioneers who recognized the critical role of education for the empowerment of the poor and backward Muslim community. In more than one ways Sir Syed was one of the greatest social reformers and a great national builder of modern India. He began to prepare the road map for the formation of a Muslim University by starting various schools. He instituted Scientific Society in 1863 to create a scientific temperament among the Muslims and to make the Western knowledge available to Indians in their own language. The Aligarh Institute Gazette, an organ of the Scientific Society was started in March 1866 and succeeded in transforming the minds in the traditional Muslim Society. Anyone with an average level of commitment would have backed off in the face of strong opposition but Sir Syed responded by bringing out another journal ‘Tehzibul Akhlaq’ which was rightly named in English as ‘Mohammedan Social Reformer’.

In 1875, Sir Syed founded the Madarsatul Uloom in Aligarh and patterned the MAO College after Oxford and Cambridge universities that he visited on a trip to London in 1869. His objective was to build a college in tune with the British education system but without compromising its Islamic values. He wanted this College to act as a bridge between the old and the new, the East and the West. While he fully appreciated the need and urgency of imparting instruction based on Western learning, he was not oblivious to the value of Oriental learning and wanted to preserve and transmit to posterity the rich legacy of the past. Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal observed that “the real greatness of Sir Syed consists in the fact that he was the first Indian Muslim who felt the need of a fresh orientation of Islam and worked for it--- his sensitive nature was the first to react to modern age”.

The aim of Sir Syed was not merely restricted to establishing a college at Aligarh but at spreading a network of Muslim managed educational institutions throughout the length and breadth of the country. Keeping in view this, he instituted All India Muslim Educational Conference in 1886 that revived the spirit of Muslims at national level. The Aligarh Movement motivated the Muslims to help open a number of educational institutions. It was the first of its kind of such Muslim NGO in India, which awakened the Muslims from their deep slumber and infused social and political awareness among them.

He contributed much to the development of the modern society of the subcontinent. During Sir Syed’s own life time, ‘The Englishman’, a renowned British magazine of the 19th century remarked in a note on November 17, 1885: ‘Sir Syed’s life “strikingly illustrated one of the best phases of modern history”’. He died on March 27, 1898 and lies buried next to the main mosque at AMU.

### **An Architect of Modern India**

History of social and educational reforms in Indian sub-continent can not be completed without Sir Saiyad Ahmad Khan. He is one of the great thinker, philosopher and revolutionaries who had dedicated his complete life for his nation and especially for his community. Nineteenth century was a hard time for the nation of India and especially for Muslims in the aftermath of 1857 revolt against British colonialism. Sir Saiyad tried and motivated Indian Muslim. In the history of India's transition from medievalism to modernism, Sir Saiyad stand out prominently as a dynamic force pitted against conservatism, superstitions, inertia and ignorance. He contributed many of the essential elements to the development of modern India and paved the growth of a healthy scientific attitude of mind which is sine qua non for advancement, both material and intellectual. Sir Saiyad said: After the Revolt of 1857, I was grieved neither on account of the plunder of my house nor on account of the loss of property that I had suffered. What saddened my heart was the misery and destruction of people. When Mr. Shakespeare offered to me the Taluqa of Jehanabad, which originally belonged to a distinguished Saiyad family, and yielded an annual rental of more than a lac rupee, as a reward of my services, my heart was deeply hurt. I said to myself, how can I accept this jagir and become the Taluqdar while all the people are in distress. I refused to accept it.

Sir Saiyad was born on 17th October 1817 in Delhi in a respectable family of Saiyad Mohammad Muttaqi & Azizun Nisa Begum . Sir Saiyad and Maulana Qasim Nanotwi (Founder of Darul-Uloom, Deoband) studied together under the able guidance of Maulana Mamlook Ali in Delhi. Sir Saiyad studied mathematics, Geology and Medicine from his uncle, Saiyad Zainul Abedin. He also studied Arabic literature, Tafseer-e-Quran, Hadith, and Fiqah from Maulana Makhsusullah (s/o Maulana Shah Rafiuddin Dahlwi), Maulana Nawazish Ali and Maulana Faizul Hasan Saharanpuri. In 1836 Sir Saiyad got married to Parsa Begum (Mubarak) and had two sons, Hamid (born in 1849) and Mahmood (born in 1850) and a daughter Amina. His elder brother Saiyad Muhammad started a weekly newspaper in 1837 and out of love of his younger brother Saiyad Ahmad (also known as Saiyad in his youth), named the newspaper Saiyadul-Akhbar . After Saiyad Muhammad's death in 1845, Sir Saiyad Ahmad started managing Saiyadul-Akhbar.

Sir Saiyad was a great champion of Hindu-Muslim Unity. Addressing a big gathering at Gurudaspur on Jan. 27, 1884 He said: "Hindus and Muslims! Do you belong to a country other than India? Don't you live on this soil and are you not buried under it or cremated on its Ghats? If you live and die on this land, then bear in mind, that Hindus and Muslims is but a religious word; all the Hindus, Muslims and Christians who live in this country are one nation."

### **Father of Aligarh movement**

This most respected and important educational centre for Indian Muslims was initially founded as Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College (MAOC) at Aligarh in 1875 by Sir Saiyad Ahmed Khan and subsequently raised to the status of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in 1920. Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), known more as a movement than an academic institution is one of the most important chapters of Indian history as far as the sociology of Hindu-Muslim relation is concerned. Sir Saiyad said: "This is the first time in the history of Mohammedans of India, that a college owes it not to the charity or love of learning of an individual, nor to the spending patronage of a monarch, but to the combined wishes and the united efforts of a whole community. It has its own origin in course which the history of this county has never witnessed before. It is based on principles of toleration and progress such as find no parallel in the annals of the east." Sir Saiyad' famous speech which he made while foundation of MAO College was

laid down by Lord Lytton on 18th January, 1877 is the soul of Aligarh Movement. Sir Saiyad said: “from the seed which we sow today, there may spring up a mighty tree, whose branches, like those of the banyan of the soil, shall in their turn strike firm roots into the earth, and themselves send forth new and vigorous saplings”.

It's a common misconception that Sir Saiyad and Aligarh Movement is anti-oriental studies (Islamic and Eastern studies) and MAO College was started in a reactionary movement to counter the religious school, Darul-Uloom Deoband, started by Maulana Qasim Nanotvi (another student of Sir Saiyad's teacher Maulana Mamlook Ali Nanotvi). In fact Sir Saiyad had a broader vision and had put forward the need of the hour to get equipped with the modern education to improve the social and economical conditions of Muslims of India. He never discouraged or denied the importance of religious and oriental studies. By his individual means and with the help of Muslim Educational Conference, he always tried to modernize the Madarasas, update their syllabus as per the need of the hour.

Sir Saiyad wrote a lot about these things in Tahzeebul-akhlaq. Sir Saiyad's educational vision has two strong points;

1. Adoption of Modern education
2. Moral Education

From the beginning, Madarsatul-Uloom, later MAO College was equipped with the above philosophy. Tarbiyat of the students living in Hostels were part of the duties of Principal and Manager of Hostels. For Islamic and moral education, Sir Saiyad created a position of Nazim-e-Diniyaat for MAO College who was responsible for Islamic and moral education of the students. Dars-e-Quran was part of curriculum of the college and every morning before the start of the class, Allama Shibli Nomani used to give Dars-e-Quran for about half hour from 1887 to 1895 and later on the responsibility was handed over to Maulana Abdullah Ansari, the founder Nazim-e-Diniyaat.

Sir Saiyad breathed his last on Sunday, 27th March 1898. The funeral took place on Monday, 28th March 1898. The Janazah prayers were offered in the cricket field lead by the founder Nazim-e-Diniyaat, Maulana Abdullah Ansari (son in law of Maulana Qasim Nanotwi and grandson of Sir Saiyad's teacher Maulana Mamlook Ali). The burial took place in College Jama Masjid.

### **Maulana Altaf Hussain Haali- writer of Sir Saiyad's biography, HAYAAT-E-JAVED;**

“After Sir Saiyad's death, it was not only by words but also by actions that the people proved their love and respect for his high ideals. Almost at once, some people began to press for the foundation of Muslim University. The movement spread all over India and abroad and people started raising money for Sir Saiyad's finest memorial.. Even in England students raised money for the Muslim University. People were surprised to see the interest of Englishmen and their efforts to collect money to fulfill the dream of Sir Saiyad to make MAO College as Muslim University. There is an old saying that a good friend is like a leafy tree. For when a tree is in full bloom one has the pleasure of its shade and the enjoyment of its fruits, and when it withers, its wood is put to many uses. Sir Saiyad was such a friend to the Muslims. When he was alive, he laboured for them with his body, his words, his pen and his money. When he died he left the

memory of his love and work imprinted on their hearts so that they might come together and builds on the foundations he has laid. “

### **The Wahabi Movement**

The Wahabi Movement named after its founder Abdul Wahab originated in Arabia in the 18th century with a view to restoring Islam to its pristine purity and order. In India, the movement was started by Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareilly who was influenced by the Wahabi ideas from Arabia. Syed Ahmed's aims were at once religious and political. From the religious point of view, he aimed to urge Islam in India of all its accretion, corruptions and superstitions, which he thought were mostly borrowings from Hinduism. Politically, he aimed at bringing about the overthrow of the Sikhs in the Punjab and the British in Bengal and to restore the Muslim rule in India. Syed Ahmed first preached his doctrines in Rohilkhand but later due to political exigencies, he proceeded to North West frontier and established his headquarters at Sittana in Swat valley. He waged a Holy War against the Sikhs whom he considered as the chief oppressors of the Muslims in the Punjab. He fought many battles with Darbar troops till he was slain in the battle of Balakot in 1831 without achieving much success.

Syed Ahmad's death gave a severe blow to the Wahabi movement but the fire of Holy War once lighted by him was kept burning for half century by the Khalifas of Patna. The British Government inherited this turbulent legacy from the Sikhs. Between 1853 and 1863, it had to send as many as twenty expeditions against the Wahabis in the North West frontier regions of India in which as many as 60,000 troops were engaged.

The Wahabis became again active in the 1850's in the Punjab. After Sayed Ahmed's death, Vilayat Ali took over the command of the Wahabis at Sittana camp. He organised various rebellions and a net work of conspiracies to overthrow the British rule. A Wahabi plan to temper with the Frontier Infantry Station at Rawalpindi was unearthed by the authorities in 1856. Mohammad Ali, a regimental Munshi and some other soldiers were tried at Rawalpindi for offences against the state and convicted. The Government also seized certain documents which made it clear that a well-thought of plan for transporting crusader from Bengal and Bihar to Sittana for the purpose of waging a Holy War was in operation. In 1853, the Wahabi leaders enlisted the sympathy and support of the ruler of Swat and made a spirited attack on the territories of Jahan Dad Khan, the pro-British ruler of Amb. Jahan Dad Khan had ostensibly shown sympathy with the Wahabi movement but had secretly appealed to the British for help. In a skirmish with the British troops, the Wahabis suffered heavy casualties; their rear guard and leader Karim Ali were killed. Inayat Ali, another Wahabi leader escaped with great difficulty. The Wahabis now adopted a policy of making suitable preparations before risking a battle with the trained British troops. They began to impart regular military training to the crusaders and recited songs extolling the glories of war with the infidels. They sent another expedition under Mirza Mohammad who occupied Yusufzai villages of Nawakhela and Sheikhjana. But the British troops soon expelled the rebels and recovered those villages. The Wahabis next occupied Narangi, a border village within the British territory, but the British troops drove them away to Chinghai and Bagh. They next secured the help of the tribals, and made a night attack on Lt. Horne, the Assistant Commissioner at Sheikhjana in October 1857. They routed the British troops and returned to their strongholds with a large booty which they distributed among the soldiers. While the Wahabis under Inayat Ali were preparing for another expedition, the mutiny of 1857 broke out in full fury, and their supply lines from Patna were cut off. Inayat Ali moved from Chinghai to Swat where he died of illness in March, 1858. He was succeeded by Maqsud Ali, a Bihari, who took over the command of Sittana camp.



During 1850-57, the Sittana stronghold of the Wahabis remained a constant source of trouble and anxiety for the British. They sent sixteen expeditions to subdue the rebels and their allies, but they could not be extirpated. In 1858, an expedition was sent under Sir Sydney Cotton with 5000 men to chastise the rebels. The British occupied the Sittana territory but made it over to the tribals on the condition that they would give no shelter to the fanatics nor allow them to pass through their territory to commit depredations within the British frontiers. After the death of Maqsud Ali, the Wahabis under the command of Abdullah continued anti-British campaigns in the North-West frontier territories.

He recruited a large number of recruits through various agencies in India, received the active support of tribal chiefs and also of the Akhund of Swat and recovered the old Wahabi settlement of Sittana in July 1863.

### **Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Mission**

Swami Vivekananda, known in his pre-monastic life as Narendra Nath Datta, was born in an affluent family in Kolkata on 12 January 1863. His father, Vishwanath Datta, was a successful attorney with interests in a wide range of subjects, and his mother, Bhuvaneshwari Devi, was endowed with deep devotion, strong character and other qualities. A precocious boy, Narendra excelled in music, gymnastics and studies. By the time he graduated from Calcutta University, he had acquired a vast knowledge of different subjects, especially Western philosophy and history. Born with a yogic temperament, he used to practise meditation even from his boyhood, and was associated with Brahmo Movement for some time.

#### ***With Sri Ramakrishna:***

At the threshold of youth Narendra had to pass through a period of spiritual crisis when he was assailed by doubts about the existence of God. It was at that time he first heard about Sri Ramakrishna from one of his English professors at college. One day in November 1881, Narendra went to meet Sri Ramakrishna who was staying at the Kali Temple in Dakshineswar. He straightaway asked the Master a question which he had put to several others but had received no satisfactory answer: "Sir, have you seen God?" Without a moment's hesitation, Sri Ramakrishna replied: "Yes, I have. I see Him as clearly as I see you, only in a much intenser sense."

Apart from removing doubts from the mind of Narendra, Sri Ramakrishna won him over through his pure, unselfish love. Thus began a guru-disciple relationship which is quite unique in the history of spiritual masters. Narendra now became a frequent visitor to Dakshineswar and, under the guidance of the Master, made rapid strides on the spiritual path. At Dakshineswar, Narendra also met several young men who were devoted to Sri Ramakrishna, and they all became close friends.

#### ***Difficult Situations***

After a few years two events took place which caused Narendra considerable distress. One was the sudden death of his father in 1884. This left the family penniless, and Narendra had to bear the burden of supporting his mother, brothers and sisters. The second event was the illness of Sri Ramakrishna which was diagnosed to be cancer of the throat. In September 1885 Sri Ramakrishna was moved to a house at Shyampukur, and a few months later to a rented villa at

Cossipore. In these two places the young disciples nursed the Master with devoted care. In spite of poverty at home and inability to find a job for himself, Narendra joined the group as its leader.

### ***Beginnings of a Monastic Brotherhood***

Sri Ramakrishna instilled in these young men the spirit of renunciation and brotherly love for one another. One day he distributed ochre robes among them and sent them out to beg food. In this way he himself laid the foundation for a new monastic order. He gave specific instructions to Narendra about the formation of the new monastic Order. In the small hours of 16 August 1886 Sri Ramakrishna gave up his mortal body. After the Master's passing, fifteen of his young disciples (one more joined them later) began to live together in a dilapidated building at Baranagar in North Kolkata. Under the leadership of Narendra, they formed a new monastic brotherhood, and in 1887 they took the formal vows of sannyasa, thereby assuming new names. Narendra now became Swami Vivekananda (although this name was actually assumed much later.)

### ***Awareness of Life's Mission***

After establishing the new monastic order, Vivekananda heard the inner call for a greater mission in his life. While most of the followers of Sri Ramakrishna thought of him in relation to their own personal lives, Vivekananda thought of the Master in relation to India and the rest of the world. As the prophet of the present age, what was Sri Ramakrishna's message to the modern world and to India in particular? This question and the awareness of his own inherent powers urged Swamiji to go out alone into the wide world. So in the middle of 1890, after receiving the blessings of Sri Sarada Devi, the divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna, known to the world as Holy Mother, who was then staying in Kolkata, Swamiji left Baranagar Math and embarked on a long journey of exploration and discovery of India.

### ***Discovery of Real India***

During his travels all over India, Swami Vivekananda was deeply moved to see the appalling poverty and backwardness of the masses. He was the first religious leader in India to understand and openly declare that the real cause of India's downfall was the neglect of the masses. The immediate need was to provide food and other bare necessities of life to the hungry millions. For this they should be taught improved methods of agriculture, village industries, etc. It was in this context that Vivekananda grasped the crux of the problem of poverty in India (which had escaped the attention of social reformers of his days): owing to centuries of oppression, the downtrodden masses had lost faith in their capacity to improve their lot. It was first of all necessary to infuse into their minds faith in themselves. For this they needed a life-giving, inspiring message. Swamiji found this message in the principle of the Atman, the doctrine of the potential divinity of the soul, taught in Vedanta, the ancient system of religious philosophy of India. He saw that, in spite of poverty, the masses clung to religion, but they had never been taught the life-giving, ennobling principles of Vedanta and how to apply them in practical life.

Thus the masses needed two kinds of knowledge: secular knowledge to improve their economic condition and spiritual knowledge to infuse in them faith in themselves and strengthen their moral sense. The next question was how to spread these two kinds of knowledge among the masses? Through education—this was the answer that Swamiji found.

### ***Need for an Organization***

One thing became clear to Swamiji: to carry out his plans for the spread of education and for the uplift of the poor masses, and also of women, an efficient organization of dedicated people was needed. As he said later on, he wanted “to set in motion machinery which will bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest.” It was to serve as this ‘machinery’ that Swamiji founded the Ramakrishna Mission a few years later.

### ***Decision to attend the Parliament of Religions***

It was when these ideas were taking shape in his mind in the course of his wanderings that Swami Vivekananda heard about the World’s Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago in 1893. His friends and admirers in India wanted him to attend the Parliament. He too felt that the Parliament would provide the right forum to present his Master’s message to the world, and so he decided to go to America. Another reason which prompted Swamiji to go to America was to seek financial help for his project of uplifting the masses. Swamiji, however, wanted to have an inner certitude and divine call regarding his mission. Both of these he got while he sat in deep meditation on the rock-island at Kanyakumari. With the funds partly collected by his Chennai disciples and partly provided by the Raja of Khetri, Swami Vivekananda left for America from Mumbai on 31 May 1893.

### ***The Parliament of Religions and After***

His speeches at the World’s Parliament of Religions held in September 1893 made him famous as an ‘orator by divine right’ and as a ‘Messenger of Indian wisdom to the Western world’. After the Parliament, Swamiji spent nearly three and a half years spreading Vedanta as lived and taught by Sri Ramakrishna, mostly in the eastern parts of USA and also in London.

### ***Awakening His Countrymen***

He returned to India in January 1897. In response to the enthusiastic welcome that he received everywhere, he delivered a series of lectures in different parts of India, which created a great stir all over the country. Through these inspiring and profoundly significant lectures Swamiji attempted to do the following:

- ❖ to rouse the religious consciousness of the people and create in them pride in their cultural heritage;
- ❖ to bring about unification of Hinduism by pointing out the common bases of its sects;
- ❖ to focus the attention of educated people on the plight of the downtrodden masses, and to expound his plan for their uplift by the application of the principles of Practical Vedanta.

### ***Founding of Ramakrishna Mission***

Soon after his return to Kolkata, Swami Vivekananda accomplished another important task of his mission on earth. He founded on 1 May 1897 a unique type of organization known as Ramakrishna Mission, in which monks and lay people would jointly undertake propagation of Practical Vedanta, and various forms of social service, such as running hospitals, schools,

colleges, hostels, rural development centers etc, and conducting massive relief and rehabilitation work for victims of earthquakes, cyclones and other calamities, in different parts of India and other countries.

### ***Belur Math***

In early 1898 Swami Vivekananda acquired a big plot of land on the western bank of the Ganga at a place called Belur to have a permanent abode for the monastery and monastic Order originally started at Baranagar, and got it registered as Ramakrishna Math after a couple of years. Here Swamiji established a new, universal pattern of monastic life which adapts ancient monastic ideals to the conditions of modern life, which gives equal importance to personal illumination and social service, and which is open to all men without any distinction of religion, race or caste.

### ***Disciples***

It may be mentioned here that in the West many people were influenced by Swami Vivekananda's life and message. Some of them became his disciples or devoted friends. Among them the names of Margaret Noble (later known as Sister Nivedita), Captain and Mrs Sevier, Josephine McLeod and Sara Ole Bull, deserve special mention. Nivedita dedicated her life to educating girls in Kolkata. Swamiji had many Indian disciples also, some of whom joined Ramakrishna Math and became sannyasins.

### ***Last days***

In June 1899 he went to the West on a second visit. This time he spent most of his time in the West coast of USA. After delivering many lectures there, he returned to Belur Math in December 1900. The rest of his life was spent in India, inspiring and guiding people, both monastic and lay. Incessant work, especially giving lectures and inspiring people, told upon Swamiji's health. His health deteriorated and the end came quietly on the night of 4 July 1902. Before his Mahasamadhi he had written to a Western follower: "It may be that I shall find it good to get outside my body, to cast it off like a worn out garment. But I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere until the whole world shall know that it is one with God."

### **Vivekananda's contributions to World Culture**

Making an objective assessment of Swami Vivekananda's contributions to world culture, the eminent British historian A L Basham stated that "in centuries to come, he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world..."

Some of the main contributions that Swamiji made to the modern world are mentioned below:

1. *New Understanding of Religion*: One of the most significant contributions of Swami Vivekananda to the modern world is his interpretation of religion as a universal experience of transcendent Reality, common to all humanity. Swamiji met the challenge of modern science by showing that religion is as scientific as science itself; religion is the 'science of consciousnesses. As such, religion and science are not contradictory to each other but are complementary.

This universal conception frees religion from the hold of superstitions, dogmatism, priest craft and intolerance, and makes religion the highest and noblest pursuit – the pursuit of supreme Freedom, supreme Knowledge, and supreme Happiness.

2. *New View of Man*: Vivekananda's concept of 'potential divinity of the soul' gives a new, ennobling concept of man. The present age is the age of humanism which holds that man should be the chief concern and centre of all activities and thinking. Through science and technology man has attained great prosperity and power, and modern methods of communication and travel have converted human society into a 'global village'. But the degradation of man has also been going on apace, as witnessed by the enormous increase in broken homes, immorality, violence, crime, etc. in modern society. Vivekananda's concept of potential divinity of the soul prevents this degradation, divinizes human relationships, and makes life meaningful and worth living. Swamiji has laid the foundation for 'spiritual humanism', which is manifesting itself through several neo-humanistic movements and the current interest in meditation, Zen etc all over the world.

