A Brief History of Modern India

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Revised and Enlarged Edition
2020

SPECTRUM BOOKS (P) LTD.
A1 291, First Floor, Janakpuri,
New Delhi 110 058

Editor's Note

Several books have been written by justly famous authors and historians of India's struggle for freedom which is the major strand in any consideration of the history of Modern India. But these volumes are extensive and in-depth studies, and often suffer from an overemphasis on one aspect at the cost of another. The present small effort, however, brings together various aspects of the turbulent period (from the arrival of the Europeans on Indian soil and the establishment of British rule in India to the day India won independence and the years after freedom) in a systematic and succinct manner: major and important details and milestones are effectively discussed while several relevant but little known details are also highlighted.

It is not just the mainstream freedom struggle that has been considered; the disparate efforts—small but significant—of several groups have also been discussed. The political and socio-economic developments that have influenced the growth of modern India have been dealt with in independent chapters.

The endeavour has been to present complex and truly vast material in a brief and easy-to-understand manner, and we hope our readers find the book of use and interest.

The present edition includes chapters on the advent of

the Europeans in India and the British consolidation of power in India besides incorporating additional information under several chapters. There are also chapters on the challenges that a newly independent nation faced in the wake of a brutal partition. The Nehruvian era is also briefly discussed. The chapter on India after Nehru discusses various developments under the governments that came after 1964. In the Appendices, a survey of personalities associated with various movements is given. Also included for easy ready reference are several charts relating to modern India and the freedom struggle.

We are grateful for the feedback we have received from our readers. We have incorporated many of their valuable suggestions in the present edition.

Suggestions for improvement are welcome.

Kalpana Rajaram
November 2020

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UNIT 1

Sources and Approaches

Chapters 1 and 2

CHAPTER 1

Sources for the History of Modern India

An abundance of historical material is available for studying India from the mid-18th century to the mid-20th century. In constructing the history of modern India, priority needs to be given to the archives. **Archives** refer to a collection of historical records and documents, usually primary source documents, i.e., those documents that have been created as a necessary part of some activity—administrative, legal, social, or commercial. They are unique/original documents, not consciously written or created to convey information to a future generation. An important part of archives relating to modern India are the official records, i.e., the papers of government agencies at various levels.

The records of the East India Company provide a detailed account of trading conditions during the period 1600–1857. When the British crown took over the administration, it also kept a large variety and volume of official records. These records help historians to trace every important development stage-by-stage and follow the processes of decision-making and the psychology of the policymakers. The records of the other European East India companies (the Portuguese, Dutch, and French) are also useful for constructing the history of the 17th and 18th centuries. They are primarily important from the point of view of economic history, but much can be gathered from them about the political set-up as well.

There are also many contemporary and semi-contemporary works such as memoirs, biographies, and travel accounts which give us interesting as well as useful glimpses into the history of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Newspapers and journals made their appearance in the later part of the 18th century, and they provide very valuable information on almost all aspects of the Indian society, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries. Other sources of modern Indian history include oral evidence, creative literature, and paintings.

Archival Materials

There are four categories of official records: (i) central government archives; (ii) state government archives; (iii) records of intermediate and subordinate authorities; and (iv) judicial records. Apart from these, there are private archives and archival sources available abroad.

Central Government Archives

The National Archives of India, located in New Delhi, contains most of the archives of the Government of India. These provide authentic and reliable source materials on varied aspects of modern Indian history. The records with the National Archives come under various groups, representing

different branches of the secretariat at different stages of its development. This happened as the work of the East India Company was distributed among various branches—public or general, revenue, political, military, secret, commercial, judicial, education, etc.—and a separate set of records was kept for each of these branches or departments. With the appointment of James Rennell as the first Surveyor General of Bengal in 1767, the Survey of India began to scientifically map the unknown regions of the country and its bordering lands. The records of the Survey of India as well as the journals and memoirs of the surveyors provide valuable information not only on geographical matters but also on contemporary socio-economic conditions and other important historical aspects.

The proceedings of the public, judicial, and legislative departments provide ample data for studying the social and religious policies of the colonial government. The government's policies on education and the growth of the education system during the colonial rule are mentioned in the educational records of the central archives. The papers bearing on the emergence of the nationalist movement were part of the public series of the home department records, but in 1907, a new series of records—Home Political—was started to deal exclusively with political and communal issues. The records of the Reforms Office are very useful for an analytical study of the constitutional developments from 1920 to 1937.