3. *New Principle of Morality and Ethics*: The prevalent morality, in both individual life and social life, is mostly based on fear – fear of the police, fear of public ridicule, fear of God's punishment, fear of Karma, and so on. The current theories of ethics also do not explain why a person should be moral and be good to others. Vivekananda has given a new theory of ethics and new principle of morality based on the intrinsic purity and oneness of the Atman. We should be pure because purity is our real nature, our true divine Self or Atman. Similarly, we should love and serve our neighbours because we are all one in the Supreme Spirit known as Paramatman or Brahman.

4. *Bridge between the East and the West*: Another great contribution of Swami Vivekananda was to build a bridge between Indian culture and Western culture. He did it by interpreting Hindu scriptures and philosophy and the Hindu way of life and institutions to the Western people in an idiom which they could understand. He made the Western people realize that they had to learn much from Indian spirituality for their own well-being. He showed that, in spite of her poverty and backwardness, India had a great contribution to make to world culture. In this way he was instrumental in ending India's cultural isolation from the rest of the world. He was India's first great cultural ambassador to the West.

On the other hand, Swamiji's interpretation of ancient Hindu scriptures, philosophy, institutions, etc prepared the mind of Indians to accept and apply in practical life two best elements of Western culture, namely science and technology and humanism. Swamiji has taught Indians how to master Western science and technology and at the same time develop spiritually. Swamiji has also taught Indians how to adapt Western humanism (especially the ideas of individual freedom, social equality and justice and respect for women) to Indian ethos.

### **Swamiji's Contributions to India**

In spite of her innumerable linguistic, ethnic, historical and regional diversities, India has had from time immemorial a strong sense of cultural unity. It was, however, Swami Vivekananda

who revealed the true foundations of this culture and thus clearly defined and strengthened the sense of unity as a nation. Swamiji gave Indians proper understanding of their country's great spiritual heritage and thus gave them pride in their past. Furthermore, he pointed out to Indians the drawbacks of Western culture and the need for India's contribution to overcome these drawbacks. In this way Swamiji made India a nation with a global mission.

Sense of unity, pride in the past, sense of mission – these were the factors which gave real strength and purpose to India's nationalist movement. Several eminent leaders of India's freedom movement have acknowledged their indebtedness to Swamiji. Free India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: "Rooted in the past, full of pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems, and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present ... he came as a tonic to the depressed and demoralized Hindu mind and gave it self-reliance and some roots in the past." Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose wrote: "Swamiji harmonized the East and the West, religion and science, past and present. And that is why he is great. Our countrymen have gained unprecedented self-respect, self-reliance and self-assertion from his teachings."

Swamiji's most unique contribution to the creation of new India was to open the minds of Indians to their duty to the downtrodden masses. Long before the ideas of Karl Marx were known in India, Swamiji spoke about the role of the labouring classes in the production of the country's wealth. Swamiji was the first religious leader in India to speak for the masses, formulate a definite philosophy of service, and organize large-scale social service.

### **Swamiji's Contributions to Hinduism**

1. *Identity*: It was Swami Vivekananda who gave to Hinduism as a whole a clear-cut identity, a distinct profile. Before Swamiji came Hinduism was a loose confederation of many different sects. Swamiji was the first religious leader to speak about the common bases of Hinduism and the common ground of all sects. He was the first person, as guided by his Master Sri Ramakrishna, to accept all Hindu doctrines and the views of all Hindu philosophers and sects as different aspects of one total view of Reality and way of life known as Hinduism. Speaking about Swamiji's role in giving Hinduism its distinct identity, Sister Nivedita wrote: "... it may be said that when he began to speak it was of 'the religious ideas of the Hindus', but when he ended, Hinduism had been created."
2. *Unification*: Before Swamiji came, there was a lot of quarrel and competition among the various sects of Hinduism. Similarly, the protagonists of different systems and schools of philosophy were claiming their views to be the only true and valid ones. By applying Sri Ramakrishna's doctrine of Harmony (Samanvaya) Swamiji brought about an overall unification of Hinduism on the basis of the principle of unity in diversity. Speaking about Swamiji's role in this field K M Pannikar, the eminent historian and diplomat, wrote: "This new Shankaracharya may well be claimed to be a unifier of Hindu ideology."
3. *Defence*: Another important service rendered by Swamiji was to raise his voice in defence of Hinduism. In fact, this was one of the main types of work he did in the West. Christian missionary propaganda had given a wrong understanding of Hinduism and India in Western minds. Swamiji had to face a lot of opposition in his attempts to defend Hinduism.
4. *Meeting the Challenges*: At the end of the 19th century, India in general, and Hinduism in particular, faced grave challenges from Western materialistic life, the ideas of Western



free society, and the proselytizing activities of Christians. Vivekananda met these challenges by integrating the best elements of Western culture in Hindu culture.

5. *New Ideal of Monasticism*: A major contribution of Vivekananda to Hinduism is the rejuvenation and modernization of monasticism. In this new monastic ideal, followed in the Ramakrishna Order, the ancient principles of renunciation and God realization are combined with service to God in man (Shiva jnane jiva seva). Vivekananda elevated social service to the status of divine service.
6. *Refurbishing of Hindu Philosophy and Religious Doctrines*: Vivekananda did not merely interpret ancient Hindu scriptures and philosophical ideas in terms of modern thought. He also added several illuminating original concepts based on his own transcendental experiences and vision of the future. This, however, needs a detailed study of Hindu philosophy which cannot be attempted here.

### **Selected Teachings of Swami Vivekananda:**

- ☑ My ideal, indeed, can be put into a few words, and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.
- ☑ Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.
- ☑ We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.
- ☑ Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak, weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be.
- ☑ If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what we need.
- ☑ Strength, strength it is that we want so much in this life, for what we call sin and sorrow have all one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes ignorance, and with ignorance comes misery.
- ☑ Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials to success, and above all, love.
- ☑ Religion is realization; not talk, not doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes.
- ☑ Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.
- ☑ Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity.
- ☑ It is love and love alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the Universe.

### **Theosophical society**

The Theosophical Society is an organization formed in 1875 to advance the spiritual principles and search for Truth known as Theosophy. It was officially formed in New York City,

United States, in November 1875 by Helena Blavatsky, Henry Steel Olcott, William Quan Judge and others. Its initial objective was the "study and elucidation of Occultism, the Cabala etc." After a few years Olcott and Blavatsky moved to India and established the International Headquarters at Adyar, in Madras (Chennai). They were also interested in studying Eastern religions, and these were included in the Society's agenda. After several iterations the Society's objectives evolved to be:

1. To form a nucleus of the universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science.
3. To investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

The Society was organized as a non-sectarian entity. It is absolutely unsectarian, and no assent to any formula of belief, faith or creed shall be required as a qualification of membership; but every applicant and member must lie in sympathy with the effort to create the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity.

Annie Besant (1847–1933), second President of The Theosophical Society from 1907 to 1933, was described as a 'Diamond Soul', for she had many brilliant facets to her character. She was an outstanding orator of her time, a champion of human freedom, educationist, philanthropist, and author with more than three hundred books and pamphlets to her credit. She also guided thousands of men and women all over the world in their spiritual quest.

### **Early Days**

Annie Wood was born on 1 October 1847, and educated privately in England, Germany and France. She was a devout Christian, and was married at the age of twenty to an English clergyman, Rev. Frank Besant, Vicar of Sibsey, Lincolnshire, by whom she had a son, Arthur Digby, and a daughter, Mabel. However, the awakening of her character made her challenge several of the Christian dogmas. 'It was not the challenge of unfaith', as Jinarâjadâsa was to say later, 'but rather of a highly spiritual nature that desired intensely not only to believe but also to understand.' Unable to make logic out of Christian traditions, she left the Church in 1872 and became a freethinker, thus ruining her social position through her passion for Truth; consequently she had to leave her husband and young son. In 1879 she matriculated at London University and went on with her studies in science but met obstacles there owing to the sexist prejudices of her time.

She joined the National Secular Society in 1874 and worked in the free thought and radical movements led by Charles Bradlaugh, MP. She co-edited the *National Reformer* with him and wrote many political and free-thought books and pamphlets from 1874–88. At this point her husband moved court to take their little daughter away from her, alleging that she was 'unfit' because of her ideas. This deprivation caused her profound grief. (But, when the children were older they became devoted admirers of their mother). She was prominent in the Labour and Socialist movements, a member of the Fabian Society and Social Democratic Federation, and took an active part in Trade Union work among unskilled labourers; with Herbert Burrows she led the path-breaking match girls' strike to a successful conclusion.

### **Meeting with H. P. Blavatsky**

Feeling dissatisfied with the negative approach of free thought, Mrs Besant now made researches into spiritualism, hypnotism, and so forth. At this juncture Mr W. T. Stead, the editor of *The Review of Reviews*, sent her Madame Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* to review. As she read the book, it was as if a long lost vision of truth flashed through her mind. She asked for an interview with the author, and from that first sight of HPB, her whole life changed. She abandoned her secularist ideas and also to some extent the socialist philosophy, but the new light which she received inspired her more firmly than ever to the service of the world. Her approach towards the various evils in the world changed and she began to deal with the root causes in the light of the laws which govern all existence.

### **The Theosophical Society**

Annie Besant joined The Theosophical Society on 21 May 1889, and became a devoted pupil and helper of HPB, pledging her loyalty to the President-Founder, Col. H. S. Olcott, and the cause of Theosophy. She became the most brilliant exponent of Theosophy, both as orator and author. In 1893 she represented The Theosophical Society at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago.

### **In India**

In 1893 she landed in India, made a tour of the country in the company of H. S. Olcott, and, by her splendid presentation of Indian philosophy and her undisguised personal preference for the Indian spiritual heritage, won the support of orthodox Brahmins to Theosophy. The transformation of the religious life in India, particularly among Hindus, is one of the wonders she performed. She was an untiring worker for the upliftment of women, and pleaded again and again for a radical change in social conditions, but never desired any modification of the Indian woman's temperament which she held to be one of the most spiritual in the world.

She soon gathered round her a band of Indians to work for the regeneration of the country and in 1898, after much planning, founded the Central Hindu School and College in Benares (now Varanasi). A few years later she started the Central Hindu School for Girls. Theosophists from overseas came to help her in the work of the college, which was established with the object of impressing India's past glory on the minds and hearts of the students. A brilliant band of workers gathered round her, including Dr Bhagavan Das, his brother Govinda Das, Gyanendra Nath Chakravarti, Upendranath Basu, I. N. Gurtu, and P. K. Telang, all of whom worked in an honorary capacity. Later the college became the nucleus of the Hindu University, and in recognition of Mrs Besant's services to Indian education the degree of Doctor of Letters was conferred upon her in 1921.

As Lord Baden-Powell deemed that Indians were unfit to be scouts, the Indian Scout Movement was founded by her in 1918, the boys wearing Indian turbans! When Baden-Powell came to India and saw how successful was the movement created by Annie Besant, it was amalgamated with the world movement, and she was made the Honorary Scout Commissioner for India. In 1932 Baden-Powell sent her from London the highest Scout distinction, the 'Silver Wolf' medal.

### **Second President of the TS**

In 1907, after the passing of Col. H. S. Olcott, Annie Besant became the second International President of the Theosophical Society, an office which she held until her death in 1933. Mrs

Besant had always been a great traveller, having visited in the course of her Theosophical work nearly all the countries of Europe more than once, and making several visits to the United States and Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Her great organizing capacity was used to 'make theosophy practical', and action became her 'slogan'. During her presidentship, the Society grew considerably, with the addition of more than thirty-six Sections or National Societies to the initial eleven. Dr Besant continued to tour and lecture all over India, dealing extensively with education. Lodges of the Theosophical Society undertook to open schools wherever they could. She also tried to draw women into the movement wherever possible, for at that time women were not encouraged to take part in public life.

Clear explanations of the many enigmas of life and the universe were presented in her outstanding books such as *A Study in Consciousness*, which is used in some universities as a textbook. Another of her major works, *Esoteric Christianity* has been considered a historical document; and has helped to revive true knowledge of Christianity. Her lectures at Theosophical conventions on the great religions of the world were put into a valuable book entitled *Seven Great Religions*, presenting the core teachings of each one of them. The first edition of her English translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* was published in 1905. Dr Besant was a practical mystic, exemplifying in her life and in all her actions a lofty idealism, and a truly religious awareness — a combination found in very few people. In 1908 she announced the formation of a Theosophical Order of Service, which aimed at banding members together in groups with the motto 'Union of all who Love in the Service of all that Suffer.' From 1908 onwards Dr Besant proceeded to enlarge the Headquarters estate at Adyar. In order to link Adyar more intimately with the rest of the Theosophical world, she started *The Adyar Bulletin*, which continued until 1929. Presently the Adyar Newsletter fulfils a similar function.

### **Annie Besant and J. Krishnamurti**

A new phase of Dr Besant's activity began when she came into contact with two remarkable Indian boys, and declared that the elder of them, J. Krishnamurti, was destined to be the vehicle of the 'World Teacher', the Bodhisattva Maitreya. In 1910 she assumed the guardianship of J. Krishnamurti and his brother and despite great difficulties launched him on his remarkable career. Mrs Besant saw her role in Krishnamurti's life as that of a catalyst: 'Amma never told me what to do', Krishnamurti gratefully recalled in later life. She merely tried to prepare him for a worldwide regenerative mission. He was encouraged to meet people, to give talks and lead discussions. The Order of the Star in the East was organized to pave the way for the very special work he was to do.

### **Political Work for India**

A new period in Annie Besant's life began in 1913 when she became active in Indian politics, and gave a lead by claiming Home Rule for India. She entered politics because she saw that India's independence was essential for her age-old wisdom to become a beacon for the whole world. The Home Rule movement she organized spread all over India. She used all her resources to bring together on the common platform of the 'All India Home Rule League' the two sections of the Indian National Congress which had been divided since 1907. Later she was elected President of the Indian National Congress inspiring Indians with a dynamic vision of India's future. Since the British government merely suppressed agitation but did little to remove the grievances, she started the Young Men's Indian Association in 1914 to train them for public work and donated Gokhale Hall in Madras as a centre for national awakening and free speech. She also started two journals: *The Commonweal*, a weekly dealing with issues of national

reform; and *New India*, a daily newspaper which for fifteen years was a powerful instrument promoting Home Rule and revolutionizing Indian journalism.

Ten months after she began her political work, the Great War broke out. India was called upon to make great sacrifices, which she did gladly but not a single word was said by any British statesman as to India's contribution. It was this blunder of British statesmen that convinced Dr Besant that the political work in India had to continue, and could not be modified or slackened because the Empire was at war. She was interned in 1917 for three months because of her success in arousing the love of freedom in the Indian people. She took as her motto not only 'strike while the iron is hot', but also 'make it hot by striking'. She taught Indian journalists to write strong leading articles denouncing the action of the government, yet keeping within the letter of the law. As President of the Indian National Congress; she made the office one of active work throughout the year, instead of only presiding over it during the four-day annual meetings, as was the practice earlier.

Annie Besant's life was one of incredible activity. By 1918 she had started the Madras Parliament, opened Madanapalle College (now in Andhra Pradesh), inaugurated the Adyar Arts League, started the Home Rule League in Bombay, started the Girls' College in Benares, founded the Order of the Brothers of Service, presided over the Women's Indian Association at Adyar—from which grew the All-India Women's Conference at Poona (now Pune) in 1927 and the All-Asian Women's Conference at Lahore in 1931—and started the Society for the Promotion of National Education (SPNE). Unfortunately, she fell into disfavour with the Indian National Congress because of her opposition to Mr Gandhi's plan of non-cooperation and civil disobedience as she foresaw the danger of instilling disrespect for the law. Although she had a deep regard for Gandhi as someone whose life was guided by truth and compassion, she herself stood by constitutional methods for achieving political reform. Mr Gandhi's policies were adopted and the disasters she had anticipated occurred in various parts of India. Though she became unpopular and lost her position as a political leader, she still continued with her work for India.

### **Clairvoyant Investigations**

Those who came into intimate contact with Annie Besant were aware of her spiritual powers and first-hand knowledge of many occult matters. She used certain of her yogic powers to investigate the nature of the super-physical realms, and several books on this recondite subject were written in collaboration with her colleague, C.W. Leadbeater. A remarkable piece of writing done by them was *Occult Chemistry*, in which they described the chemical elements examined by them. The first edition was printed in 1908, when it did not appear possible to reconcile their observations with the scientific knowledge of atomic structure of those times, but recent developments in the field support them. C. Jinarâjadâsa, a former President of the Theosophical Society, published in 1951 a third, enlarged edition of *Occult Chemistry*, containing descriptions of 111 atoms, including 14 isotopes, and the molecules of 29 inorganic compounds and 22 organic compounds. Dr Stephen M. Phillips, a theoretical physicist, made a detailed analysis of the Besant–Leadbeater studies in the late 1970s and provided a lucid explanation and reinterpretation of their observations, reconciling them with present-day physics.

### **Last Days**

On 20 September 1933, Dr Besant laid aside her physical body at Adyar. Her Presidentship spanned twenty-six years full of glorious devoted service to the Theosophical Society and to mankind at large, and she passed away as she had lived—a warrior Soul. Mr N. Sri Ram, who was then her Secretary, wrote the following tribute:

Dr Besant was nothing if she was not wholehearted and whole-souled in all that she undertook, in every aim and every inner impulse. . . . Almost always, as I know from personal knowledge of how she affected various people, they were struck with the extraordinary magnetism that seemed to surround her, the brightest energy, which seemed to leave her at the end of the day almost as fresh as at the beginning.

### **Women's organizations/Indian Women's Movement**

The roots of the Indian women's movement go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century male social reformers who took up issues concerning women and started women's organizations. Women started forming their own organization from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century first at the local and then at the national level. In the years before independence, the two main issues they took up were political rights and reform of personal laws. Women's participation in the freedom struggle broadened the base of the women's movement. In post independence India, large number of women's autonomous groups has sprung up challenging patriarchy and taking up a variety of issues such as violence against women, greater share for women in political decision making, etc. both at the activist and academic level. India has a rich and vibrant women's movement but it has still a long way to go to achieve gender equality and gender justice.

### **Socio-Religious Reform Movements**

The roots of the Indian women's movement go back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when social reformers, beginning with Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833), began to focus on issues concerning women. Roy condemned sati, kulin polygamy and spoke in favour of women's property rights. He held the condition of Indian women as one of the factors responsible for the degraded state of Indian society. If Ram Mohun is remembered for his anti-sati movement, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar is more often remembered for his widow remarriage campaign. Following them, improving the condition of women became the first tenet of the Indian social reform movement. Women's inferior status, enforced seclusion, early marriage, condition of widows and lack of education were facts documented by reformers throughout the country.

Women's Organizations started by men.

Men who belonged to the socio religious reform associations began the first organization for women. In Bengal, Keshub Chandra Sen, a prominent Brahmo Samaj leader, started a woman's journal, held prayer meetings for women and developed educational programmes for women. Members of the Brahmo Samaj formed associations for women of their own families and faith. The Prarthana Samaj in Maharashtra and Gujarat did similar work. Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar, Madhav Govind Ranade and R.G. Bhandarkar in Pune and Mahipatram Rupram Nilkanth and his associates in Ahmedabad started organizations for prohibition of child marriage, for widow remarriage and for women's education. The male-inspired and male-guided organizations for women did valuable work in educating women and giving them their first experience with public work. While the men wanted their women to be educated and take part in public activities, they regarded the home as the primary focus for women.

### **Women's organizations started by women**



By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a few women emerged from within the reformed families who formed organizations of their own. One of the first to do so was Swarnakumari Devi, daughter of Devendranath Tagore, a Brahmo leader, and sister of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, who formed the Ladies Society in Calcutta in 1882 for educating and imparting skills to widows and other poor women to make them economically self-reliant. She edited a women journal, *Bharati*, thus earning herself the distinction of being the first Indian woman editor. In the same year, Ramabai Saraswati formed the Arya Mahila Samaj in Pune and a few years later started the Sharda Sadan in Bombay. The National Conference was formed at the third session of the Indian National Congress in 1887 to provide a forum for the discussion of social issues. The Bharat Mahila Parishad was the women's wing of this and was inaugurated in 1905. It focused on child marriage, condition of widows, dowry and other "evil" customs. The Parsis, the Muslims and the Sikhs all formed their own women's organizations. Women in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other smaller cities formed associations whose members were drawn from among a small group of urban educated families. They were useful in bringing women out of their homes, giving them an opportunity to meet other women, doing philanthropic work, encouraging them to take an interest in public affairs and thus broadening their horizon. It also gave them the experience of managing an organization.

### **National Women's Organizations**

The early women's organizations had been confined to a locality or city. In 1910, Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, daughter of Swarnakumari Devi formed the Bharat Stree Mandal (Great Circle of India Women) with the object of bringing together "women of all castes, creeds, classes and parties... on the basis of their common interest in the moral and material progress of the women of India." (Bagal, 1964). It planned to open branches all over India to promote women's education. Branches were started in different cities such as Lahore, Amritsar, Allahabad, Hyderabad, Delhi, Karachi and other cities. Purdah was regarded by Sarala Devi as the main obstacle for women's education and teachers were sent round to women's homes to educate them. She wanted women to escape male domination and so only women were allowed to join her organization. The Bharat Stree Mahila Mandal however proved to be a short-lived venture.

### **Votes for Women**

In the inter-war years, between 1917 and 1945, there were two main issues that the women's movement took up- political rights for women and reform of personal laws. When Lord Edwin Montague, Secretary of State for India, came to India to join the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford to survey the political scene with a view to introducing constitutional reforms, Indian women saw an opportunity to demand political rights. This led to the foundation of the Women's Indian Association (WIA) in 1917 by Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins and Dorothy Jinarajadasa, all three Irish women Theosophists, who had been suffragettes in their own country. They were joined by Malati Patwardhan, Ammu Swaminathan, Mrs. Dadabhoy and Mrs. Ambujammal. WIA was in a sense the first all-India women's association with the clear objective of securing voting rights for women. A Memorandum signed by 23 women from different parts of the country, demanding votes for women on the same terms as men which would enable them to have a say in political matters was submitted to Montague and Chelmsford. It also stated other demands such as for education, training in skills, local self-government, social welfare, etc. (Cousins, 1950) The Indian National Congress at its session in Calcutta in 1917, over which Annie Besant presided, supported the demand of votes for women and so did the Muslim League. A women's delegation led by Sarojini Naidu met the Secretary of State and the Viceroy to plead their case personally. The women leaders argued that the absence of women in the

legislative assemblies was deplorable and that their presence would be extremely helpful as they could ensure that “children grow up to be splendid, healthy, educated efficient and noble sons and daughters of India...” (Basu, 2008,)

Women’s organizations held meetings all over India to express support for women’s franchise. Behind the scene, Margaret Cousins and a few other women worked hard to make their case. At this time petition politics was the main way of making an impression on the government. The Southborough Franchise Committee toured India in 1918 to gather information. It accepted women’s petitions but was initially reluctant to grant the franchise to women as it felt that Indian women were not yet ready for it. WIA and other women’s groups were furious and continued their agitation. Sarojini Naidu and Annie Besant went to England to present evidence before the joint Parliamentary Committee while local branches of WIA held meetings, passed resolutions and forwarded them to London. A delegation was sent to England to plead their case. The Joint Parliamentary Committee of Parliament finally agreed to remove the sex disqualification but left it to the provincial legislatures to decide how and when to do so. Travancore-Cochin, a princely state, was the first to give voting rights to women in 1920, followed by Madras and Bombay in 1921. Other states followed. Franchise was of course extremely limited. Women could vote only if they possessed qualifications of wifehood, property and education. In the elections held in 1926, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya stood for the Madras Legislative Council elections from Mangalore but was defeated by a narrow margin. (Nanda, 2002) The Madras Government nominated Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy, a noted social worker and medical doctor, to the Legislative Council where she took up the women’s cause.

Ten years after the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, the Simon Commission was appointed in 1927 as the first step towards the formulation of a new India Act. This led to the second round in the battle for female enfranchisement. When the Commission visited India, the Indian National Congress boycotted it on the ground that there were no Indian members on the Commission. The WIA joined the boycott, while the All India Women’s Conference was divided and some of its members met the Commission. AIWC prepared a Memorandum to be submitted to the Franchise Committee of the Second Round Table Conference demanding universal adult franchise, mixed general electorate and no reservation of seats for women. The Franchise Committee under the chairmanship of Lord Lothian rejected universal adult franchise but recommended that 2 to 5 per cent of seats in the provincial legislatures be reserved for women (Reddy, 1956). AIWC rejected the demand for reserved seats. The Government of India Act of 1935 increased the number of enfranchised women and removed some of the previous qualifications. All women over 21 could vote provided they fulfilled the qualification of property and education. Women had to wait till after independence to get universal adult franchise.

### **Reform of Personal Laws**

The All India Women’s Conference was established in 1927 at the initiative of Margaret Cousins to take up the problem of women’s education (Basu and Ray, 2003). Women from different parts of India belonging to different religions, castes and communities attended the first session in Pune that was a great success. AIWC’s initial concern was with education but it realized that girls did not go to school because of purdah, child marriage, and other social customs. It therefore took up these issues. It waged a vigorous campaign for raising the age of marriage which led to the passing of the Sarda Act in 1929. AIWC took up the cause of reform of personal law. As there was some opposition to a common civil law, it demanded reform of Hindu laws to prohibit bigamy, provide the right to divorce and for women to inherit property.

The women's movement carried on a sustained campaign for these reforms that were finally obtained with the passing of the Hindu Code Bills in the 1950s.

### **Women in the National Movement**

While on the one hand women's organizations were fighting for women's political and economic rights and trying to improve their position by education and social reform, women's struggle entered a new phase with the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene. Women had been associated with the freedom struggle before that too. They had attended sessions of the Indian National Congress and taken part in the *swadeshi* movement in Bengal, 1905-11 and in the Home Rule Movement. But the involvement of really large number of women in the national movement began when Gandhi launched the first Non Co-operation Movement and gave a special role to women. Peasant women played an important role in the rural satyagrahas of Borsad and Bardoli. Women participated in the Salt *satyagraha*, in the Civil Disobedience Movement, in the Quit India Movement and in all the Gandhian satyagrahas. They held meetings, organized processions, picketed shops selling foreign cloth and liquor and went to jail. While thousands of women joined the freedom movement in response to Gandhi's call, there were others who could not accept his creed of non-violence and joined revolutionary or terrorist groups. Their hatred of the British was intense and their plan was to make attempts on European lives as widely as possible. They believed in individual acts of heroism not in building a mass movement.

Women participated in the freedom movement because they were inspired by patriotism and wanted to see the end of foreign rule. It is debatable as to how far this participation liberated them. Women's participation in the freedom movement did not lead to a separate autonomous women's movement since it was part of the anti-colonial movement. While women who picketed shops, marched in processions or went to jail or threw bombs did not question male leadership or patriarchal values, it did generate in them a sense of self-confidence and a realization of their own strength. Many returned to their homes but others continued their activities in the public arena. It transformed the lives of many young widows such as Durgabai Deshmukh or Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya. Women won respect for their courage and the large numbers in which they participated in the freedom struggle and at the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress in 1930, the resolution on Fundamental Rights gave equal rights to women.

### **Women in the labour movement**

In 1917 Anasuya Sarabhai had led the Ahmedabad textile workers' strike and in 1920 under her leadership the Majoor Mahajan, the Ahmedabad textile mill workers union was established. By the late 1920s, the presence of women in the workers' movement was noticeable. There were several prominent women unionists and women workers were consciously organized and a special role was given to them in the workers' movement. Bombay was the center of this development and Maniben Kara emerged as the socialist leader of railway workers and Ushabai Dange and Parvati Bhore as Communist leaders of textile workers. In the 1928-29 Bombay textile mill workers' strike, women played a leading role, as they did in the Calcutta strike during the same years.

### **First Phase of Women's Movement: An Assessment**

19<sup>th</sup> century social reformers were primarily concerned with issues that affected urban, upper caste, middle class women such as purdah, sati, education, age of marriage and widow remarriage. They argued that uplift of women was necessary because women are the mothers of future generations. While women were urged to come out and work for the nation, there was no questioning of the traditional role of mother and wife. In fact it was stressed that if they were educated they would become better wives and mothers. The women's organizations demanded political rights and reforms in personal laws. The nationalist movement brought into its fold elite women but also poor, illiterate rural and urban women. What then was the nature of the women's movement during the period before independence? Social reform, demand for political, economic and legal rights as well as participation in the freedom struggle were the main elements in the women's movement. Women's participation in the public arena and in politics legitimized their claim to a place in the governance of India.

The national women's organizations like WIA and AIWC tried to remain apolitical but many of their leaders and members joined political parties whose main demand was *swaraj*. As early as 1918, moving the resolution at the Indian National Congress, Sarala Devi Chaudhurani told the delegates that women had as much rights as men for this was the age of human rights, justice, freedom and self determination. She asked, "How do we attain rights?" and answered, "By the strength of our agitation we must force men to concede our demands and at the same time carry on propaganda among ourselves." (Quoted in Forbes, 1998, 94). The women's organizations did precisely this by holding meetings carrying on propaganda and petitioning the government to give women votes and bring about changes in laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, property rights, etc. All women's organizations worked very hard to gather information for the Rao Committee on the Hindu Code Bill. They issued questionnaires and held meetings to discuss the implications of these reforms. Efforts were also directed towards women's education and improving the condition of poorer women. These organizations cut across boundaries of religion, caste, language and region. In 1938 the Indian National Congress set up a National Planning Committee under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru. One of the 29 sub-committees established was on "Women's Role in a Planned Economy" in which many prominent women's organizations and women Congress leaders were members. The terms of reference of the committee were very comprehensive and dealt with every aspect of women's life and work. The committee put in an enormous amount of work, sending detailed questionnaires and compiling a huge amount of data. In its report, it came up with some extremely radical recommendations. The women in the movement were educated and mentored by men but they were not mere puppets of the anglophile elite or even of nationalists. Nor were they a monolithic group. Some had been educated in English medium convent schools others in *pathshalas*. Some were from princely families, others from ordinary middle class homes. Some of them were strong personalities with views of their own.

The women's movement in pre-independent India has been often called the first wave feminism. In this phase, women blamed tradition and religion for their suffering and sought redress in education and legal change. They were feminists in the sense that they recognized women as oppressed because of their sex. They looked upon women as biologically, psychologically and spiritually different from men and based their claim for representation in public life on the complementarity of this difference. They argued that women could bring a special knowledge of the household and family matters to forums where public policy was debated and formulated. This ideology fitted well with Gandhi's views on women and the nationalist desire to bring women into the freedom movement.

## The Women's Movement: 1970s to the Present

In post-independent India, the women's movement was divided, as the common enemy, foreign rule, was no longer there. Many of the Muslim members went over to Pakistan. Some of the women leaders now formally joined the Indian National Congress and held positions of power as Ministers, Governors and Ambassadors. Free India's Constitution gave universal adult franchise and by the mid fifties India had fairly liberal laws concerning women. Most of the demands of the women's movement had been met and there seemed few issues left to organize around. Women's organizations now saw the problem as one of implementation and consequently there was a lull in the women's movement. Women dissatisfied with the *status quo* joined struggles for the rural poor and industrial working class such as the Tebhaga movement in Bengal, the Telangana movement in Andhra Pradesh or the Naxalite movement. Shahada, which acquired its name from the area in which it occurred, in Dhulia district in Maharashtra, was a tribal landless labourers' movement against landlords. Women played a prominent role and led demonstrations, invented and shouted militant slogans and mobilized the masses. As women's militancy developed, gender based issues were raised. There was an anti alcohol agitation as men used to get drunk and beat their wives. Women went round villages breaking pots in liquor dens. Meanwhile in Ahmedabad, what was probably the first attempt at a women's trade union was made with the formation of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) at the initiative of Ela Bhat in 1972. Its aim was to improve the condition of poor women who worked in the unorganized sector by providing training, technical aids and collective bargaining. Based on Gandhian ideals, SEWA has been a remarkable success.

The anti price rise agitation launched in Bombay in 1973 by Mrinal Gore of the Socialist Party and Ahalya Rangnekar of the CPI-M, together with others, mobilized women of the city against inflation. The movement grew rapidly becoming a mass movement for consumer protection. So many housewives got involved in the movement that a new form of protest was invented by women coming out in the streets and beating *thalis* (metal plates) with rolling pins. The Nav Nirman movement, originally a students movement in Gujarat against soaring prices, black marketing and corruption launched in 1974 was soon joined by thousands of middle class women. Their method of protest ranged from mass hunger strike, mock funerals and prabhat pheris. The Chipko movement got its name from the Hindi word '*chipko*' which means to cling. This clinging to trees was a particular action people used to save trees, which were crucial to their lives, from being felled. The movement began in 1973 in the small hilly town of Gopeshwar in Chamoli district when representatives from a sports factory came to cut trees. Women joined the movement in 1974 and with their united strength prevented the contractor from cutting trees. It was the women of Chipko who brought to public attention the importance of trees and the need to protect the environment.

## Towards Equality Report

The publication of *Towards Equality, the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women* in 1974 and the United Nation's declaration of 1975 as the International Year of Women beginning with the First World Conference on Women in Mexico, generated a new interest in and debate on women's issues. The data collected by CSW Report after exhaustive countrywide investigation revealed that the *de jure* equality granted by the Indian Constitution had not been translated into reality and large masses of women had remained unaffected by the rights granted



to them more than 25 years earlier. It provided the intellectual foundation of a new women's movement that found expression both in activism and the academia.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the growth of numerous women's groups that took up issues such as dowry deaths, bride burning, rape, *sati* and focused on violence against women. They stressed the sexual oppression of women in a way previous reform or feminist groups had never done. They questioned the patriarchal assumptions underlying women's role in the family and society based on the biological sex differences implying a "natural" separation of human activities by gender differentials, the public political sphere being the male domain and the private familial sphere as that of the female which eventually translates into a domination of male over female. It was held that based on such a dichotomous perception of male and female roles, women find themselves in a secondary role which may sometimes lead to humiliation, torture and violence even within the family. Such a questioning of the patriarchal character of the family and society was not evident in the earlier phase of the women's movement. Thus they held that the first step towards women's liberation was to become aware of such patriarchal assumptions based on biological sex differences and roles.

Some of the earliest autonomous women's groups were the Progressive Organization of Women (POW, Hyderabad), the Forum against Rape (now redefined as Forum against Oppression of Women), Stree Sangharsh and Samata (Delhi). Among the first campaigns that women's groups took up was the struggle against rape in 1980. This was triggered by the judgment of the Supreme Court to acquit two policemen who were accused of raping a minor tribal girl, Mathura, despite the fact that the High Court had indicted them. Four eminent lawyers addressed an open letter to the Chief Justice of India protesting the patent injustice of this decision and this led to country-wide demonstrations. Several other rape cases became part of this campaign that culminated after several years of protest in Government agreeing to change the existing rape law. The amended law was enacted in 1983 after long discussions with women's groups. Since then, women's groups have lobbied again to have the law further changed to make it more stringent and have also fought for an implementation machinery to be set up without which the law is less effective than it was intended to be.

The POW in Hyderabad organized new and fresh protests against dowry. In the late 1970s, Delhi became the focus of the movement against dowry and the violence inflicted on women in the marital home. Groups which took up the campaign included '*Stree Sangharsh*' and '*Mahila Dakshita Samiti*'. Later, a joint front called the '*Dahej Virodhi Chetna Mandal*' (organization for creating consciousness against dowry) was formed under whose umbrella a large number of organizations worked. The anti dowry campaign attempted to bring social pressure to bear on offenders so that they would be isolated in the community in which they lived. Experience in the campaign revealed the need for counseling, legal aid and advice to women. It was in response to this that legal aid and counseling centers were set up in different parts of the country. Women's organizations also succeeded in getting the dowry law changed.

Sati was declared a punishable offence in 1829. Yet in 1987, Roop Kanwar, a young widow, was forcibly put on the funeral pyre of her husband and burnt to death in a village in Rajasthan. Women's groups rose in protest and declared this to be a cold-blooded murder. They demanded a new Sati Prevention Bill. There were several campaigns in the eighties relating to women's rights. Among them was a campaign, in 1985, in support of the Supreme Court judgment in the divorce case where Shah Bano, a Muslim woman, had petitioned the Court for maintenance from her husband under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Act and the Court granted her



demand. The orthodox Muslims, however, protested against interference with their personal law. In 1986, the government introduced the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights in Divorce) Bill denying Muslim women redress under Section 125. Women's associations protested against this outside Parliament.

Over the years it has become clear that changing laws alone means little unless there is a will to implement them and unless there is education and literacy which makes women aware of their rights and allows them to exercise them effectively. It was this realization that has led the women's movement to take up in a more concerted manner programme of legal literacy and education, gender sensitization of textbooks and media.

Women's studies as an identifiable area of teaching and research emerged in the 1960s in the United States, although the intellectual antecedents go back further, most noticeably in the works of Simone de Beauvoir and Virginia Wolf. The contemporary women's movement provided the impetus for the establishment and growth of women's studies across disciplines. Women's studies spread to India slowly at first and then more rapidly following the UN Mid Decade Conference in Copenhagen in 1980. The Indian Association of Women's Studies established in 1981 is an institution of women academics and activists involved in research and teaching. In the last three decades a large number of books and journals by and on women have appeared. There are publishing houses that bring out books exclusively on feminist subjects. Efforts are being made to prepare reading and teaching material with a feminist perspective. A number of universities and colleges have women's study centers. All the major political parties, the Congress, BJP, CPI, CPI (M) have their women's wings. The new women's groups declare themselves to be feminist. They are dispersed with no central organization but they have built informal networks among themselves. Their political commitment is more leftist than liberal. The Indian women's movement is often accused of being urban based and middle class in character. While the urban feminists are more visible and articulate, rural women have also mobilized themselves.

While street level protests and demonstrations give the women's movement visibility, this is clearly not enough. What is needed is attention to basic survival needs such as food, safe drinking water, sanitation and housing. Women need education, health care, skill development and employment; safety in the home and at work. The last few years have seen the broadening and expansion of the movement to take in a whole range of issues. Women's organizations not only lead campaigns and march on the streets, they, including the older ones such as AIWC, YWCA and others, run shelters for battered wives and women who are victims of violence and provide counseling and legal aid. They conduct training workshops on various issues. They also help in forming self help groups to make women economically self - reliant. The success of the women's movement has not been in the number of women appointed to office or in the number of laws passed but in the fact that it has brought about a new consciousness on the entire question of women in Indian society.

There would have been no women's movement in India if Indian men in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had not been concerned with modernizing women's roles. They focused on certain issues such as sati, child marriage, condition of widows, education, etc., because they saw the world through the prism of their own class and caste. Their efforts led to bringing women of their own families into the new world created by colonial rule. Women came out and created a space for themselves. They started organizations of their own, first at the local, then at the national level. They were motivated by liberal feminist ideas and the belief that education, granting of political

rights, and legislative reforms would improve women's position. They fought for the country's freedom and believed that independence from foreign rule would remove obstacles in women marching forward. In the second phase, the women's movement was more radical and challenged patriarchy.

Yet in terms of numbers, few women, even now, are involved in the women's movement and one should not exaggerate its impact. The large majority of India women still live below the poverty line leading miserable wretched lives. While there have been scattered and sporadic examples of women's outraged protests against rape, dowry deaths or sati, women have not been able to mobilize themselves enough to exert political pressure and focus attention on those problems which are today affecting their role and status. Despite this long history of women's struggle, Indian women are one of the most backward today in terms of literacy, longevity, maternal mortality, female work participation and sex ratio. Changing societal attitudes and women's own self perceptions which are deeply rooted in our psyche and social structure is not easy. For every step forward that the movement takes, there may be a possible backlash, a possible regression. History shows that though the struggle for women's rights is long and hard, it is a struggle that must be waged and won. The women's movement thus has a long way to go in its struggle for bringing about new values, a new morality and a new egalitarian relationship.

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## UNIT-V

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## EMERGENCE AND FUNCTIONING OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

India gained Independence from the British colonial power sixty four years ago. Her achievement of Independence was a result of about a century's struggle by the people. The struggle for freedom was not an involvement of few people but rather it was a people's movement where every section of people played their roles. The Indian national movement has a long history. As a matter of fact, it began with the Revolt of 1857. The Revolt had been called as Sepoy Mutiny, by the British people, but many Indians considered it as the first war of India's Independence. However, the actual struggle for freedom began with the formation of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885. The period between the Revolt of 1857 till the formation of the INC in 1885 was marked by a rapid growth of national consciousness for political freedom. With the formation of INC the nation struggle became an organized movement.

The second half of the 19th century witnessed rapid growth of organized National Movement in India. It arose to meet the challenge of foreign domination. The direct and indirect consequences of British rule provided the material, moral and intellectual conditions for the development of national movement in India. There were many predecessors of the Indian National Congress. Important political associations before 1885 were as follows.

### Zamindari Association

Zamindari Association was the first political association of modern India. Formally launched in Calcutta in March 1838, it was renamed the Landholders' Society shortly afterwards. Landed magnates like Raja radhakant dev, dwarkanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Rajkamal Sen and Bhabani Charan Mitra were its leading spirits. The promotion of landholders' interests through petitions to government and discreet persuasion of the bureaucracy was its professed object. Among its aims were securing a halt to the resumption of rent-free tenures and an extension of the permanent settlement of land all over India, including the grant of lease of waste land to their occupants. The demand for reform of the judiciary, the police and the revenue departments was also on its agenda.

To attain its aims and objectives, the Society maintained close contact with the bureaucracy in Calcutta, established links with the British India Society of London and appointed its President, George Thompson, the Landholders' Society's agent in London.

With its distinctive mark of loyalism, the Landholders' Society was an exclusive aristocratic club of native zamindars and compradors. Membership of the club was also extended to non-official Britons engaged in trade and commerce in Bengal. It was beyond the means of ordinary raiyyats to become its members. The Landholders' Society failed to take root in areas outside the Bengal Presidency, where the Permanent Settlement did not exist. With its limited field and range of activity, its only achievement was the concession it had extracted from government in the form of exemption of *Brahmottara* (land donated for the services of Brahmins and temples), to the extent of ten *bighas*, from rent. The Landholders' Society may be said to have inaugurated the new course of modern institutional politics in India.

The Landholders' Society did not endure long. It became inactive around 1842, becoming almost moribund by 1843, although maintaining a precarious existence till 1850. It was superseded by the Bengal British India society.

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## Bengal British India Society

Bengal British India Society founded in Calcutta on 20 April 1843, was the second political public association to be formed in British India, the first being the zamindari association (1837). It was, like its predecessor, avowedly a loyalist body based on limited Indo-British collaboration. But unlike the introvert Zamindari Association, representing solely the interests of the landed aristocracy, the Bengal British India Society was an organisation dominated by a section of the Bengal intellectuals, particularly by the young Bengal group that boasted of their aristocracy of western education and intelligence.

Its protagonist was a Briton, George Thompson, who, with his love for the Whiggish ideal of progress and interest in Indian affairs, had already established in London a platform by the name of the British India Society (1839) with himself at its head. During his sojourn in India in the spring of 1843 he gathered a group of Bengalis in Calcutta to form a rival body to the Zamindari Association, presumably as an extension of his own organisation, the British India Society. But ultimately it made its appearance with the appellation of the Bengal British India Society, probably as an autonomous body. It, however, maintained close liaison with the British India Society and with the government in India. Its stated aims and objectives were, to foster good citizenry qualities among the Indian populace, create public awareness about the state of governance and about their 'just rights', and strive for their realisation through peaceful and lawful means consistent with 'loyalty to the person and the government of the reigning sovereign' in England.

Its membership was open to all adults not 'under instruction in any public institution', paying subscription or donating to the society fund and 'conscientiously subscribing' to its aims and objects. But the members of the landed aristocracy studiously kept themselves aloof from it because of its open anti-landlord stance. Its Secretary had launched a trenchant attack on the permanent settlement and the zamindars and indigo planters from its platform and in the press. Its first 15-member executive committee consisted of four Europeans and eleven Indians with George Thompson as President, GF Remfry and Ramgopal Ghosh as Vice-Presidents, Peary Chand Mitra as Secretary. The Bengali members on the committee were Tarachand Chakravarty, Dakshina Ranjan Mukhopadhyaya, Brojnath Dhar, Krishnamohan Banerjee, Hari Mohan, Govind Chandra Sen, Chandra Sekhar Deb, Shyama Charan Sen and Satkari Datta - all belonging to the Young Bengal group.

Lobbying the bureaucracy and petitioning the government comprised the principal modes of its activity. The Bengal British India Society sent petitions urging upon government for increasing employment of Indians in public offices and for judicial reforms. It is said that the appointment of Indians as Deputy Magistrates and reforms in the Registration Department were the results of these endeavours. But neither the Bengal British India Society nor the Zamindari Association could achieve much, although in the growth of political parties in India they played pioneering roles. Both languished by 1850.

## Young Bengal

Young Bengal a socio-intellectual label that was given by the contemporary Calcutta society to the students of Hindu college who followed their teacher Henry Louis Vivianderozio, a free

thinker and rationalist, when he was a teacher there from 1826 to 1831. Derozio taught his students to have critical outlook about life and societal processes. He taught them how social institutions take root and develop and how people become attached to dead and fossilised ideas and institutions. Drawing examples from world history and philosophy, Derozio tried to persuade his students to love knowledge and abandon the habit of believing groundlessly. To his students his repeated sermon was 'to live and die for truth'.

The most favourite students of Derozio were a band of brilliant students of the Hindu College like Krishnamohan Bandyopadhyay, Rashik Krishna Mallik, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Ramgopal Ghose, Madhab Chandra Mallik, ramtanu lahiri, Maheshchandra Ghose, Sibchandra Deb, Harachandra Ghose, Radhanath Sikder, Govindachandra Basak, Amritalal Mitra and others. They were inspired and excited by a spirit of free thought and revolt against the existing social and religious structure of the Hindu society.

As a mark of emancipation from old and decaying traditions they exulted in taking beef and drinking wine, which they regarded as a yardstick to measure their freedom from all religious superstition and prejudice and a notable effort to break social fetters. Many of Derozio's students found logic and substance in the arguments of the Christian missionaries against many superstitious and cruel beliefs of the Hindus. Quite a number of them like Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay and Krishnamohan Bandyopadhyay even left Hinduism and embraced Christianity.

In 1828 Derozio founded with his students the 'Academic Association' which organised debates on various subjects. The meetings of the Academic Association were well attended and a number of distinguished men were often present. Derozio's students made an intense study of the writings of Voltaire, Hume, Locke, Tom Paine etc and quoted them freely in their debates. Another organisation of these students was the 'Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge' founded in 1838. Tarachand Chakravarty was the president of the society and secretaries were Pearychand Mitra and Ramtanu Lahiri.

Quite a few journals were run by the Derozians between 1828 and 1843 to give wider currency to their views and principles. Among these were the *Parthenon*, *Hesperus*, *Jnananvesan*, *Enquirer*, *Hindu Pioneer*, *Quill* and the *Bengal Spectator*. Only one issue of the *Parthenon* came out in 1830 and then it discontinued. Encouraged by the missionaries, the Young Bengal group published the *Jnananvesan* (Quest for Knowledge) for propagating their views. It had a longer life; starting in 1831, it continued up to 1844. Organised by Rashik Krishna Mallik, it was a bilingual journal aimed at educating the people in the science of government and jurisprudence. Krishnamohan started the *Enquirer* in 1831 and vehemently criticised the orthodox community that had mobilised its forces against the young radicals. Many of the groups were faced with social excommunication and all kinds of pressure were brought to compel them give up radical trend. The articles written by members of Young Bengal group and published in the *Hindu Pioneer* (started in 1838) clearly showed the growth of political consciousness among them. The *Quill*, run by Tarachand Chakravarty, also was critical of the government. In their writings the Young Bengal expressed frustration about the unequal political status of the natives and Europeans. The *Bengal Spectator*, a progressive publication, was perhaps the last of the Young Bengal journals. Starting in 1842, this monthly published articles on social, political and economic problems of the period and discussed such subjects as female education and remarriage of Hindu widows. It ultimately became a daily.

Besides their attacks on Hinduism, the Young Bengal supported most vocally the westernisation processes initiated by the colonial state. The Young Bengal movement is one of the most controversial phases of the Bengal renaissance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They earned both unstinted praise and outright condemnation. They were connected with the efforts made for the introduction of western medical education in the country, which ultimately led to the foundation of the Calcutta medical college in 1835. They also encouraged the students of the Medical College to overcome the prevailing prejudice against dissecting dead bodies and thus removed an obstacle. Some scholars assert that the Young Bengal activists were the pioneers of the Bengal Renaissance. There is no doubt that they contributed much to the awakening of Bengal in the early nineteenth century and appreciated the introduction of English as official language of the state and establishment of several public libraries in Calcutta.

The greatest folly on the part of the Young Bengal, however, was that they found perfection in everything western. Oriental ways of life appeared to them superstitious. Their aversion to native practices led them to adopt western habits and manners, though unsuccessfully, which made them hateful in the eyes of the natives in general and their guardians in particular.

The Young Bengals were too immature to grasp and evaluate the significance of freethinking and disinterested questioning. Their half-baked knowledge about western civilization and their ignorance of the oriental culture made them highly audacious to the extent of downgrading Bengal culture and tradition as a whole. Consequently, in spite of their eloquent arguments against many aspects of contemporary life and institutions, they failed to enlist support from the Bengal literati and sustain their ideology. The Young Bengal spirit proved to be ephemeral and shallow and faded away as quickly as it appeared. In the later part of the nineteenth century Young Bengal turned into a social gossip.

### **British Indian Association**

British Indian Association was founded on October 29, 1851 at Calcutta with Raja Radhakanta Dev and debendranath Tagore as its President and Secretary respectively. Other members of the Association included Ramgopal Ghosh, Peary chand mitra and Krishnadas Pal. Its membership was kept exclusive to Indians.

The object of the Association was 'to secure improvements in the local administration of the country and in the system of government laid down by Parliament'. The Association gave leadership to remove the existing defects in the laws and civil administration of the country and to promote greater welfare of the Indians. In 1852 the Association sent a petition to Parliament 'relative to the East India Company's charter' fallen due to be renewed in 1853. The Association informed parliament that Indians were not benefited by their connection with Great Britain 'to the extent they expected'.

It submitted a list of grievances, which afterwards became a part of the Congress demand. These were the relaxation of the pressure of the revenue systems, the improvement of judicial administration, the protection of the life and property of the people from molestation, relief from monopolies of the East India Company, encouragement of indigenous manufacture, education of the people and the admission of the Indians to the higher administrative services. The Association demanded that in the future Indian Legislative Council two-thirds of its representatives should be Indians.



From its inception the Association had an all-India outlook and maintained close contacts with associations of similar character, which were established in Poone, Madras and Bombay. For about quarter of a century, the Association was the spokesman of India. When the Government of India put restriction on higher education (1879), the Association vehemently protested. Being predominantly an organisation of the landlords and of the upper class, it was obviously concerned with those measures of the administration that affected their class interests.

The exclusive character of the Association and its high rate of annual subscription came under public criticism. The Muslims of Bengal who were largely raiyats and peasants had little interest and connection with this Association. So in order to protect their own interest the Mohamedan Association was founded in Calcutta in 1856. The British Indian Association, however, welcomed it. The leaders of this Association gave their co-operation during the Indian National Conference (1883 & 1885) and the Conference of the Indian National Congress (1886) held in Calcutta.

In 1859, despite its pro-zamindari and landed aristocracy interest the Association refused to join the indigo planters in their efforts to get Act X of 1859 repealed and supported the cause of the raiyats. In 1860 also it urged the Government to set up a Commission of Enquiry for solving the question of indigo cultivation. The Indian Association ceased to operate after the abolition of the zamindari system in West Bengal in 1954.

### **The East India Association**

The East India Association was founded by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1866, in collaboration with Indians and retired British officials in London. It superseded the London Indian Society and was a platform for discussing matters and ideas about India, and to provide representation for Indians to the Government. Naoroji delivered the first lecture to the Association on 2 May 1867. The Association's first President was Lord Lyveden.

In 1868, the East India Association had nearly 600 members. This had increased to 1,000 in 1878. Female members were admitted from 1912. The Association produced a journal (Journal of the East India Association) from its inception which included the papers that were delivered before their meetings. Papers and proceedings of these meetings were then produced in the Asiatic Quarterly Review, which eventually superseded the *Journal of the East India Association*. These lectures were usually delivered in the Association's regular meeting place - Caxton Hall, Westminster (i.e., Westminster Town Hall). Over the course of its existence, the Association would listen to lectures from a wide range of Indian and British men and women on matters ranging from the economic development of India to literature to suffrage. In March 1940, after a lecture delivered by Michael O'Dwyer at Caxton Hall, the former Governor of Punjab at the time of the Amritsar Massacre was shot dead by Udham Singh.

The East India Association incorporated the National Indian Association in 1949 and became the Britain, India and Pakistan Association. In 1966 it amalgamated with the former India Society, now Royal India, Pakistan and Ceylon Society, to become the Royal Society for India, Pakistan and Ceylon.

One of the chief objects Mr Naoroji had in view in founding the Association was the awakening of the British people to a due sense of their responsibilities as rulers of India, and his first endeavours were therefore directed to the dissipation of that 'colossal ignorance' of India

which had so impressed him on his first arrival in England in 1855. Later on he saw how desirable it was that the Chiefs and Princes of India should be represented in this country, and that all possible assistance should be afforded them in laying their claims and views before Government for the protection of their interests and the redress of their grievances. So 'all persons interested in India' (whether Indians or Britons) were welcomed as Members of the East India Association.

### **Indian Association**

Indian Association formed in 1876 was one of the pioneer political associations with an all India outlook. During the second half of the 19th century India witnessed marked changes in social and economic life. One of the striking developments of this time was the growth of political consciousness leading to the birth of political associations and national movements for independence. Prior to the Indian Association Sisir Kumar Ghosh along with Sambhu Charan Mukherjee founded 'The India League' in Calcutta on 25 September 1875. The nationalist leaders like Ananda Mohan Bose, Durgamohan Das, Nabagopal Mitra, Surendranath Banerjea and others were associated with this organisation. The League represented the middle class and worked to stimulate the sense of nationalism among the people and to encourage political education. With a broad vision of an all India outlook, the leaders kept the organisation above narrow provincial and communal politics.

But soon the League foundered and shortly afterwards Surendranath Banerjea founded the Indian Association along with his friend Ananda Mohan Bose on 26 September 1876. The leaders who were associated with this organisation were Sibnath Sastri, Kristodas Pal, Dwarkanath Ganguly, Narendra Kishore and others. Rev Krishna Mohan Banerjee and Ananda Mohan Bose were elected the first President and Secretary respectively of the Association. There was not much difference between the India League and the Indian Association in objectives and outlook. Both of them had worked to help the growth of national awakening and political unity among the educated middle class in India. The very name 'Indian Association' implied that national movement was assuming an all India character in outlook and approach.

The Association started its programme with a number of objects: (a) the creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country; (b) the unity of the Indian races and peoples on the basis of common political interest and aspirations; (c) the promotion of friendly feeling between Hindus and Muslims and (d) the inclusion of the masses in the great public movement of the time.

Prior to this Association there was no political organisation in Bengal that represented the interest of the middle class and the raiyats. The Association gave the young middle class community a political platform on a more democratic basis. The leaders of the Association were mostly educated young men, lawyers and journalists. Surprisingly it did not include big business leaders and landlords as members. In the words of Anil Seal, the Indian Association had worked as a pressure group for graduates and professional men, which claimed to represent 'The middle class'.

Being founded by moderate leaders like Surendranath Banerjea and Anandamohan Bose, who were also at the helm of its affairs, the Association was above extreme and narrow Hindu nationalism and parochialism. As a gesture of friendship and goodwill towards the Muslims, they invited Nawab Mohammad Ali to preside over its second annual conference. Indeed, the

Indian Association had laid the foundation for the growth of national awakening and political consciousness that ultimately saw the establishment of the Indian national congress in 1885 and for this Surendranath Banerjea deserves credit. In fact, the Association was the forerunner of the Congress.

Right from its birth, the Association started its work in right earnest. The reduction of age limit (1877) from 21 to 19 years for the candidates of the Indian Civil Service examination gave it an excellent opportunity to start an all India movement. Under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjea the Association strongly protested against this unjust decision. Surendranath was chosen as a special delegate to visit different parts of India to secure support for the memorial that the Association intended to send to British Parliament. Surendranath's tour of India was a great success. It enkindled a new spirit of nationalism, which helped to create a feeling of national unity on important political issues. He was the first politician to receive all India popularity. Under his able leadership, the Association demanded simultaneous holding of civil service examination in England and India and Indianisation of higher administrative posts. Besides, the Association led campaign against the repressive arms act, the vernacular press act, and exemption of duties on cotton goods. Public meetings were held in Calcutta demanding removal of racial inequality between Indians and Europeans and reduction of salt tax. The Association gave its support to the Bengal tenancy act of 1885 and demanded self Government in India.

It is true that with the establishment of the Indian National Congress, the Association gradually lost much of its political importance. Yet it must be given the credit for initiating the idea of holding an all India conference with representatives from every province. The first Indian National Conference was accordingly held in Calcutta in 1883. The second National Conference, organised by the Association, held in 1885 in Calcutta. It coincided with that of the National Congress, which was meeting for the first time in Bombay in December 1885. The Indian Association expressed its solidarity and decided its merger with the Congress when the National Congress was organising its second annual conference in Calcutta in December 1886.

It is true that the Indian Association lost its earlier political importance as soon as the Congress began to function as an all India organisation. Even then when the partition of Bengal (1905) occurred, the Association under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjea became very active. The Association, under the leadership of Surendranath, organised the Boycott and swadeshi movement against the partition, raised a National Fund, drew up a National Educational Policy and, in 1906, formally inaugurated the National Council of Education. Violent agitation compelled the government to revoke the partition of Bengal in December 1911. After the annulment of the partition, the Indian Association lost much of its political importance and continued its existence being engaged mainly in social works.

### **Madras Mahajana Sabha**

**Madras Mahajana Sabha** was an Indian nationalist organisation based in the Madras Presidency. Along with the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, Bombay Presidency Association and the Indian Association, it is considered to be a predecessor of the Indian National Congress. The first organisation in the Madras Presidency to agitate for the rights of Indians was the Madras Native Association which was established by publicist Gazulu Lakshminarasu Chetty in 1849. This organisation did not survive for long and was eventually disbanded.

In May 1884, S. Ramaswami Mudaliar and P. Anandacharlu established the Madras Mahajana Sabha. The office of the Sabha functioned in the beginning at the office of *The Hindu*, Ellis Road Junction, Mount Road. P. Rangaiah Naidu was elected President of the Sabha with R. Balaji Rao as its Secretary. In September 1885, the Sabha in collaboration with the Bombay Presidency Association and the Indian Association sent a delegation to England.

The Mahajana Sabha held its first conference between December 29, 1884 and January 2, 1885. The Sabha adopted a moderate policy in its early days. However, still, its aims and objectives were considered seditious. In December 1895, on his visit to Madras, the Viceroy of India, Lord Elgin refused to receive the welcome address from the Madras Mahajana Sabha.

The members of the Sabha felt the necessity of creating an organization at All India level to relieve and free the nation from the clutches of British rule and solve the problems of Indians. The members of the Sabha expressed the idea very strongly in the conference held at Adayar Theosophical Society which was attended by many patriots and leaders, who materialized it later by forming The Indian National Congress later. Madras Mahajana Sabha was considered to be a unique and holy organization which has paved the way for our national freedom by the South Indians. Thus the Sabha has voiced out the fundamental rights of our countrymen such as national freedom and other common social issues for the welfare of our fellowmen since 1884.

### **The Birth of Indian National Congress, 1885**

The Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885 at Bombay. It marked a new beginning in the history of Indian nationalism. It was the first organized expression of Indian nationalism on an all India Scale. A.O. Hume; a retired English LC.S officer played an important role in its formation.

In 1884 Hume founded the Indian National Union. Its objectives were to promote Indian nationalism and establish a close relation between and England, by securing the removal of unjust and harmful laws. Towards the end of 1884 he came to Bombay and discussed with the local leaders regarding a comprehensive programme including the summoning of an annual conference and the formation of a central National Association. A.O. Hume came into contact with Man Mohan Gosh, W.C. Banerjee, S.N. Sen and A.M. Bose. He met the viceroy Lord Dufferin and discussed his plan. The congress could serve as a focal point for national discontent. Hume made it clear that the congress should serve as a 'safety valve' for revolutionary discontent. Hume as well as other English officials and states men was afraid that the educated Indian might provide leadership to the masses and organize a powerful rebellion against the British government. Hume believed that the National Congress would provide a peaceful and constitutional outlet to the discontent among the educated Indian and would thus help to avoid the outbreak of a popular revolt. W.C. Banerjee popularized the view that the idea of the Indian National Congress was a product of Lord Dufferin's brain, that he suggested it to Mr. Hume who undertook to work it out. Dufferin's idea was to have a political organization through which the government could ascertain the real wishes of the people and save the administration from any possible political outburst of the country. Lala Lajpat Rai maintained to serve as a safety valve for the growing unrest in the country and to strengthen the British Empire.

The 'safety valve' Theory is however, is a small part of the truth. More than any thing else, the National Congress represented the urge of the politically conscious Indians to set up a

national organization to work for their political and economic advancement. We saw that the national movement was already growing in the country as a result of the working of powerful forces. No one man or a group can be given credit for creating this movement. Even Hume's motives were mixed one. In many case, the Indian leaders who co-operated with Hume in starting Indian National Congress, were patriotic men of high character who willingly accepted Humes help as they did not want to arouse official hostility towards their effects at an early stage of political activity.

Surendra Nath Banerjee and many leaders of Bengal had not attended the first session of Indian National Congress. They were busy with the second National Conference at Calcutta; in 1886 they merged with the Indian National Congress. The second session of the congress met in Calcutta on December 1886, under the president ship of Dadabhai Naoroji. From the second session the Indian National Congress became the whole country's congress. Here after the Indian National Congress met tvery year in December in different party of the country. The number of its delegate soon increased in Thousands. Its delights consisted of lawyers, journalist, traders, industrialist teachers and landlords. In 1890 Kadambini Ganguli, the first women graduate of Calcutta University, addressed the congress session.

### **Programme of the early Nationalists (1885-1905)-Moderates-Petitions and Memorials**

The National leaders like Dadabai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, D.Ewacha, W.C.Banerjee, S.N.Banerjee and Gopala Krishna Gokhala who dominated the congress politics during this period were strong believers in liberalism and moderate politics. They had unbounded confidence in the British sense of the justice. They came to be labelled as moderates to distinguish them from the neo- nationalist of the early 20th century who were referred as Extremists. The moderate leaders explained their political outlook as a happy combination of liberalism and moderation. Being believers in the spirit of liberalism they worked to procure for Indian freedom from race and creed prejudices, equality between man and man, equality before law, extension of civil liberties, extension of representative institutions etc. They wanted a share in the government of their own country and made to the principle of democracy. Their immediate demands were extremely moderate. They hoped to win freedom through gradual steps. They demanded the expansion and reform of the legislative councils. They demanded membership of the council for elected representative of the people and also an increase the power of the council.

During this period the congress was dominated by the middle class intellegentia, men of legal, medical engineering, literacy pursuits and journalist. The ideas and methods of this middle class governed the character of the national struggle. The moderate leaders stood for the maintenances, rather than strengthening of the British Empire. This approach was the outcome of their apprehension that anarchy and disorder would reappear in India if British Government was superseded. This moderates sincerely believed that India's progress could be possible only with the supervision of the British.

For the first three years there was no sympathetic response on the part of the government to the demands of the congress for reform. Hume was shocked by the different attitudes of the government. The extreme poverty of rural population had profoundly disturbed Hume. He was convinced that drastic governmental action in the matter of agrarian reform was necessary. The mass movement began by Hume was not liked by the government. Even Dufferin who was at first sympathetic to the main objectives of the congress changed his views. He described Indian National Congress as representing a "Microscopic Minority" and the congress ideal was vague. In 1890 the government forbade its employees from attending the meetings of the congress. In



1900 Lord Curzon, the viceroy wrote the secretary of the state for India, that the congress is tottering to its fall, and one of his ambitions while in India was to assist it to a personal demise. All opposition however, failed to check the growth of the Indian National Congress. According to some critics, the Nationalist movement and the National Congress did not achieve success in the early phase. Very few of the reforms for which the nationalist agitated were introduced by the government. Critics also point out that the national movement during these, years had no roots among the masses; the policy of the moderate leaders or the 'Old guard' was criticized as 'political mendicacy'. Lala Lajpath Rai writes, it was at best an opportunist movement. It enabled some people to trade in the name of patriotism. A big charge against the moderates was their loyalty to the crown. The moderates believed that India lacked some of the essential elements which constitute nation and British rule kept them together.

Even though, there is a great deal of truth in this criticism. The early national movement was not a complete failure. It succeeded in creating a wide national awakening among the people of India. It trained the people in the art of political work; popularized. The ideas of democracy and nationalism propagated the modern outlook and exposed the evil results of British rule. Most of all, it made people recognized the economic content and character of British imperialism. It evolved a common political and economic programme around which the Indian people could gather and wage political struggle later on. It established the political truth that India must be ruled in the interest of Indians. It made the issues of Nationalism a dominant one in Indian 'life which its weakness was to be removed by succeeding generations. Its achievements were to serve as a base for a more Vigorous national movement in later years.

### **Gopala Krishna Gokhale (1860-1915)**

Gopala Krishna Gokhale was a greatest leader of the Indian national movement. He was a follower of Mahadev Ranade, popularly known as the socrates of Maharashtra. Gokhale was a strong believer in the policy of modernization and reasonableness. He was considered as the Guru of Mahatma Gandhi. Gokhale was born in a Marath Brahmin family at Kolhapur. After graduation in 1884, Gokhale joined the Deccan Educational Society founded by Ranade. He served the society for twenty years in various capacities as a school master, professor and principal of Fergusson College Poona; He edited the journal of Poona Sarvajanik Sabha.

Gokhale made his first appearance in the congress platform at the Allahabad session in 1899. In 1902 he was elected to the imperial legislative council. In the council Gokhale made his mark as an eloquent and persuasive speaker. In the legislative council Gokhale greatly criticized the Indian official finance and spoke with considerable insight on the budget. He also exposed the hollowness of the British pretension in the matter of appointment of Indian to higher service. He worked as a joint secretary of the Indian National Congress and later in 1905 presided over the Banaras session. In 1906 he went to England to educate the British about the situation created by the partition of Bengal and played a great part, officially and unofficially in the formulation of the Minto Morley reforms of 1909. In 1910 Gokhale was again elected to the imperial council. He also served as a member of Indian Public Service Commission (1912-15) and urged to increase the share of Indians in higher service. Gokhale made heroic efforts in the imperial legislation council for introduction of free and compulsory education through out India.

In his 'political philosophy' Gokhale was a true liberal. He was a believer in moderation and reasonableness. He stood for the speed of western education and principles of liberalism and democracy. He was convinced about the evils and weakness of Indian society. He clearly saw



reactionary rule of the Anglo- Indian bureaucracy. He played the difficult role of an intermediary between rulers and the ruled. He interpreted the popular aspirations and the government difficulties to the congress. This, on occasions, made him unpopular with both.

The Extremist in the congress found fault with his moderation and dubbed him as faint hearted moderate, while the government on occasions charged him with holding Extremist views and being a seditionist in disguise. Gokhale put forward his views in a very candid language. 1905 Gokhale laid the foundation of the 'servants of India society', with a view to the training of national missionaries for the service of India, and to promote by all constitutional means, the true interest of the Indian people. Gokhale played a remarkable role in spreading ideology of nationalism and democracy. He played the role of moderates and extremist. In his political view he was a moderate, but in his social outlook he was an extremist and revolutionary. He wanted to reform Indian society by the introduction of modern education and administrative reforms.

### **Economic Critique of Imperialism**

The Indian National Movement was the most deeply and firmly rooted in an understanding of the nature and character of imperialistic domination and exploitation. Its early leaders, known as moderates, were the first in the 19th century to develop an economic critique of imperialism. This critique was also perhaps their important contribution to the development of the national movement in India. The early nationalist complained of India's growing poverty and economic backwardness. The failure of modern industry and agriculture were due to the imperialist policy of the British. The nationalist leaders like Dadabai Naoroji and Romesh Chandra Dutt initiated and carried out the economic analysis of British rule during the period 1870-1905. They raised the basic questions regarding the nature and purpose of British rule. Eventually, they were able to trace the process of colonization of the Indian economy and conclude that colonization was the main obstacle to Indian economic development.

They clearly understood the fact that the essence of British imperialism lay in the subordination of the Indian economy to the British economy. The essence of the 19th century colonialism lay in the transformation of India into a supplier of raw materials and a market for British manufactured commodities and field for investment of British capital. The early Indian national leaders organised powerful intellectual agitation against colonial economic policies. The nationalist economic agitation started with the assertion that Indians were becoming poorer every day. Dada Bai Naoroji declared from public platform and press that Indian is starving, he is dying off at the slightest touch, living on insufficient food".

R.C. Dutt in his book 'Economic history of India' wrote 'If India is poor today it is through the operation of economic causes'. In the course of their search for the cause of India's poverty, the nationalist underlined factors and forces which had been brought into play by the colonial rulers and the colonial's structure. The early nationalist asserted that genuine economic development was possible only if Indian capital itself initiated and developed the causes of industrialization. Foreign capital represented the exploitation of Indian resources.

Another major problem highlighted by the early nationalists was that of the decline and ruin of India's traditional handicrafts. It was the result of deliberate policy of destroying Indian industries in the interest of British manufactures. The nationalist view that the foreign trade and railways represented not economic development but colonialisation and under development of

the economy and the railways had not been co-ordinated with the industrial needs. They ushered in a commercial revolution not an industrial revolution, which enabled the imported goods to undersell domestic industrial products. More over they said that the benefits of railway construction in terms of encouragement is steel and machine industry and to the foreign capital investment. The nationalist criticized the policy of free trade, which was ruining Indian handicrafts industries.

The important point of the nationalist critiques of colonialism was the Drain theory. The nationalist leaders pointed out that a larger part of India's was being transferred or drained to Britain in the form of salaries and pensions of British civil and military officers working in India, interest on loan, profit of British capitalist in India and home charges or expenses of the Indian Government of Britain.

### **Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917)**

The evolution of the economic critique of imperialism owes immensely to Dadabhai Naoroji. Reverently remembered as the 'Grand old man of India'. He was associated with the Indian National Congress right from its formation. He was born in Maharashtra. From his early life Dadabhai was active in taking steps for the social and political advantage of his countrymen. The Bombay Association, the first political association in Bombay presidency was founded by him in 1852. During his stay in England from 1855 to 1869, he tried to educate British public on Indian affairs through the London Indian Association and the East India Association. These services in England made him a national hero.

Dadabhai Naoroji devoted his entire life and wealth to the creation of national movement in India. He systematically formulated an economic critique of the colonial rule in India. His book 'poverty and un British rule in India' published in 1901 analysed the nature of the British rule in India. He explained the poverty and economic backwardness of India and realized that the wealth of India been drained to England and demanded that this drain be stopped. The Drain theory became the focal point of the nationalist critique of colonialism. The drain also took the form of an excess of export over import for which India got no economic or material returns. According to the nationalist calculations, this drain amounted to one half of government revenue, more than the entire land revenue collection and over one third of India's total savings.

Dadabhai Naoroji, the acknowledged high priest of the drain theory. It was in May 1867 that Naoroji put forward the idea that Britain was draining and bleeding India. From then for nearly half a century he launched a raging campaign against the drain, hammering at the theme, through every possible form of public communication. The drain he declared was the basic cause of India's poverty and the fundamental evil of British rule in India. It is the thoughtless and pitiless action of the British policy. It is the pitiless eating of Indian substance in India. The drain theory incorporated all the trends of the nationalist critique of colonialism, for the demanded India of the productive capital, agriculture and industries so desperately needed. Indeed the drain theory was the high watermark on the nationalist leaders comprehensive; inter related and integrated economic analysis of the colonial situation. Through the drain theory, the exploitative character of British rule could be made visible. By attacking the drain, the nationalist were able to call into question, in uncompromising manner, the economic essence of imperialism.

More over, the drain theory possessed the great political merit of being easily grasped by a nation of peasants. Money being transferred from one country to another was the most easily understood fact of the theories of economic exploitation, for the peasants daily underwent this

experience. No other idea could arouse the people more than the thought that they were being taxed so that others in far off land might live in comfort.

### **Constitutional and Administrative Reforms**

The early nationalists demanded a share in the government of their own country. They demanded the expansion and reforms of legislative councils. The nationalist leaders demanded increasing of membership of councils for elected representative of the people and also increase in the powers of the councils.

The Indians desire at this time was the Indianisation of the higher grades of administrative service. They put forward this demand on economic, political and moral grounds. Economically the European monopoly of the higher services was harmful on two grounds. (1) Europeans were paid very high rate and this made Indian administration very costly-Indians of similar qualification could be employed on lower salaries. (2) Europeans sent out of India a large part of their salaries and their pensions were paid in England. This added to the drain of wealth from India. Politically the nationalist hoped that the Indianisation of these services would make the administration more responsive to Indian needs.

The nationalists demanded the separatism of the judicial from executive power. They opposed the curtailment of the powers of juries. They opposed the official policy of disarming the people and asked the government to trust the people and grant them the right to bear arms and thus defend themselves and their country in times of needed. They urged the government to undertake the welfare activities of the states. They laid a great of emphasis on the spread of primary education among the masses. They also demanded greater facilities for technical and higher education. They urged the development of agricultural banks to save peasants from the clutches of money lenders. The Nationalists wanted government to undertake a large scale programme of extension of irrigation for the development of agriculture and save the country from famine.

## **Lord Curzon and Partition of Bengal**

### **Introduction:**

The opening years of the 20th century were stormy. That was the time when the greatest catastrophe of history took place. The political scenario was undergoing a change. The British were beginning to feel a bit uneasy. Discontentment was brewing. Political discontent was growing due to the inability of the government to organize effective relief during the period of plague and famine. In order to stem the discontent, the British played the political trump card with great aplomb. For the first time, they used their divide-and-rule political game with great force. From 1870 onwards, the British started inciting the Hindus and the Muslims to form their own political parties to establish their distinct religious identities. That was perhaps, the beginning of the communalization of politics. The British not only encouraged the two communities to form political parties along religious lines, they took various constructive steps to create a situation whereby Hindus and Muslims would be forced to think in a way as if their religious identity is at peril. This effort culminated in the partition of Bengal in 1905. West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar were on one side and the erstwhile east Bengal and Assam was on the other. The partition was made along communal lines. This partition provided an impetus to the religious divide and, as a result of that, All India Muslim League and All India Hindu Mahasabha was formed. Both the organizations aimed at fanning communal passions.

The main reason for the Partition was purely political. The Hindus were in a better position in terms of economic status, professional qualities etc, than the Muslims. During the pre-Sepoy Mutiny period, section of Hindu traders greatly helped the British while their Muslim counterparts did not. The British were angry. With the spread of Western education Hindus made a big way, but the Muslims could not. A sense of deprivation crept in. Perhaps, the sense of deprivation was engineered. When the discontentment grew in the beginning of this century, the British capitalized on this sense of deprivation. A feeling of inferiority was there. The British merely added fuel to fire. Suddenly both the communities became aware of their religious identities. The net result is the Partition of Bengal. The sear of Partition is yet to heal.

### **Partition:**

Lord Curzon, the viceroy of India decided to partition Bengal for administrative purposes, creating a new province of East Bengal and Assam, with a population of 31 million people and with its capital at Dhaka. The Brahmaputra and the Padma (the Ganges) rivers physically defined this first partition of Bengal. East Bengal prospered, Dhaka assumed its old status as capital and Chittagong became an important sea port.

### **Given below is the proclamation of partition:**

- The Governor-General is pleased to constitute the territories at present under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Assam to be for the purposes of the Indian Councils Act 1861... a province to which the provisions of that Act touching the making of laws and regulations for the peace and good order of the presidencies of Fort St. George and Bombay shall be applicable and to direct that the said province shall be called and known as the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam....
- The Governor-General in Council is pleased to specify the sixteenth day of October, 1905 as the period at which the said provisions shall take effect and 15th as the number of councilors whom the Lieutenant-Governor may nominate for his assistance in making laws and regulations.
- The Governor-General in Council is further pleased to declare and appoint that upon the constitution of the said province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, the districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Backergunge, Tippera, Noakhali, Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna, and Malda which now form part of the Bengal Division of the Presidency of Fort William shall cease to be subject to or included within the limits of that Division, and shall thenceforth be subject to and included within the limits of the Lieutenant-Governorship of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

The reason behind the partition that was officially announced was that the Bengal province was too large to be administered by a single governor and therefore was partitioned on administrative purpose. But the real reason behind the partition was political and not administrative. East Bengal was dominated by the Muslims and West Bengal by the Hindus. Partition was yet another part of the 'Divide and rule' policy. The following excerpts from Curzon's letter of 2 February 1905 to St. John Brodrick, Secretary of State for India, give an idea of his aims in partitioning Bengal:

“Calcutta is the centre from which the Congress Party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal, and indeed the whole of India. Its best wire pullers and its most frothy orators all reside here. The perfection of their machinery and the tyranny which it enables them to exercise are truly remarkable. They dominate public opinion in Calcutta; they affect the High Court; they frighten the local Government, and they are sometimes not without serious influence on the Government of India. The whole of their activity is directed to creating an agency so powerful that they may one day be able to force a weak government to give them what they desire. Any measure in consequence that would divide the Bengali-speaking population; that would permit independent centres of activity and influence to grow up; that would dethrone Calcutta from its place as the center of successful intrigue, or that would weaken the influence of the lawyer class, who have the entire organization in their hands, is intensely and hotly resented by them. The outcry will be loud and very fierce, but as a native gentleman said to me – ‘my countrymen always howl until a thing is settled; then they accept it’.”

### **Lord Curzon:**

George Curzon was the eldest son of Baron Curzon. He was perhaps the most important British politician in modern times that failed in his quest to become prime minister. He was born in 1859 and proved to be a brilliant student. Curzon was an ambitious man who tended to see issues in stark terms. He took strong positions and would rarely acknowledge any middle ground. He became a force in the Conservative Party and served as Viceroy of India. He introduced reforms angering Lord Kitchener--head of the British Army in India. He was at the time a firm believer in Empire and Britain's imperial mission. Interestingly, today he is chiefly remembered for extending Western knowledge of Indian art, archeology, and literature. Before and after World War I, he led the fight against women's' suffrage which is part of the reason he never achieved his goal of becoming prime minister.

George was a brilliant student. He attended the prestigious Eton public (private) school. At Eton College, he won a record number of academic prizes. He entered Oxford University in 1878. He was elected president of the Oxford Union in 1880--a considerable honor. Although George did not earn a first he was made a fellow of All Souls College in 1883.

The Marquis of Salisbury in November 1891, appointed Curzon as his secretary of state for India. Curzon lost this post when Earl of Roseberry formed a Liberal Government in 1894. The General Election of 1895 returned the Conservative Party to power. Curzon was given the post of under secretary for foreign affairs. Three years later the Marquis of Salisbury granted him the title, Baron Curzon of Kedleston, and appointed him Viceroy of India. Once in India, Curzon introduced a series of reforms that upset the British and civil service in India. He also angered Lord Kitchener, who had become the commander of the Indian Army in 1902. Lord Curzon was one of the most important English Viceroys. He was a seasoned politician and very young, only about 40 at the time of his appointment. He was both energetic and capable. His understanding of the Asian affairs was better than that of other British statesman of the time. He understood Indian problems and addressed most of them. His goal was to strengthen British Empire in India. The reforms were very extensive, much too popular to assess in ant detail here. Many such as measures to deal with plague and to protect farmers were of great benefit to Indians. A measure to divide Bengal proved very unpopular. He was at the time a firm believer in Empire and Britain's imperial mission. Interestingly, today he is chiefly remembered for extending Western knowledge of Indian art, archeology, and literature. One of his reforms was to preserve Indian archeological treasures. His many reforms disturbed many British leaders who chief interest was

to maintain the established order with a minimum of local unrest. The new leader of the Conservative Party, Arthur Balfour, began to question Curzon's judgment. Curzon in 1905 was forced out of office.

### **Anti-Partition Movement:**

The first part of a news item, which appeared in the Amrita Bazar Patrika of 17 October 1905 entitled "Calcutta in Mourning-A Unique Sight", describing the situation in Calcutta on 16 October 1905, the day Bengal was partitioned, is given below. 'Yesterday was one of the most memorable days in the history of the British administration of India. It being the day on which the Bengal Partition scheme took effect, the day on which our unsympathetic government forced a measure by a proclamation in the official gazette against the wishes of the whole population, the day on which our rulers tried to separate the Bengali speaking people of the East Bengal from those of the West Bengal, the people of Calcutta, irrespective of nationality, social position, creed and sex, observed it as a day of mourning. The leaders of the Bengali community- Hindus and Mohammedans-did not however silently mourn and weep. They as a legacy to posterity and as a landmark to British administration laid the foundation of the Federation Hall. They also took a practical step towards the furtherance of the Swadeshi movement by opening the National Fund.'

16th of October 1905 was observed as the day of mourning. Right from the morning thousands of people began taking dip in Ganges. Hindus and Muslims tied rakhis to each other to show their indestructible unity. People in Calcutta walked bare-foot in the streets shouting the slogan 'Vande Mataram'. Such was effect of the slogan that the British prohibited the use of it in Bengal.

The partition of Bengal led many youths to resort to arms. In different parts of the country a number of secret societies sprang up, particularly in Bengal and Maharashtra. To terrorize the British officers, they trained members, mostly students in the use of fire-arms. In this, Aurobindo Ghosh and his associates Bengal and one Chapekar brother and the Savarkar brothers in Maharashtra were quite active. By assassinating unpopular British officials and their Indian agents, their main method was to spread terror. Attempts were made on the lives of Lt. Governor of Bengal and the Viceroy. Khudiram Bose, a 16 year old fired a shot at a district judge on April 30, 1908, which accidentally killed two English women instead. He was caught, flogged and hanged. But the main consequence of the Partition of Bengal was the Swadeshi and Boycott movement.

It was with the sense of a need for organisation, the sense of intense bitterness at the Congress, and the realisation that the liberation of India would have to be won by force, that led to the emergence of the revolutionary terrorists. Many Swadeshi movement radicals joined the movement: among them, Ajit Singh's group in Punjab and the Tirunelveli radicals after the arrest of Pillai and Siva. These early revolutionaries' special contribution was in putting forward a conscious alternative path of struggle to the Congress's peaceful petitioning. Jugantar (which along with Bande Mataram and Sandhya was one of the leading magazines representing this trend) wrote about the police assault on the peaceful Barisal conference: "The 30 crores of people inhabiting India must raise their 60 crores of hands to stop this course of oppression. Force must be stopped by force."



Though the revolutionary terrorists did not lead mass struggles against the British, their heroic acts and sacrifices won them enormous popularity among the common people. Among the major groups were the Abhinav Bharat (centers in Nasik, and led by V. Savarkar), the Anushilan Samity (based in Dacca and led by Pulin Das), the Jugantar group (led by Jatindranath Mukherji) and the group led by Rash Behari Bose and Sachindranath Sanyal. These groups carried out several armed raids to raise funds, executions of English officials (especially of sadistic and racist district magistrates), and a few spectacular attempts on the lives of major officials. Some of their more famous actions included the unsuccessful attempt in 1907 on the life of the lieutenant governor of Bengal, the 1908 attempt on the life of the notorious Muzaffarpur district magistrate Kingsford, the 1909 execution of the Nasik district magistrate, the 1909 London execution of the India Office bureaucrat Curzon-Wyllie, and the 1912 attempt on the life of the Viceroy Lord Hardinge.

The sheer heroism of these men, who carried out these acts in the face of certain death, moved the people. The would-be assassins of Kingsford (their bomb instead killed two Englishwomen and left Kingsford unscathed), Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose, became heroes of Bengal. Chaki shot himself in captivity while Bose was tried and hanged. Folk songs in their memory were composed and sung all over the country.

### **Swadeshi & Boycott Movement:**

The spark for the Swadeshi Movement was the British decision to partition Bengal. Viceroy Curzon's scheme, ostensibly for "administrative convenience", to divide Bengal into Eastern and Western provinces, was indeed a major provocation. First, the Congress, and political activity in general, were strongest in Bengal. Moreover, Curzon had an obsessive hatred of the Congress: "The Congress", he wrote to the Secretary of State, "is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise." His Secretary of State, on the other hand, differed. Congress leaders, of course, were unhappy with Curzon's hostility, and compared him unfavourably with earlier, more liberal, Viceroys. Gokhale complained, "The bureaucracy was growing frankly selfish and openly hostile to national aspirations. It was not so in the past."

Swadeshi, which means of one's own country, implied that people should use only the goods produced in India and boycott foreign goods. On August 7, 1905, in a public meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall, the Boycott Resolution was passed. Tilak had attempted a boycott of foreign cloth in 1896, but failed to elicit such response. The response in Bengal was overwhelming: By September 1905, the sale of British cloth in some districts fell to between 6 and 20% of original levels. Public burning of foreign cloth and the setting up of village samitis took place spontaneously. One of these samitis, the Swadesh Bandhab Samiti of Barisal, headed by the schoolteacher Aswinikumar Dutt, attained remarkable popularity for its social and humanitarian work among the largely Muslim peasantry. It was reported even in 1909 to have 175 village branches.

The Swadeshi movement also saw a remarkable upsurge in labour organisation, with the added feature of active public sympathy with the strikers. Among the strikes of this period (1905-08) in Bengal were those of clerical staff, Calcutta tram workers, jute workers, railway workers (of various categories, from clerical staff to coolies), and press workers. The Swadeshi movement in Bengal also saw the emergence of labour unions and professional agitators. Bombay, Madras and Punjab also witnessed the growth of a spontaneous anti-imperialist labour

movement - the most famous example being the 1908 strike of Bombay textile workers in protest against Tilak's arrest.

Among the many lasting achievements of the Swadeshi movement were its contribution to anti-imperialist culture - whether in Rabindranath Tagore's earlier writings, in Subramania Bharati's poems, or, most importantly, in the vast number of extremely popular patriotic folk songs, folk plays, and other forms of people's art. The writings of "extremist" journalists also philosophically advanced the Indian liberation struggle. For instance, as Indian "extremists" started building contacts with Irish radicals, a sense of the world-wide anti-imperialist movement (which had, of course, nourished the beginnings of Swadeshi - as in its drawing inspiration from China and the Russian Revolution) was getting enunciated.

Bande Mataram wrote (in 1909, by which time it was being brought out from Europe by Madame Cama), "Dhingra's pistol shot has been heard by the Irish cottier in his forlorn hut, by the Egyptian fellah in the field, by the Zulu labourer in the dark mine..." While Aurobindo Ghosh's fanatic Hinduism severely limited his anti-imperialist politics and ultimately led him, for fear of British repression, into the safety of ashram life, other groups had no such limitations. The pamphlet *Oh Martyrs* (1907), for instance, evokes the memory of 1857, when "the Firinghee rule was shattered to pieces and the swadeshi thrones were set up by the common consent of Hindus and Mohammedans..." When Madame Cama unfurled the flag of "free" India at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, the design contained, besides the words "Bande Mataram", both Hindu and Muslim symbol.

### **Education:**

The year 1905 was in many ways a turning point. Its immediate impact was political. Bengal at that time was a hot bed of anti British political activity. Though for some time a partition of the huge province was being contemplated for administrative convenience, Curzon decided to kill two birds with one stone. By dividing the Bengali speaking population on communal grounds, he hoped to break the nationalist movement. But what happened was just the opposite. The anti- British feeling did not fizzle out. Instead, a new wave of patriotism swept through the province. The protest snowballed to such proportions that finally the partition had to be annulled in 1911. But the protesters had to pay a price. From Calcutta, the capital was shifted to Delhi.

Saha, Bose and their contemporaries who later made significant contributions in science grew up in this atmosphere of inspired idealism. Children along with their elders roamed the streets singing patriotic songs, burning of foreign goods became a rage- "Boycott British goods, buy Swadeshi" was the popular slogan. The reason why many good students of the generation opted for science was again this vague sense of patriotism. They felt it was possible to improve things, to bring about development through science. It was against this background that India's first crop of brilliant scientists came up – the celebrated 1909 batch of Presidency College, about whom P C Ray has waxed eloquent in his autobiography. They all happened to be the students of P C Ray, though many changed over to mathematics or physics later. They were, apart from Saha and S N Bose- J.N. Ghosh, J.N.Mukherjee, Maniklal De, Sailen Ghosh, N.R.Sen, Pulinbehari Sarkar, Amaresh Chakravarty and Prankrishna Parija. Though the 1909 batch was the brightest in the history of that college, there were others destined for greatness. P C Mahalanobis, N R Dhar and S K Mitra were a few years senior to this group. Other illustrious people like Subhas Bose and Rajendra Prasad were students around this period. The teaching faculty was also outstanding, with P C Ray, J C Bose, D N Mullick, C E Cullis, Surendranath

Maitra, P C Ghosh, Manmohan Ghosh, H M Percival and others. This combination of excellent teachers and receptive pupils brought about a new period in the history of science in India.

One manifestation of the Swadeshi spirit was the Indianisation of education. There was a feeling that along with the boycott of British goods the students should turn to their own culture and tradition. English education only resulted in alienation from their roots.. From boycott of British goods the next step was boycott of the Calcutta University. Alternatives had to be worked out. The National Education movement gathered momentum, but there were serious differences of opinion about what measures should be adopted. One group led by Gooroodas Bannerjee, Satish Chandra Mukherjee and Rabindranath Tagore wanted to have a completely Indian structure of education under Indian control. The other group was of opinion that extreme nationalism could not take them very far. Led by eminent people like Taraknath Palit and Nilratan Sircar, they wanted to add courses in scientific and technical education as well. The difference between the two camps led to two different institutions – the National Council of Education and the Society for the Promotion of Technical Education. But none of these institutions could attract enough students. Eventually Sir Taraknath handed over all his assets to Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University about whom Lord Minto had said, “ I know no pilot more capable of steering the ship of learning through educational shoals and quick-sands than Dr. Mookerjee.”It was a prophetic statement. Sir Asutosh did more for higher education in Bengal than all other educationalists put together.

By an Act of 1904, the University was now to be a teaching university and not just an examining body. It was now empowered to appoint professors and lectures. Under the able guidance of Sir Asutosh who believed that changes could be made within the framework of the existing structure, Calcutta University became a thriving centre for research. Princely donations from eminent jurists and other wealthy patrons helped Asutosh in creating professorships and scholarships. With such support the University College of Science came into being. With uncanny insight, Asutosh spotted talents and brought many deserving people under the same umbrella. The new Science College soon acquired a character of it's own. A stipulation for the endowment chairs clearly laid down the rule that all the posts were only for Indians. So starting off as an ally of the British, Asutosh was able to achieve the objectives of the National School. By and by an attitude of hostility developed between the government and the university. In those crucial times, a man of the courage and stature of Sir Asutosh was needed to steer things with a firm hand. When the government rejected the request for more funds, Asutosh said we would rather go from door to door with a begging bowl rather than accept the government's terms. A galaxy of stars assembled round Asutosh, P C Ray as the Palit Professor of Chemistry, D M Bose as the Ghosh Professor and C V Raman in the Physics chair. Raman belonged to the Indian Audits and Accounts Service and carried on research during off-hours in the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science. It goes to the great credit of Sir Asutosh that this officer was inducted into the University with complete freedom to work in the I A C S., work which finally won him the Nobel Prize in Physics.

### **National Flag:**

On August 7, 1906, the first anniversary of the anti-partition movement, a big rally was organised at Parsi Bagan Square (Greer Park) in Calcutta. For the first time a tricolour flag was unfurled there. The moving spirit behind the design of this flag was Schindra Prasad Bose, a close follower of Sir Surendranath Banerjee and the son-in-law of the moderate Brahmo leader,

Krishna Kumar Mitra. The flag they designed had open lotuses on the top green, yellow and red. It had eight half open lotuses on the green stripe, Vande Mataram in blue on the middle yellow stripe, and the sun and moon (crescent) in white on the bottom red stripe. This flag was for the first time hoisted at the Parsi Bagan Square on August 7, 1906, which was observed as Boycott Day to protest against the partition of Bengal, Narendranath Sen ceremonially the flag and sang a song. Sir Surendranath Banerjee, who hoisted this flag with the bursting of a hundred and one crackers.

### **Literature:**

The sufferings of the motherland and the passion for independence inspired many Bengali writers, novelists, poets and play weights to show their protest against the colonial rule. 'Bangamangal' was written by the poet Karunanidhan Bandyopadhyay, and was published in 1901. In some of these poems, Satyendranath Dutta too wrote about the Swadeshi Movement. It was the Swadeshi Movement which gave a new dimension to the Bengali literature of that time. A number of ballad songs were written by the famous poet Mukunda Das. These songs became very popular t that time of the Anti-Partition Movement, and were great source of inspiration to the freedom fighters.

The turbulent movement against the partition of Bengal came in the sphere of drama and plays too. 'Sirajdaullah' (1906), 'Mirkasim' (1907) and 'Chhatrapati' (1908) were the important plays by Girishchandra Ghosh whose patriotism was reflected in them. Apart from Girishchandra, the historical plays by D.L. Roy like 'Mewar Patan (the downfall of the Mewar)', 'Shahjahan', 'Pratapsinha' etc. had the Swadeshi flavour. Not only by his plays, D. L. Roy showed his emotions for his motherland by many of his patriotic songs. Rajanikanta Sen and Atulprasad Sen – these two names are also remarkable for their patriotic songs. Dwijendranath Tagore's name is also remarkable in this perspective.

In 1905, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh wrote 'Vawani Mandir'. In this book, he stated the plans and programmes of the Revolutionary Terrorist groups. Abinashchandra Bhattacharya discussed the guerilla strategy in his book 'Bartaman Rananiti' (the present war policy). But above all it was the novel called 'Pather Dabi' by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay. Where a vivid sketch of the passion, the strategy and the spirit of the Revolutionary Terrorists was revealed. The character of the main protagonist of the novel, Sabyasachi, was inspired by many great revolutionists of that time like Rasbehari Basu, Manabendranath Roy and many others. This novel was about the Revolutionary Terrorist group of Bengal which was working outside India especially in Burma to eradicate the foreign rule from their motherland. Though some critics think that the importance of romance and personal emotions were much prominent in this novel than the detailings of the revolutionary activities, but it can't be denied that the revolutionary flavor in this novel was so much that it was banned by the contemporary British Government immediately after its publication in 1926. It is impossible to avoid Rabindranath Tagore concerning the Swadeshi Movement in Bengali literature, especially when his 'Gora' (1910) came out just in this period.

### **Vande Mataram:**

Created on 7th November, 1875, the next few years saw Vande Mataram being accepted and appreciated in the literary circles of Bengal. However, the masses better conceived it through a novel written by Bankimchandra himself: The Anandmath. This novel started appearing in the

magazine, Banga Darshan, during 1880 to 1882. Its concept itself generated ripples in people's minds, as it was a novel, which speaks of revolutionaries who live and die for their motherland. So naturally was the song incorporated in it, that its prior creation seems unlikely.

The year 1905 was memorable to Vande Mataram in many ways. In this year the song crossed the boundaries of Bengal, spread like a jungle fire throughout the nation which would oust the British rule. No sooner than the Partition of Bengal was declared, thousands of angry Bharatiyas protested the decision in a unanimous voice: Vande Mataram.

Bengal was a province rich enough in resources. The then viceroy Lord Curzon had ulterior motives in separating Bengal into two. Although portrayed to be an 'administrative convenience', the partition aimed at segregating the Hindu and Muslim populations on the basis of cast, creed and language.

Mild protests didn't change the decision and time came to revolt. On 7th of August 1905, a huge mob gathered for protest. Somebody just loudly said, the words Vande Mataram and the miracle happened. Thousands echoed it in one voice. Indian freedom struggle had got its march song. The whole incidence is witnessed and chronicled by a great spiritual and revolutionary person-Shri Aurobindo Ghosh.

It took the year 1905 and the events narrated above when the British government realized the potential and nuisance value of Vande Mataram. Saraladevi Chaudharani, niece of Ravindranath Tagore, sung it despite protest in the 1905 Congress convention. The very next year 1906 saw a massive blood-shed, because of Vande Mataram. A regional youth convention of the Congress was originated at Barisal (now in Bangladesh). Strict orders were issued that Vande Mataram should not be rehearsed in any way in the convention, in any procession or even in a public place. The eminent leaders present- Surendranath Banerjee and the editor of Amrit Bazar Patrika, Mr. Motilal Ghose discussed the issue with delegates.

On the 14th April 1906, neglecting the orders issued, a full procession wearing Vande Mataram badges gathered. Before it could proceed, the police charged them in the cruelest manner with police sticks. Neither Shri Aurobindo nor Surendranath could escape the attack. Their bodies were covered with blood. Again, the next day of the convention began with the Vande Mataram song. After concluding, every volunteer returned with Vande Mataram in his mind.

### **Origin:**

Vandemataram inspired a true sense of patriotism amongst Bharatiyas. These were the very words, which ultimately avoided the partition of Bengal, and these were the words recited in the end, by numerous Bharatiya revolutionaries while facing the gallows. It will be appropriate to glance over the inspirations of its writer poet-Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, in creating such a great song. Although a sudden flux of energy made him write it instantly, many events have acted as trigger.

The first runner of the Indian National Congress was a gathering started in 1867- The Hindu Mela. In its second convention (11th April 1868), Bankimchandra heard a song 'Jai Bharat, Jai' and was greatly influenced by its content. He started thinking on a need of a universal, patriotic message to fellow Bharatiyas. Bankim felt sad about this mindset of his countrymen. In his



times, Vande Mataram did not acquire so much importance in Indian hearts, as compared to later years. But surely, it provided a common chord of brotherhood provided the right stimuli for the Indians. Ancient Indian tradition worships 'Mother' as a sacred deity, a mother, her love and affection towards her children, the pains she takes to bring up the child, have given this unparalleled position in our culture. Obviously, Bankim portrayed the nation as the 'Mother' itself and hailed her. In fact, he was searching for the right words. Words, with power and zeal, which will chant the ultimate praise of the motherland. The year was 1875. Not even in the creations (poems) of the great poets like Bhavabhuti, Kalidas those powerful words could he find.

On the 7th of November, 1875 he was quietly meditating in a house on the banks of Ganga, night was tranquil and flux of full moon was showering on the waters of Ganga. Suddenly Bankimda could hear the folklore of Bengal's fishermen. It was saying that "for us, the river Ganga is nothing else but mother Durga. Easily will we sacrifice our lives for her, within her." That was the right tone, the right feeling Bankimchandra was looking for. Durga is the warrior goddess, with the lion as the chariot. Although a mother, a woman she is, destroying the enemy with a weapon in hand. This stance of the mother was what was needed. Thus was born the Indian national song Vande Mataram. The day was 7 November 1875 Kartik Shuddha Navami, Hindu year 1797.

### **Rise of Extremism**

The policy and the methods that the moderate leaders of the Congress followed during the first twenty years failed miserably. Their prayers and petitions had no effect on the British Government; on the contrary, the government adopted a hostile attitude towards the congress from the very beginning. Consequently, the political ideas and methods of the Congress became out of tune with Indian life and culture. The historical forces, therefore, brought to the surface fresh thinkers who broke completely from the basic assumptions of the moderates and created a profound revolution in the field of political thought and action in the country.

The new school of politics was associated with the name of Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra. Along with him, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh of Bengal, and Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab were the most prominent of its leaders. They termed themselves Nationalists' also 'integral Nationalists', and came to be commonly known as 'Extremists' in opposition to the 'Moderates'.

### **Factors Responsible for the Rise of Extremism**

#### **(1) Natural Calamities:**

During the last decade of the 19th century the cup of  
A woe of our people was filled to the brim. Famine, pestilence, earthquake, war and

Repressions were let loose on the country. From 1896 to 1900 prolonged and disastrous famines occurred throughout the length and breadth of the land in a bewildering succession. In 1896 bubonic plague broke out in Bombay and took a toll of millions of lives.

#### **(2) Exploitation:**



These natural calamities were accompanied by the intensified exploitation and repression by the Government. In 1890, Lord Lansdowne's government closed the Indian mint to free exchange of silver and in 1893 granted exchange compensation allowance to the British officials in India. In 1896 a noose was thrown round the neck of the nascent textile industry by the imposition of excise duty on cotton manufactures.

### **3. Repression:**

These measures were followed by a wave of repression, especially after the murder at Poona of Plague Commissioner Rand and his companion Lt. Ayerst. Four Marathas including Damodar Chapeker, Balkrishna Chapeker and Vasudeva Chapeker were hanged. Two brothers, Sardar Natus, were deported and a number of journalists, including B. G. Tilak were sentenced for sedition to long terms of imprisonment. A number of repressive laws were enacted. Section 124A was stiffened and the Criminal Procedure Code and the Post Office Act were amended with a view to increasing the powers of the Government.

### **4. Administration of Lord Curzon:**

The administration of Lord Curzon proved to be the proverbial last straw on the camel's back. In his ill-fated term of office he "inflicted upon the country in almost breathless succession one contentious measure after another to which the people took the strongest exception. His costly Durbars amidst divesting famines, his Indian Universities Act of 1904, his attack on the elected members of the Calcutta Corporation, his expending to Tibet at the cost of Indian revenue his notorious address to the convocation of the Calcutta University in 1905 in which he declared most brazenly that truth had never been an ideal of the Indian people, and finally the partition of Bengal carried out in the teeth of strong opposition from the nation tried the patience even of the most stoic among our Anglophile leaders and sent a wave of indignation throughout the length and breadth of the country.

### **5. International Events:**

Some international events of the day fanned the smoldering fire into flames. The defeat of Italy at the hands of the Abyssinians in 1894, the tough fight given by the South African Republics to the British and the Russia by Japan in 1904-05 exploded the myth of European invincibility and caused a new awakening and self-confidence throughout the Asian continent. It seemed "like overthrow of a European Goliath by an Asiatic David."

### **Political Ideas, Objectives and Methods of Extremists:**

#### **(1) IDEAS:**

The leaders of the Extremist Party were men who had either never abandoned or had come back to the faith of their ancestors. They were influenced and inspired by the revivalist movements of Arya Samaj, Theosophical Society, and especially, the New Vedantism of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. They were not ashamed of India's past culture and civilization.

The extremists brushed aside the claim that European civilization was superior to that of Asia and Africa and that it was the ideal and of human culture. They believed that "Every civilization is a working out of a Divine Idea, the manifestation of a Divine Ideal, the revelation of a Divine Purpose. The genius of every nation is as much a temple of God, as the body or the spirit of

individual manor woman admittedly is." It was on this basis that they claimed equal rights for all races and nations.

## **(2) OBJECTIVES**

In conformity with the general political philosophy, the extremists set complete independence as the goal of the national movement in India. The thesis that British rule had proved a great blessing to the country was against their very basic doctrines.

As regards the shape of things in a fully independent India, the ideal of the extremists was "Democratic Swaraj". First, it meant full freedom of growth and development to all races and communities of the land, i.e., full cultural autonomy for all the sections of the population. Secondly, the extremists aimed at the establishment of a federal type of government in India.

## **(3) METHODS**

The methods that the extremists advocated for the achievement of Swaraj were realistic and farsighted. They had absolutely no faith in the good intentions and promises of the British government or people. They ridiculed the moderates' methods of prayer and petitions and protests, and called the early Congress a begging institution.

The extremists advocated and adopted the method of passive resistance. It consisted in refusing in an organized way to do anything that might help the government and thereby make the administration impossible. The method had a negative aspect. It included the boycott of foreign goods, the boycott of British courts of justice, of the executive branch of administration and of government schools and colleges. Ultimately, if the government did not listen to reason, it might be extended to include nonpayment of taxes. The method, however, had a positive aspect too. The extremists aimed at organizing the civil life of the people independently of government help and control. The programme included the organization of villages, talukas and districts, the setting up of Panchayats for administration of justice and schools and colleges for public education. In this sense the resistance was not passive, it was quite active.

## **Origin and Growth of the Extremist Movement:**

### **(1) B.G. Tilak-**

The Extremist Movement was born in the last decade of the 19th century, but it could not play a decisive role until the partition of Bengal. The credit of enlivening Indian politics with the new spirit goes to Tilak. He was the first Indian political leader who emphasized on the four distinctive features which characterized the new movement. The first was a sincere faith in the glory and greatness of Indian culture in the past and the belief that all future development must be built on this foundation. The second was a conviction that the policy of mendicancy followed by the Congress would not lead to the desired goal, and that Indians must rely on their own strength and assert their inalienable rights. The third was a clear enunciation that the political goal of India was Swaraj rather than reforms in administration. The fourth was the awakening of political consciousness among the people at large and the consequent need of political agitation among the masses.

### **(2) Ganapati Festivals -**

The inauguration of the Ganapati and Shivaji Festivals by Tilak may be said to be important landmark in the history of the new movement. The Ganapati festival was started in 1893. It was an old religious institution in Maharashtra, but Tilak transformed it into a national festival and gave it a political character by organizing lectures, processions, meals and singing parties. The festival appealed instinctively to all classes of people and provided a platform for Hindus of all classes to stand together and discharge a joint national duty.

### **(3) Shivaji Festival -**

The first Shivaji festival was held at Raigarh in 1895. It was "national hero worship, and round his name relied all the newly aroused national pride and enthusiasm of the Maharashtrian people." Fiery speeches were delivered on the occasion and Shivaji's killing of Afzal Khan-was justified as a great and unselfish act for national self-preservation. The festival was used to inculcate national sentiments among young men. In 1897 the festival was also celebrated at Poona, within ten days of celebration at Poona, Rand the collector of Poona and another officer, Lt. Ayerst, were shot dead by Chapekar brothers. Tilak was held responsible for the crime and was sentenced to 18 months, imprisonment.

The inauguration of Shivaji festival was a memorable contribution of Tilak to the development of Indian nationalism. Tilak's efforts were ably seconded by Bipin. Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh, Lala Lajpat Rai and others.

### **(4) Partition of Bengal -**

The presidency of Bengal in those days covered an extensive area and was no doubt, inconvenient from the administration point of view. Besides Bengal, it also included Bihar and Orissa. Lord Gurzon's government partitioned the area inhabited by Bengalis, hitherto known as Bengal proper, and brought it under two different Governments. One of the new provinces retained the name of Bengal with; its capital at Calcutta, the other was called Eastern Bengal and Assam, The new province-included Chittagaon, Decca and Rajshahi divisions, Hill Tippera and Malda apart from Assam.

The partition scheme was formally commenced in July 1905 and put into effect on October 16. In the beginning, the plan was opposed through an intensive use of the conventional 'Moderate' methods of press campaigns, meetings and petitions. But these techniques had no effect on the government. Then it was decided to boycott all foreign goods. October 16, 1905 saw in Bengal popular demonstrations unparalleled in India's history. It was a day of mourning and in many places was closed and Rakshabandhan was observed. Thus, the anti-partition agitation took the form of an undeclared war between the people and the Government.

### **(5) Surat Split -**

As the movement developed and gained momentum, the division of opinion between moderates and extremists grew apace. By December 1906, extremism had advanced considerably and attempts were made to elect Tilak or Lajpat Rai as President of the coming Calcutta session. But the move was scotched by the moderate leaders by inviting the universally respected father-figure, Dadabhai Naoroji who was at that time living in England. The Calcutta session in a way marked the height of Extremist influence over the Congress. Their resolutions on boycott, Swadeshi, national education and Swaraj were passed. Thus a split was avoided because of the respect which Dadabhai's personality commanded.

The next session of the Congress was held at Surat. The Moderate leaders were not sincere about the Calcutta resolutions, and rumours spread that they would be dropped at the Surat session. Both sides came prepared for a confrontation. The Moderates wanted to elect Rashbehari Ghosh as President. The Extremists were opposed to this move, the result was that there were violent clashes between the two groups and the session was dissolved in total chaos. Thus, a split took place and the Extremists were ousted from the Congress. Precise responsibility for the actual clash has remained controversial but on a broader view the major provocation seems to have come from the Moderates. Lajpat Rai and Tilak tried for a reunion of the Congress in the months following the Surat Session but the Bombay Moderate group remained adamant. The Congress remained under the control of the Moderates till 1916 when the two groups were reunited by Lucknow Pact.

### **(6) Government policy of Repression and Conciliation -**

After 1906 the government adopted repressive measures to crush Extremism. The major instruments forged included banning of seditious meetings in specific areas, newspaper acts enabling seizure of presses, the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 which permitted a ban on Samities in Bengal, and deportations. Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported in 1907 and many leaders from Bengal in 1908. In 1908 Tilak was tried for sedition, sentenced to six years imprisonment and sent to Mandalay.

In order to conciliate the moderates the British government enacted the Indian Council Act of 1909 which allowed somewhat greater power of budget discussion, putting questions and sponsoring resolutions to members of Legislative Councils; and for the first time formally introduced the principle of elections. The moderates welcomed the Act and rallied to the side of the government.

### **Evaluation of Extremist Movement**

The extremist movement marks a great landmark in the history, of the freedom struggle. First, the Extremists devastated the entire structure of political thoughts of the Moderates and thus affected a veritable resolution in the field of ideas. They taught that administrative reforms could not solve the problems of the country; complete independence was the only solution to this problems. Secondly, the technique of resistance that the Extremists developed was best in the conditions. Thirdly, the Extremists were the first to realize the importance of mass agitation. To sum up, Extremists prepared the way for mass struggles conducted by the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

## **UNIT-VI**

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## CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

### Anti-imperialist Struggles of Indians outside India-The Ghadar party

Ghadar Movement is the saga of courage, valor and determination of overseas Indians who had come to Canada and the United States either for higher education or for economic opportunities. They imbibed the fire and zeal of revolutionaries and became the trail blazers of freedom struggle for their motherland, India. They may have lived ordinary lives but they left an extra-ordinary legacy. At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both India and Canada were British dominions, so, Indians had easier access to emigrate to Canada. The new immigrants were hard working and accepted lower wages, so some Canadian companies publicized the economic and job opportunities available in Canada to seek more cheap labor from India. During the first few years, every year about 2000 immigrants, mostly Punjabi farmers and laborers were permitted to come. As the number of immigrants increased, the locals felt threatened by labor competition from the hardy and adventurous Punjabis. Fear of labor competition led to racial antagonism and demands for exclusionary laws from cheap foreign Asian workers. In 1909, severe immigration restrictions virtually ended legal Indian immigration to Canada.

When Indian immigrants saw the doors closing on them in Canada, they started coming to the United States which needed more people to do hard labor work to build new communities. In the U.S, they faced many difficulties, suffered numerous hardships and encountered rampant discrimination. Initially, they could find only menial jobs, but over a period of time and with their hard work and determination, many of them became successful farmers with their own land. Within a span of few years, number of immigrant workers had swelled, so they started facing widespread hostility which led to racial riots, resulting in certain cases, a loss of life and property. Like Canada, the United States, which had initially welcomed the Asian labor to do menial jobs, enacted Asian exclusionary laws to bar Asians immigrating to the United States.

For discriminatory treatment and damages in race riots, the Japanese and Chinese governments sympathized with their overseas nationals and negotiated with the American government for compensation for life and property losses. But the British Indian Government would not make any representation to the U.S. Government for similar losses. Indians soon realized the difference between the citizens of a “slave” country and those ruled by their own people. The United States had also welcomed qualified Indian students seeking admissions in the American universities. However, upon graduation, they were not able to get jobs commensurate with their qualifications. The discriminatory practices were against the very ideals of liberty and freedom they had seen in their University environment. The Indian students attributed the racial prejudice and discrimination to their being nationals of a subjugated country. They were motivated to get rid of the foreign rule in India and were determined to fight for freedom for their motherland. They also started fostering feelings of patriotism and nationalism among their fellow Indian Immigrants.

Many Indians and particularly Indian students in the USA, Canada, England, Germany, and France, started advocating freedom for their motherland, India from British serfdom. They formed organizations or groups for India’s freedom. Taraknath Das, a student, started publishing a magazine *Free Hindustan* in 1907 in Seattle, advocating armed rebellion against the British rule in India and also formed “East India Association” in 1911; G. D. Kumar started a Punjabi

paper *Swadesh Sewak* in Vancouver while Shymji Krishna Varma founded Indian Home Rule Society in London.

In the United States, Har Dyal who had come from England after relinquishing his scholarship and studies at Oxford University was identified with nationalist activities. He inspired many students studying at the University of California at Berkeley. Two of his many student followers, Katar Singh Sarabha and Vishnu Govind Pingle later on played very prominent role in the Gadar movement. Dyal's fervor for India's freedom spread beyond the university campuses. A meeting of some patriotic and enlightened Indians was called on April 23, 1913, in Astoria, Oregon, where Har Dyal, Bhai Parmanand and others passionately spoke for throwing the British out of India. It was at this meeting that Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast was formed with a major objective to liberate India with the force of arms from British colonialism, just as Americans had done more than a century ago, and helps establish a free and independent India with equal rights for all. Sohan Singh Bhakna was elected President, Hardayal, General Secretary, and Pandit Kanshi Ram Mardauli, Treasurer. Lala Har Dayal, who had been a faculty member at Stanford University for about two years, was the central figure and the force behind the newly formed organization.

The headquarters of Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast was established in San Francisco, which served as a base for coordination of all the activities of the association. A building was purchased with funds raised from the community, primarily Punjabi farmers and farm and lumber mill workers and was named Yugantar Ashram. The association began publishing a magazine, *Gadar*, for free distribution to promote the aims, objectives and activities of the organization. *Gadar*, literally means revolt or mutiny, was published in Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, among other languages. "The first issue of the journal *Gadar* was in Urdu and was published on November 1, 1913. An edition of the journal was brought out next month in Gurmukhi and in May 1914 a Gujrati edition of the journal was also published." Says Anil Ganguly in his book "Ghadar Revolution in America."

The *Gadar* publication exposed the British imperialism and called upon the Indian people to unite and rise up against British rule and throw the British out of India. It carried articles on the conditions of the people of India under British Rule and also on problems of racial attacks and discrimination against Indians in the USA and Canada. The publication *Gadar*, over a period of time, became well known among Indians and the Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast itself became known as the Gadar party. Besides *Gadar*, the group brought out various publications to raise the consciousness of the Indian people to revolt against the British. Special issues of *Gadar* were also printed in Nepali, Bengali, Pashto, Gujrati, as well as in many other languages. *Gadar* literature was sent to Indian revolutionaries in India, Europe, Canada, Singapore, The Philippines, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, Singapore, Burma, Egypt, Turkey, and Afghanistan. In a short period of time, publications from the *Yugantar Asram*, particularly the *Gadar* magazine became very popular. The British government got alarmed and used every means to stop the circulation of *Gadar* and other such publications, particularly in India. The magazine, being the principal patriotic literature, reached many people; even if one copy reached India or to a fellow revolutionary elsewhere, multiple copies were made for circulation.

Hindustan Association was barely a few months old when under pressure from the British Indian Government; Har Dyal was arrested by the U.S. Government. He was released on bail on March 24, 1914 but soon left for Switzerland and then to Germany. The sudden departure of Har Dyal did create some vacuum in the organizational structure of the association but it did not cause the death of the organization. The seed of revolt that Har Dyal sowed had developed into a



formidable organization. Many committed and dynamic volunteers continued to work tirelessly and pursued the planned activities of the association.

In Germany, Har Dyal continued to promote his mission, independence for India. He knew that Germans had great sympathy with the Gadar movement because they and Gadarites had common enemy, the British. Har Dyal, along with Virendra Nath Chattopadhyay, younger brother of politician-poetess Sarojani Naidu, Barkatullah, Bhupendra Nath Datta, brother of Swami Vivekananda, Ajit Singh, Champak Raman Pillai, Tarak Nath Das, and Bhai Bhagwan Singh formed Berlin Indian Committee in September 1914, also known as the Indian Revolutionary Society. The objectives of the society were to arrange financial assistance from German Government for revolutionary activities and propaganda work in different countries of the world, plan training of volunteer force of Indian fighters and arrange transportation of arms and ammunitions to reach the Gadarites for a revolt against the British Government in India.

The war between Germany and England broke out in August, 1914 and created a golden opportunity for gadarites to expel the English from India while British troops would be busy fighting war at the front. The gadarites started forceful campaign to mobilize overseas Indians in Singapore, Burma, Egypt, Turkey and Afghanistan and particularly Punjabis in Canada and the USA to go to India and launch revolution. They drew plans to infiltrate the Indian army and excite the soldiers to fight not for but against the British Empire and free India from the shackles of British imperialism. The Indian Revolutionary Society in Berlin had arranged for substantial financial aid from Germany. The German Embassy in Washington had engaged a German National in the United States to liaison with the Gadar leadership in San Francisco. Several ships were commissioned or chartered to carry arms and ammunitions and batches of Indian revolutionaries, about 6000, to India.

Besides Germany, the gadarites also sought help from anti-British governments. In December 1915, they established a Free Hindustan government-in-exile in Kabul, Afghanistan, with Raja Mohinder Pratap as President, Maulavi Barkatullah as Prime Minister and Champakaran Pillai as Foreign Minister. The government-in-exile tried to establish diplomatic relationships with countries opposed to the British in World war I such as Turkey, Germany, Japan, etc. The gadarites also established contact with the Indian troops at Hong Kong, Singapore, and in some other countries and hoped for their participation in the uprising against the British.

The British Government tried to suppress the Gadar Movement and had hired agents to penetrate the Gadar party almost from the beginning. Har Dyal used the columns of *Gadar* to caution his compatriots against British spies. The traitors of the Gadar movement leaked out the secret plan to the British spies. As a result, the ships carrying arms and ammunitions never reached India. Germany was originally planning to send more ships carrying arms and ammunition to India, lost interest in the venture after seeing the fate of original vessels. Many gadarites and volunteer fighters were taken captives upon reaching India. Some of the active gadarites who escaped arrests, including Kartar Singh Sarabha and Vishnu Govind Pingle, made alliance with Ras Behari Bose and other known revolutionaries in India. They had come to India to overthrow the British rule and wanted to unite and work with all those forces that were working to liberate India. They tried hard to mobilize the people and infiltrate into various units of the armed forces. But the British spies out maneuvered them. They also could not get the support of Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders of India's Freedom movement, who had already committed full co-operation with the British Indian Government.

Before leaving for India, the Gadarites were given the impression that India was ready for a revolution. So, when the World War I provided a golden opportunity for them to attain their goal, they hurried homeward for revolution. What an irony; while the Gadarites had gone to India to fight willingly for the freedom of their motherland, the Indian leadership openly and willingly co-operated with the British prolonging India's serfdom; while the overseas Indians prayed in Gurudwaras and temples for the success of Gadarites' mission, the people in India flocked to Gurudwaras and temples to pray for the victory of the British.

The Gadarites had a flame of liberty lit in their hearts, and did not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the cause of freedom, dignity and prosperity of their motherland. They fought valiantly for their cause; several Gadarites in India were imprisoned, many for life, and some were hanged. In the United States too, many Gadarites and Germans who supported *Gadar* activities, were prosecuted and some were incarcerated for varying terms of imprisonment. Although the movement did not achieve its stated objective, but it awakened the sleeping India and left a major impact on India's struggle for freedom. The heroism, courage and sacrifices of the Gadarites inspired many freedom fighters to continue their mission.

A prominent Indian writer, Khushwant Singh, wrote in *Illustrated Weekly*, on February 26, 1961, "In the early months of World war I, an ambitious attempt to free their country was made by Indians living overseas, particularly in the United States and Canada. Although the overwhelming majority of the Gadarites were Sikhs and the centers of revolutionary activity were the Sikh temples in Canada, the United States, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, many of the leaders were of other parties and from different parts of India, Hardyal, Ras Bihari Bose, Barkutullah, Seth Husain Rahim, Tarak Nath Das and Vishnu Ganesh Pingley. .... The Gadar was the first organized violent bid for freedom after the rising of 1857. Many hundreds paid the price with their lives."

### **Revolutionary Terrorism**

Revolutionary Terrorism marked a phase in Bengal politics characterised by political violence by a youthful section of the Hindu bhadralok class mainly during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The emergence of revolutionary terrorism coincided with the partition of Bengal (1905) and moderate and extremist rift in the Indian national congress.

Ideologically, the participants in the politics of violence were directly influenced by the radical thoughts of bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghosh. It was in their philosophies and thoughts that the revolutionary ideas and vocabularies of the revolutionaries were rooted. Their thoughts led the youth to seek strength from the distant past in order to oust the colonial rulers from India by force. The participating youths were devoted to the cult of *Shakti* and its associated cult of *Dharmarajya Samsthapan*. They took oath to kill the demons (foreign rulers) and renew the cosmic realm of Hindu civilisation based on classical Brahmanical purity.

The revolutionaries were organised into two major groups: Calcutta Jugantar and Dhaka Anushilan Samiti. Their activities were conducted with utmost secrecy. Special codes were adopted to maintain the secrecy of their operations. Those who were initiated as revolutionaries were under vow not to divulge their plans and programmes to anybody, not even to parents. Consequently, many parents never knew that their school or college going sons were, in fact, active members of one or other revolutionary groups.

The revolutionary terrorism had two distinct phases. In the first phase, from 1905 to 1918, the activists were more given up to the restoration of the imagined world of *Dharmarajya* of the *Gita*. During this period, no less than 210 incidents occurred in which 70 police and targeted persons and twenty-four revolutionaries were killed. During the same period 205 persons were convicted under the Indian Penal Code and Arms and Explosive Substances Acts. A large number of the convicts were transported to the Andamans, then a penal settlement of British India off the Bay of Bengal. The First World War situation made the government particularly worried about the revolutionaries. In an effort to contain their activities 1262 persons were detained between 1915 and 1918. Most of them were either cadres of the Anushilan or the Jugantar.

As a result of the strong counter measures and vigilance, the revolutionary activities came to a virtual halt by 1919. Only one incident took place in 1919 and none in 1920 and 1921. Satisfied by the improved political condition and persuaded by the idea of placating the Indian public opinion in favour of constitutional reforms, the government released, under a royal pardon, all political detainees held under the Defence of India Act. The amnesty included the revolutionaries transported to the Andamans as well.

Released from detention, many of the revolutionaries abandoned the path of violence and joined the Congress nationalist movement and some of their leaders got responsible positions in the Congress hierarchy. Many had joined the newly launched Communist Party of India. Many of them had joined the National Volunteer Corps of Subhas Chandra Bose. But in spite of large-scale desertions, the most committed revolutionaries began to get reorganised under the new leadership of the Jugantar Party. Jugantar and Anushilan groups were united under the joint leadership of Narendra Mohan Sen of the Anushilan and Jadugopal Mukherjee of the Jugantar party.

The Anushilan-Jugantar merger, however, failed to revive the old spirit of the revolutionary movement. Frustrated utterly by the performance of the senior leaders, the younger revolutionaries made a federation of all groups to launch a new offensive. The federation was led by Niranjana Sen Gupta of the Barisal Anushilan, Satish Chandra Pakrashi of Dhaka Anushilan, Jatin Das of the South Calcutta Anushilan and Surya Sen and Ganesh Ghosh of the Chittagong Jugantar party. This new confederacy, labelled as neo-violence party, adopted in 1929 a programme of hitting government establishments all at a time.

Thus was started the second phase of revolutionary terrorism. Series of attacks were made on government establishments and persons from 1929 to 1933 including the most sensational Chittagong Armoury raid led by Surya Sen in 1930. Attack was launched even on the governor of Bengal, Sir Stanley Jackson, in February 1932. In 1934 came another gun attack on Governor Sir John Anderson and that was, in fact, the last major revolutionary adventure.

The new political development under the operation of the Act of 1935, the British decision to quit India and the rise of Muslim separatism had completely changed the political edifice on which the revolutionary ideas were built. The Revolutionary Terrorism thus came to an end by 1936.

### **Hindu Mahasabha**

Hindu Mahasabha was founded in 1915 to bring together the diverse local Hindu movements which had roots in North Indian public life, reaching back as far as the previous century. It was remodelled much on the lines of the Congress in the early 1920s by its founders including UP's Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. With branches in most parts of India it put emphasis on social and religious work among Hindus and untouchables, on protection of cows and in the spread of Hindi. The organisation remained more interested in protecting Hindu interests, particularly at times when the Congress tactics seemed to endanger them. In 1925, a group under the leadership of K. Hedgewar broke away from the Hindu Mahasabha and established the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS), which, since its inception, adopted a more militant stand.

Since the mid 1920s, the Hindu Mahasabha's operations in Bengal remained mostly concentrated around the removal of untouchability and the purification of 'polluted' peoples. The leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha with the support of local Congressmen undertook campaigns in favour of the social uplift of the untouchable communities. The Mahasabha's involvement with the lower castes gained much prominence in the early 1930s, especially in the aftermath of Macdonald's Communal Award. The Hindu Mahasabha invited aboriginals to adopt caste Hindu names and register their caste as ksatriya during the census enumeration. In Malda district, Mahasabha activists tried to persuade the aboriginal labourers and sharecroppers to stop work in the fields of Muslim jotedars. They encouraged aboriginals to make a common cause with local Hindu politicians on the one hand and break their connections with the Muslim employers on the other. They thought that such efforts would enable them to thwart the efforts of the leftists to win over the sharecroppers in the northern districts.

In the late 1930s, the Mahasabha also lent support to several new Hindu organisations to carry out campaigns in favour of unification of Hindu society. In several districts, Mahasabha activists maintained links with the lower caste leadership. However, this sort of campaign to bring the lower castes into the Hindu community resulted in communal clashes between the lower castes and the Muslims which often took the form of communal riots. Instances of rioting and arson involving the Muslims and the lower caste Hindus were reported from Burdwan, Khulna, Jessore, Dhaka, and Noakhali districts. Interestingly, the 1940s also witnessed a political discord between the Congress and the Mahasabha. The Bengal Congress by selecting caste Hindu candidates could win over the majority of the Hindu Nationalist and Sabha voters. Congress leaders tried to prove that they could represent Hindu interests better than the Hindu Mahasabha. The great Calcutta riot, following the Muslim League's direct action day on 16 August 1946 revived some political hopes for the Sabha. Shyamaprasad mukherjee, in this situation emerged as the sole spokesman of the Hindu Mahasabha in Bengal. In fact under Shyamaprasad's influence Bengali Hindus even toyed with the idea of creating a new Hindu state of West Bengal.

As communal politics took over the scene, the Hindu Mahasabha became more interested in setting up Hindu volunteer corps for the defence of Hindu life and property. The Mahasabha even supported the idea of supplying firearms and ammunitions to Hindu communal organisations. The Mahasabha also arranged military training to Hindu youths by ex-servicemen. By 1946, the Hindu Mahasabha was successful in mobilising a substantial section of Bengali Hindus of Calcutta in support of its politics of Hindu nationalism. In a sense, it had emerged as a platform for the Hindu bhadralok to resist Muslim dominance in Bengal politics. Many scholars believe that Hindu Mahasabha was responsible for the partition of Bengal in 1947.

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## Muslim League

Muslim League established in December 1906, initially led by Aga Khan and ultimately by muhammed Ali Jinnah, was instrumental in creating public opinion in favour of Muslim nationalism and finally in achieving Pakistan in 1947. The background of the foundation of the Muslim League at Dhaka on 30 December 1906 may be traced back to the establishment of the Indian national congress in 1885. The Western educated Hindu elite with the objectives of sharing power with the raj and motivating it to establish representative government in India established the Congress. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the most widely respected leader of the Muslim community, warned the Indian Muslims not to join the Congress in the interest of the Muslim community. He started his movement by establishing a college at Aligarh. Sir Syed and like him, many other Muslim leaders believed that the Muslims as a downtrodden nation could get more benefit from the loyalty to the British rather than from any opposition to them. He called upon his followers to devote their energy and attention to popularising English education among the Muslims. This perception and consequent activism has been known as the Aligarh Movement.

In the line of this thought Muslim elite like Nawab Abdul Latif, syed amir Ali and others established cultural organisations for propagation of English education among the Muslims in the absence of which the community remained deprived of the benefits of the colonial state. Thus the Muslim cultural organisations like the Mohammedan literary society (1863), central national muhamedan association (1877), Sir Syed's United Indian Patriotic Association (1888) and many other local *anzumans* became more active in social regenerative activities than in politics.

The Muslim leaders of India met informally once a year in a conference to discuss educational problems of the Muslim community and to disseminate the thought of loyalty to the raj. Such a conference (All India Muslim Education Conference) was held at Shahbag in Dhaka in 1906 against the backdrop of the Congress sponsored agitation against the partition of Bengal (1905) and the swadeshi movement. Previously, a deputation of Muslim leaders met Governor General Lord Minto at Simla in order to ventilate problems special to the Muslim community of India. Nawab salimullah of Dhaka, the staunchest supporter of the Partition of Bengal, felt the need to form a political party to counter the anti-partition agitation launched by the Congress cadres. He proposed in this conference to make a political platform with the objectives of safeguarding the interests of the Indian Muslims. Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk, chairman of the conference, supported the motion and thus the All India Muslim League (AIML) came into being.

The objectives of the AIML were to look after the interests of the Muslims; promote their loyalty towards the British government and cultivate harmonious relations of the Muslims with other Indian communities, particularly the Hindus. The immediate object of Nawab Salimullah's move for a Muslim political association was to put up a united stand of the Muslims of the subcontinent against a strong Hindu agitation for the annulment of the Partition of Bengal

The Indian nationalist press dismissed the Muslim League as a rickety structure, destined to a speedy dissolution. It is true that initially the League as a political organisation lacked dynamism as it was founded by those persons who had persistently suggested the Muslims of the subcontinent to keep aloof from politics during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Muslim League remained in a moribund condition for full one year after its inception in December 1906. But within a few years younger generation of the Muslims with 'middle class'



background and radical ideas found their way into the politics of the Muslim League. They not only discarded the programme of unqualified loyalty to the British rulers, but also challenged the British colonial rule in India and demanded self-government.

In the 1910s the League adopted a creed similar to that of the Indian National Congress. When the Hindu-Muslim relation improved considerably, for instance during the period of Lucknow Agreement (1916) and the period of Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement AIML became almost a dead organisation. For several years since 1920, the Muslim League was in a state of suspended animation as the *Khilafat* organisation had taken up all the work of the community at the time, and the League had practically nothing to do.

Though founded as a political organisation, the Muslim League did not develop any noticeable political programme even within the framework of loyalty to the raj. It was never a meaningful organisation politically until Muhammad Ali Jinnah took up its leadership in 1935. Implored by many Muslim leaders, Jinnah returned from London to India and took up the presidency of the Muslim League. In view of the ensuing general elections under the India Act of 1935, Jinnah reorganised and restructured the central and provincial branches of the Muslim League and asked the new committees to get ready for electoral politics ahead.

In the elections held in 1937, the Muslim League had an astounding performance in Bengal. Of the total 482 seats reserved for the Muslims in all nine provinces, the League could secure only 104. As high as 36 seats, more than one third of the total, were bagged from Bengal alone. Party-wise, the Muslim League emerged as the second largest group in the legislature, the first being the Congress. The Bengal victory of the League was said to have been scored on account of the combined support of the Western educated Bengal Muslim professionals and the Muslim landed gentry. The *Ulama* class, it may be noted, tended to remain aloof from the Muslim League activities.

In 1937, AK fazlul huq, Chief Minister of Bengal, joined the Muslim League and with that his ministry had become virtually a Muslim League one. Using the immense personal popularity of Huq, Bengal was made the fortress for the League. Fazlul Huq as the leader of the Bengal Muslims moved the Lahore resolution for independent 'homelands' for the Indian Muslims from the platform of the Muslim League. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 had a tremendous effect on the Bengal Muslim public opinion.

The Muslim League had formed the ministry under the leadership of khwaja nazimuddin in 1943 when Fazlul Huq tendered his resignation on the advice of the Governor, john Herbert. The period from 1943 to 1946 was the period for making the Muslim League a real national organisation. Under the leadership of Huseyn shaheed suhrawardy and Abul hashim, the League became so popular that in the elections of 1946 it bagged 110 seats out of 117 reserved for the Muslims of Bengal. It established the fact that the Muslim League was the sole spokesman of the Bengal Muslim community.

The League performance in other Muslim dominated provinces of India was equally enthusiastic besides the North West Frontier Province which was still under the Congress influence. The performance of the League in the elections of 1946 made its leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah the undisputed leader of the Indian Muslims. So far as the Muslim community was concerned, Jinnah was now inevitably to be consulted with in all negotiations and agreements concerning the transfer of power by the British. Six years after the Lahore Resolution, HS



Suhrahady moved the resolution for 'a Muslim state' at the Delhi Convention of the Muslim Legislators. The Muslim League became the organisation for almost every Indian Muslim when the independence came on 14 August 1947. [Sirajul Islam]

*Bengal Provincial Muslim League* with the partition of Bengal in 1905, two wings of the Bengal Muslim League were formed separately in the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, and in West Bengal. To help forming the Eastern Bengal and Assam Muslim League (EBAML) a provisional committee was formed in early July 1908 with chowdhury kazemuddin ahmad siddiky as president and Nawab Salimullah as secretary. The EBAML was given a concrete shape on 17 March 1911 at a meeting held at ahsan manzil with Nawab Salimullah and Khan Bahadur nawab ali chaudhury as president and secretary respectively. Eleven noted Muslims from East Bengal were elected vice-presidents while Khalilur Rahman and Maulvi Ameruddin Ahmed were elected joint secretaries.

The leadership of the EBAML worked hard to gain support from the AIML in favour of sustaining the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam in the face of strong Congress opposition. It endeavoured to transform certain *Anjumans* of district and sub-divisional towns into branches of the League and pleaded to the British authorities for separate electorate and promotion of Muslim education in the form of sending petitions and deputation.

The Calcutta based West Bengal Muslim League (WBML) was formed on 21 January 1909 with Prince Jehander Mirza as president and Syed Shamsul Huda as secretary. Since any literate British Indian Muslim aged 21 years or above could become member of the WBML, its office bearers also included non-Bengali Muslims. The leaders of the WBML often sent representation to the government and adopted resolutions pleading for separate electorates, appointments of Muslims in the government's Executive Council and increasing facilities for Muslim education. But, they hardly cared to work for the permanence of the Partition of Bengal or to organise the League outside Calcutta.

Following the annulment of the Partition of Bengal, the EBAML and the WBML were amalgamated into the Bengal Provincial Muslim League (BPML) as the provincial branch of the AIML on 2 March 1912. Nawab Salimullah was elected its president while Nawab Ali Chaudhury and Zahid Suhrawardy were elected secretaries. Barrister abdur rasul was elected as the treasurer and abul kashem as the joint secretary. It was only after the amalgamation of the EBAML and the WBML into the BPML that the organisation maintained a separate party office and frequently held council meetings. But the Muslim League and for that matter its provincial organs were never meaningful organisations politically until Muhammad Ali Jinnah took up its leadership in 1935. It was from November 1943 that some new and effective measures were undertaken to reorganise the BPML under the guidance of Abul Hashim, the new general secretary of the party. By 1946 the BPML succeeded in building itself up as a mass party, and in the Assembly elections of 1946 it achieved a comprehensive victory capturing 97 per cent of the Muslim seats.

Muslim League leaders from Bengal took the lead in moving vital resolutions affecting the fate of the Indian Muslims. They cherished the desire for the implementation of the Lahore Resolution with the hope for the creation of two Muslim states in the Northwest and Northeast of the subcontinent. The BPML leader Abul Hashim considered the resolution at the Delhi Convention of the Muslim Legislators for 'a Muslim state' as a 'betrayal' to their interests.

Within two years of achieving Independence, the League began to lose popular support. In the mean time maulana abdul hamid khan bhasani and other prominent Muslim Leaguers formed the Awami Muslim League in Dhaka in 1949. Series of labour strikes, communal riots, steep decline in law and order situation, agrarian uprising in some districts, police uprising, soaring prices of essentials, the language issue, and numerous other problems of the new state shattered the high expectations of the people. They now looked for alternative leadership, which was readily provided by the Awami Muslim League of Maulana Bhasani and Krishak Sramik Party of AK Fazlul Huq. These parties including some other smaller parties formed an electoral alliance called united front and in the elections held in March 1954 got as many as 223 seats whereas the Muslim League could win only 8.

Such a defeat of a ruling party is not very unusual, but what is unusual is the fact that the League, being the oldest and a mass based party, could never pick up again in East Pakistan. It could justify its existence winning a couple of seats now and then, though its presence was always marked whenever there was any Martial Law regime, both during the Pakistan as well as Bangladesh periods.

### **Morley-Minto Reforms or Indian Councils Act 1909**

The Indian Councils Act 1909 commonly known as the Morley-Minto Reforms, was an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom that brought about a limited increase in the involvement of Indians in the governance of British India. John Morley, the Liberal Secretary of State for India, and the Conservative Governor-General of India, The Earl of Minto, believed that cracking down on terrorism in Bengal was necessary but not sufficient for restoring stability to the British Raj after Lord Curzon's partitioning of Bengal. They believed that a dramatic step was required to put heart into loyal elements of the Indian upper classes and the growing Westernized section of the population. They produced the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (Morley-Minto reforms), these reforms did not go any significant distance toward meeting the Indian National Congress demand for 'the system of government obtaining in Self-Governing British Colonies'.

The Act of 1909 was important for the following reasons:

- It effectively allowed the election of Indians to the various legislative councils in India for the first time. Previously some Indians had been appointed to legislative councils. The majorities of the councils remained British government appointments. Moreover the electorate was limited to specific classes of Indian nationals;
- The introduction of the electoral principle laid the groundwork for a parliamentary system even though this was contrary to the intent of Morley. As stated by Burke and Quraishi -

“To Lord Curzon's apprehension that the new Councils could become 'parliamentary bodies in miniature', Morley vehemently replied that, 'if it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it'. But he had already confessed in a letter to Minto in June 1906 that while it was inconceivable to adapt English political institutions to the 'nations who inhabit India...the spirit of English institutions is a different thing and it is a thing that we cannot escape, even if we wished...because the British constituencies are the masters, and they will assuredly

insist.. .all parties alike....on the spirit of their own political system being applied to India.' He never got down to explaining how the spirit of the British system of government could be achieved without its body.”

- ❖ Muslims had expressed serious concern that a ‘first past the post’ British type of electoral system would leave them permanently subject to Hindu majority rule. The Act of 1909 stipulated, as demanded by the Muslim leadership.
- ❖ that Indian Muslims be allotted reserved seats in the Municipal and District Boards, in the Provincial Councils and in the Imperial Legislature;
- ❖ that the number of reserved seats be in excess of their relative population (25 percent of the Indian population); and,
- ❖ that only Muslims should vote for candidates for the Muslim seats ('separate electorates').

These concessions were a constant source of strife 1909-47. British statesmen generally considered reserved seats as regrettable in that they encouraged communal extremism as Muslim candidates did not have to appeal for Hindu votes and vice versa. As further power was shifted from the British to Indian politicians in 1919, 1935 and after, Muslims were ever more determined to hold on to, and if possible expand, reserved seats and their weightage. However, Hindu politicians repeatedly tried to eliminate reserved seats as they considered them to be undemocratic and to hinder the development of a shared Hindu-Muslim Indian national feeling.

In 1906, Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs, announced in the British parliament that his government wanted to introduce new reforms for India, in which the locals were to be given more powers in legislative affairs. With this, a series of correspondences started between him and Lord Minto, the then Governor General of India. A committee was appointed by the Government of India to propose a scheme of reforms. The committee submitted its report, and after the approval of Lord Minto and Lord Morley, the Act of 1909 was passed by the British parliament. The Act of 1909 is commonly known as the **Minto-Morley Reforms**.

The following were the main features of the Act of 1909:

1. The number of the members of the Legislative Council at the Center was increased from 16 to 60.
2. The number of the members of the Provincial Legislatures was also increased. It was fixed as 50 in the provinces of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, and for the rest of the provinces it was 30.
3. The member of the Legislative Councils, both at the Center and in the provinces, were to be of four categories i.e. ex-officio members (Governor General and the members of their Executive Councils), nominated official members (those nominated by the Governor General and were government officials), nominated non-official members (nominated by the Governor General but were not government officials) and elected members (elected by different categories of Indian people).
4. The right of separate electorate was given to the Muslims.
5. Official members were to form the majority but in provinces non-official members would be in majority.

6. The members of the Legislative Councils were permitted to discuss the budgets, suggest the amendments and even to vote on them; excluding those items that were included as non-vote items. They were also entitled to ask supplementary questions during the legislative proceedings.
7. The Secretary of State for India was empowered to increase the number of the Executive Councils of Madras and Bombay from two to four.
8. Two Indians were nominated to the Council of the Secretary of State for Indian Affairs.
9. The Governor General was empowered to nominate one Indian member to his Executive Council.

### **First World War and Indian Nationalism**

India played a significant part in the First World War. However, India's part in the war is frequently overlooked as a result of the horrors experienced in trench warfare and by Europe's tendency to home in on battles such as those fought at the Somme and Verdun, which many assume only Europeans fought in. When war broke out in 1914, India was in a state of growing political unrest. The Indian National Congress had gone from being a group that simply discussed issues to a body that was pushing for more self-government. Before the war started, the Germans had spent a great deal of time and energy trying to stir up an anti-British movement in India. Many shared the view that if Britain got involved in a crisis somewhere in the world, Indian separatists would use this as an opportunity to advance their cause.

"The moment Britain gets into trouble elsewhere, India, in her present temper, would burst into a blaze of rebellion." William Archer

These fears were unfounded. When war was declared on August 4th, India rallied to the cause. Those with influence within India believed that the cause of Indian independence would best be served by helping out Britain in whatever capacity India could – including the Indian National Congress. Offers of financial and military help were made from all over the country. Hugely wealthy princes offered great sums of money, and even areas outside of British India offered help – Nepal offered help and in total sent 100,000 Gurkhas and the Dalai Lama in Tibet offered 1000 of his troops to the cause. Despite the pre-war fears of unrest, Britain, in fact, could take many troops and most of her military equipment out of India as fears of unrest subsided. Indian troops were ready for battle before most other troops in the dominions.

Indian troops were on the Western Front by the winter of 1914 and fought at the first Battle of Ypres. By the end of 1915, they had sustained many casualties. Along with the casualties from sickness, the decision was taken to withdraw the Indian Corps from front line duty at the end of 1915. In total, 800,000 Indian troops fought in all the theatres of the war with 1½ million volunteering to fight. They fought in most theatres of war including Gallipoli and North and East Africa. In all 47,746 were classed as killed or missing with 65,000 wounded.

The Indian Corps won 13,000 medals for gallantry including 12 Victoria Crosses. Khudadad Khan won the Corps first Victoria Cross. Such was the cost of the war, that India's economy was pushed to near bankruptcy. The Indian support given to Britain's cause surprised the establishment in Britain. 'The Times' wrote: "The Indian empire has overwhelmed the British nation by the completeness and unanimity of its enthusiastic aid."

For its endeavours, India expected to be rewarded with a major move towards independence or at the least self-government. When it became obvious that this was not going to happen, the mood in India became more militant. During the last phases of the war Mahatma Gandhi said: "Seek ye first the recruiting office, and everything will be added unto you." The British government's post-war attitude quickly alienated Gandhi and was a great stimulus for his independence movement.

In 1919, the Government of India Act was introduced. This introduced a national parliament with two houses for India. About 5 million of the wealthiest Indians were given the right to vote (a very small percentage of the total population). Within the provincial governments, ministers of education, health and public works could now be Indian nationals. The act planned for a commission to be held in 1929, to see if India was ready for more concessions/reforms.

However, the British controlled all central government and within the provincial governments, the British kept control of the key posts of tax and law and order. Many in India felt that they had been badly let down by the British government for their part played in World War One. However, despite this feeling of being let down, India was to play a significant part in Second World War.

### Home Rule Movement

Tilak's activities were confined to Bombay Presidency and the Central province while Annie Besant popularized this movement in the rest of India. The branches of the league were set up all over the country. Tilak made a whirlwind tour of the country in 1916 and in his speeches he said, "*Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it.*" He said that Home Rule through was the only cure of India's political ills and the grievances of the Indians. He preached the idea of Home Rule through his two news papers - *the Kesari* and *the Maratha*. Annie Besant also toured the country and created a lot of enthusiasm among the people for the cause of Home Rule. She carried on the propaganda in favour of it in the newspapers named *New India* and *Common Weal*.

The movement reached its peak in 1917. The Government got panicky at the activities of the Home Rule Movement and it thought of suppressing it with a heavy hand. The Government made use of Defense of India Act to curb the activities of the agitators. Students were prohibited from attending Home Rule meetings. Tilak was prosecuted for his fiery and exciting speeches and his entry in Punjab and Delhi was banned. Important leaders of the movement including Annie Besant were interned. Various restrictions were imposed on the press by using the Indian Press Act of 1910. But the repressive policy followed by the Government only added fuel to the fire. Strikes, agitation and protest meetings were organized through out the country.

The government realized the seriousness of the demonstrations that broke out in support of the Home Rule League. The Indians seemed to be prepared to pay any price to achieve the Home Rule. Therefore to appease the nationalists, the Secretary of State for India made a declaration on August 20, 1917 announcing the British policy towards India. He said, "*The policy of his Majesty's Government was the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of the responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire.*" As a result the Home Rule Movement died out gradually.

**Importance of the Home Rule Movement:** The Home Rule Movement has its own importance in the history of National Movement of India. It was an important milestone in the history of the Indian freedom movement. It transformed the national movement into the peoples' movement as

more and more people began to take part in it. It worked as a light house when the political atmosphere in the country was full of disappointment. It put new life in the national movement. It gave definite shape and direction to the movement for Swaraj. It also influenced the foreign statesmen and several of the American leaders. Many British members also supported the demand for Home Rule to the Indians.

## **Advent of Gandhi**

### **Champan Satyagraha**

Now Gandhi heard about an obnoxious system of agricultural labour prevailing in Bihar. In the Champan district of Bihar, the cultivators were forced by Europeans to grow indigo, a blue dye, and this imposed on them untold sufferings. They could not grow the food they needed, nor did they receive adequate payment for the indigo. Gandhi was unaware of this until an agriculturist from Bihar, Rajkumar Shukla, met him and told him of the woes of the people of Champan. He requested Gandhi to go to the place and see for himself the state of affairs there. Gandhi was then attending the Congress meeting at Lucknow and he did not have time to go there. Rajkumar Shukla followed him about, begging him to come and help the suffering villagers in Champan. Gandhi at last promised to visit the place after he had visited Calcutta. When Gandhi was in Calcutta, Rajkumar was there too, to take him to Bihar.

Gandhi went to Champan with Rajkumar early in 1917. On his arrival the District Magistrate served him with a notice saying that he was not to remain in the district of Champan but must leave the place by the first available train. Gandhi disobeyed this order. He was summoned to appear before the court. The magistrate said, 'If you leave the district now and promise not to return, the case against you will be withdrawn. 'This cannot be.' replied Gandhi. 'I came here to render humanitarian and national service. I shall make Champan my home and work for the suffering people.'

A large crowd of peasants was outside the court shouting slogans. The magistrate and the police looked nervous. Then Gandhi said, 'I shall help you to calm these people if I can speak to them.' Gandhi appeared before the crowd and said, 'You must show your faith in me and in my work by remaining quiet. The magistrate had the right to arrest me, because I disobeyed his order. If I am sent to jail, you must accept that as just. We must work peacefully. And violent act will harm our cause.' The crowd dispersed peacefully. The police stared at Gandhi in admiration as he went inside the court.

The Government withdrew the case against Gandhi and allowed him to remain in the district. Gandhi stayed there to study the grievances of the peasants. He visited many villages. He cross-examined about 8,000 cultivators and recorded their statements. In this way he arrived at an exact understanding of their grievance and the causes underlying them.

He came to the conclusion that the ignorance of the cultivators was one of the main reasons why it was possible for the European planters to repress them. Gandhi therefore set up voluntary organizations to improve the economic and educational conditions of the people. They opened schools and also taught the people how to improve sanitation.

The government realized Gandhi's strength and his devotion to causes. They themselves then set upon a committee to enquire into the grievances of the cultivators. They invited Gandhi



to serve on that committee, and he agreed. The result was that within a few months the Champaran Agrarian Bill was passed. It gave great relief to the cultivators and land tenants. Gandhi could not stay longer in Bihar. There were calls from other places. Labour unrest was brewing in Ahmedabad and Gandhi was requested to help settle the dispute.

### **Ahmedabad Mill Strike**

Gandhi hurried back to Ahmedabad. Before taking up the Labour dispute Gandhi wanted to move his ashrama. The Satyagraha Ashrama was in a village near Ahmedabad, but the surroundings were not clean and plague had broken out. It had spread there from Ahmedabad. A rich merchant of Ahmedabad, who was closely associated with the ashrama, volunteered to procure a suitable piece of land. Gandhi went about with him looking for land and at last they chose a place on the bank of the Sabarmati Ashrama was started.

In Ahmedabad there were many textile mills. Prices had gone up and the mill workers were demanding higher wages. The mill owners would not agree. Gandhi sympathized with the workers and took up their cause. He launched a struggle and resorted to peaceful resistance. The workers proudly followed Gandhi and pledged their full support to him. They paraded the streets with large banners, and said they would not go back to work until a settlement had been reached. Days passed. The mill owners were adamant. The strikers were getting impatient for they were faced with starvation. Their discipline became weak. Gandhi feared that some workers would break their pledge and go back to work. That would be a great moral defeat.

One morning he called the workers and said, 'Unless the strikers rally and continue the strike till a settlement is reached. I will not touch any food.' The workers were shocked. 'Not you, but we shall fast,' they said. 'Please forgive us for our lapse; we shall remain faithful to our pledge.' Gandhi did not want anybody else to fast. His fast was not against the mill owners, but against the lack of co-ordination and unity among the workers. The fast lasted only for three days. It influenced the mill owners so much that they came to an agreement with the workers. Hardly was the mill workers' strike over, when Gandhi had to plunge into the Kheda Satyagraha struggle.

### **Kheda Satyagraha**

The Kheda district of Gujarat was on the verge of famine owing to failure of the crops. The yield had been so low that the cultivators, especially the poorer section, were unable to pay the revenue. But the government insisted that the yield had not been so bad and that the cultivators should pay the tax. Gandhi saw the justice of the cause of the cultivators and advised them to offer Satyagraha by not paying their taxes.

Many leaders, like Vallabhbhai Patel, Shankarlal Banker, Mahadev Desai and others, took an active part in this struggle. The campaign came to an unexpected end. There had been signs that it might fizzle out, but after four months' struggle there came an honourable settlement. The Government said that if well-to-do cultivators paid up the poorer section would be granted suspension. This was agreed to and the campaign ended. The Kheda Satyagraha marked the beginning of an awakening among the peasants of Gujarat, the beginning of their true political education. In addition it gave to the educated public workers the chance to establish contact with the actual life of the peasants.

## **Beginning of Trade Union Movement**

Trade union is a direct product of Industrialization and a very recent development. In India, the foundation of modern industry was laid between 1850 and 1870. Prior to that trade was confined to individuals and families like craftsmen and artisans. They had expertise and specialized skills which was inherited by their off springs. After Industrial revolution, these people started losing their individual identities and had to join factories to earn their livelihood and compete with mass production. There was a psychological dislocation as they were losing their identities.

### **Indian trade union movement can be divided into three phases**

The first phase falls between 1850 and 1900 during which the inception of trade unions took place. During this period of the growth of Indian Capitalist enterprises, the working and living conditions of the labour were poor and their working hours were long. Capitalists were only interested in their productivity and profitability. In addition to long working hours, their wages were low and general economic conditions were poor in industries. In order to regulate the working hours and other service conditions of the Indian textile labourers, the Indian Factories Act was enacted in 1881. As a result, employment of child labour was prohibited. Mr. N M Lokhande organized people like Rickshawalas etc., prepared a study report on their working conditions and submitted it to the Factory Labour Commission. The Indian Factory Act of 1881 was amended in 1891 due to his efforts. Guided by educated philanthropists and social workers like Mr. Lokhande, the growth of trade union movement was slow in this phase. Many strikes took place in the two decades following 1880 in all industrial cities. These strikes taught workers to understand the power of united action even though there was no union in real terms. Small associations like Bombay Mill-Hands Association came up.

The second phase of The Indian trade union movement falls between 1900 and 1947. This phase was characterized by the development of organized trade unions and political movements of the working class. It also witnessed the emergence of militant trade unionism. The First World War (1914-1918) and the Russian revolution of 1917 gave a new turn to the Indian trade union movement and organized efforts on part of the workers to form trade unions. In 1918, B P Wadia organized trade union movements with Textile mills in Madras. He served strike notice to them and workers appealed to Madras High Court because under 'Common Law', strike is a breach of law. In 1919, Mahatma Gandhi suggested to let individual struggle be a Mass movement. In 1920, the First National Trade union organization (The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC)) was established. Many of the leaders of this organization were leaders of the national Movement. In 1926, Trade union law came up with the efforts of Mr. N Joshi that became operative from 1927.

The third phase began with the emergence of independent India (in 1947), and the Government sought the cooperation of the unions for planned economic development. The working class movement was also politicized along the lines of political parties. For instance Indian national trade Union Congress (INTUC) is the trade union arm of the Congress Party. The AITUC is the trade union arm of the Communist Party of India. Besides workers, white-collar employees, supervisors and managers are also organized by the trade unions, as for example in the Banking, Insurance and Petroleum industries.

## **Syllabus**

### **HY1C01 MODERN INDIAN HISTORY (AD 1857 - 1992)**

Course: 1 - **COLONIAL STATE AND EMERGENCE OF NATIONALISM**

No. of Credits: 4

No. of Contact Hours per week: 6

Aim of the Course: To enable the student to understand the nature of the colonial state in India and the early struggles against the British imperialism and colonialism.

#### **UNIT I - Revolt of 1857**

- Antecedents - Consolidation of colonial power - Double Government in Bengal permanent settlement - Subsidiary Alliance - Early Resistance Movements - Introduction of English education - Social Reforms under the East India Company - Doctrine Lapse.
- The Revolt - Causes - Nature - Interpretations
- Significance of the Revolt
- Impact of the Revolt - Transfer of Power from the Company to the Crown - Act of 1858 - Secretary of State for India - Introduction of Uniform Penal Code.

#### **UNIT II - Administrative Reforms under the Crown**

- Lord Lytton - Famine Commission - Vernacular Press Act - Queen's Proclamation of 1877.
- Lord Ripon - Local Self Government - Factory Acts - Repeal of Vernacular Press Act - Hunter Commission - Ilbert Bill Controversy.

#### **UNIT III - Economic Impact of British Rule**

- Deindustrialisation of India
- Commercialisation of Agriculture.
- Development of Transport and Communication.
- Anti British Revolts in the Second half of the 19th century - the revolts of the Santhals, Bhils and Mundas - Pabna uprisings - Indigo revolts and the Mappila uprisings in Malabar (19th Century).

#### **UNIT IV - Social and Religious Movements of the 19th Century**

- Development of Nationalism - Formative Forces - English Education.
- Social reform movements - Brahma Samaj and the acculturative aspects - Aryasamaj and the deculturative aspects.
- Reforms among in the Sikh Community - Nirankari Movement - Namadhari Movement - Singh Sabha.
- Assertion of backward classes - Jyothiba Phule - Narayana Guru - Anticaste Movements.

- Aligarh Movement and Sir Sayyid Ahammed Khan.
- Wahabi Movement
- Swami Vivekananda and the Ramakrishna Mission.
- Theosophical Society.
- Women's Organisations.

### **UNIT V– Emergence and Functioning of National Associations**

- Formation of political associations upto 1885 - Aims and objectives.
- Indian National Congress - Early Policies - Constitutional Methods - petitions and memorials - The Moderates.
- Dada Bhai Naoroji - Exposing Colonialism - Drain Theory.
- Divisive policies of the colonial government - Lord Curzon and the Partition of Bengal - National agitation - Swadesi Movement - National Educational Institutions - Development of Extremist Group - Surat Split.

### **UNIT VI– Challenges and Responses**

- Anti-imperialist struggles of Indians outside India - the Ghadar party.
- Terrorist and the radical associations
- Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League
- Minto Morly Reforms - Nationalist responses to the reforms
- First World War and Indian Nationalism - Home Rule Movement - Advent of Gandhi - Champaran Sathyagraha and Ahammedabad Mill Strike.
- Beginning of Trade Union Movement.

### **Readings:-**

- Misra B.B.: *The Administrative History of India*.
- Bandopadhyaya Sekhar: *Plassey to Partition*
- Bipan Chandra (et. al): *India's Struggle for Independence*
- Bipan Chandra (et. al): *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India*
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- Rajayyan K.: *South Indian Rebellion: The First War of Independence*.
- Dharam Kumar & Tapan Ray Chaudhuri: *The Cambridge Economic History of India, 1707-1970*
- Desai. A.R.: *Social Background of Indian Nationalism* Popular Prakasan, Bombay, 1976.
- Kulke Herman: *State in India 1000-1800*
- Sarkar Sumit: *Modern India 1885-1947*
- Majumdar R.C. (Ed.): *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, the History and Culture of Indian People* Series, Vols. 9 and 10.
- Panikkar. K.N.: *Culture ideology Hegemony Intellectual and Social consciousness in Colonial India Tulika*, New Delhi, 1995
- Sarkar Sumit: *Modern India 1885-1947*
- Majumdar. R.C.: *The Struggle for Freedom*

**Further Readings:-**

- Naoroji Dadabhai: *Poverty and un-British rule in India*  
Irfan Habib: *Essays in Indian History*  
Ghosh. S.C.: *The History of Education in Modern India*, Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 1995  
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Panikkar K.N.: *Against Lord and State*  
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Tara Chand: *History of Freedom Movement in India* (Four volumes)  
Chatterjee Partha: *National Thought and the Colonial World*  
Chatterjee Partha: *Wages of Freedom*  
Chatterjee Partha: *A Possible India*  
Chandra Sekhar. S: *Colonialism Conflict and Nationalism*, Viswa  
Prakasam, New Delhi, 1995  
Pandey Gyanendra: *The Construction of Communalism in colonial North India*, O.U.P. 1990.  
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Protest Movement in Nineteenth Century Western India*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,  
1985.  
Seal Anil: *Emergence of Indian Nationalisation*, Cambridge University Press, 1960.

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