Archives of the State Governments

The source material in the state archives comprise the records of: (i) the former British Indian provinces; (ii) the erstwhile princely states which were incorporated in the Indian Union after 1947; and (iii) the foreign administrations other than those of the British. Apart from these, the records of those Indian powers which were taken over by the British, for instance, the archives of the Kingdom of Lahore (popularly known as *Khalsa Darbar* records from 1800 to 1849), are important source material. Another important collection of

the pre-British public archives in India is the *Peshwa Daftar* housed in the Alienation Office, Pune. It forms the most valuable single source for the study of Maratha history for a period of almost a century before the fall of the Peshwas.

For studying the history of the princely states of Rajasthan, viz., Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Udaipur, etc., the archives of these states, now housed in the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner, are valuable. Similarly, the history of Dogra rule from 1846 in Jammu and Kashmir can be studied in the valuable collection of state papers housed at Jammu. The other significant archives of the princely states are those of Gwalior, Indore, Bhopal, and Rewa, all in Madhya Pradesh; Travancore and Cochin in Kerala; Mysore in Karnataka; and Kolhapur in Maharashtra.

Archives of Three Presidencies

The early records of Fort Williams (Bengal Presidency) were lost during the sack of Calcutta in 1756, but the archives of the Bengal presidency after the British victory at Plassey have survived more or less in a complete series, which are partly available in the National Archives of India and partly in the State Archives of West Bengal. The records of the Madras Presidency begin from AD 1670 and include records of the Governor and Council of Fort St. George. In these records, there is plenty of information bearing on the rise of the English East India Company as a political power in the south and in the Deccan, including the Anglo-French struggle and the English conflicts with other Indian powers. The archives of Bombay Presidency, housed in the Maharashtra Secretariat Record Office, Mumbai, are extremely useful in studying the history of Western India—Maharashtra, Gujarat, Sindh, and the Kannada-speaking districts of the erstwhile Bombay Presidency which were incorporated in Mysore in 1956.

Archives of Other European Powers

The archives related to the Portuguese preserved in Goa, mainly belonging to the period from 1700 to 1900, are

valuable for the history of Portuguese possessions in India. The orders and dispatches from Lisbon received in Goa and the responses and reports dispatched from India to Portugal constitute the most significant historical material among the Portuguese archives. The Dutch records of Cochin and Malabar are in the Madras Record Office and those of Chinsura in the state archives of West Bengal. The French archives of Chandernagore and Pondicherry (now Puducherry) were taken to Paris by the French authorities before they relinquished these settlements. The archives of the Danish possessions were also transferred to Copenhagen when the Danes sold Tranquebar and Serampore to the English East India Company in 1845. The remaining Danish records, mainly relating to Tranquebar (1777–1845), are now housed in the Madras Record Office.

Judicial Records

Housed in the Madras Record Office, the archives of the Mayor's Court at Fort St. George, beginning from AD 1689, are the earliest available judicial archives. The pre-Plassey records of the Mayor's Court at Fort Williams have been lost, but those for the years 1757–73 are kept in the record room of the Calcutta High Court, along with the archives of the Supreme Court of Bengal (1774–1861). Similarly, the records of the Mayor's Court at Bombay established in 1728 are available in the Maharashtra Secretariat Record Office, which also has the custody of the archives of the Bombay Recorder's Court and the Supreme Court. Apart from containing the proceedings and minutes, this category of records contains copies of wills, probates, and letters of administration which are useful for genealogical studies and for investigations pertaining to the state of society and economic conditions in the respective regions.

Published Archives

The most significant archival publications are the Parliamentary Papers which include many excerpts from the records of the East India Company and the Government of India under the

Crown. The reports of the parliamentary select committees; various royal commissions constituted on specific subjects like education, civil reforms and famines, and the parliamentary debates on the Indian empire are indispensable. The proceedings of the Indian and provincial legislatures, the weekly gazettes published by the central and the provincial governments, and collections of laws and regulations issued from time to time also serve as useful source material for historical research.

Private Archives

Private archives comprise papers and documents of individuals and families of note, who played a significant role in the development of modern India. The papers of eminent leaders of the nationalist movement and the records of organisations like the Indian National Congress are housed in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi. The archives of banks, business houses, and chambers of commerce are extremely helpful in the study of economic changes.

Foreign Repositories

A vast body of historical material related to the history of modern India is available in the repositories of erstwhile imperialist powers, who ruled in different parts of the Indian subcontinent as well as in some other countries. In England, the India Office Records, London and the records kept in the British Museum are very valuable. The India Office Records possesses various important documents: the minutes of the Courts of Directors and the General Court of the East India Company and various committees constituted from time to time; the minutes and correspondence of the Board of Control or the Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India; and the records of the Secretary of State and the India Council. The British Museum possesses collections of papers of British viceroys, secretaries of states, and other high-ranked civil and military officials who were posted in India. The archives of the missionary societies, for instance, of the Church Missionary Society of London, provide insight

into the educational and social development in pre-independent India.

The Archives Nationale, Paris, and the Archives of the French Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Colonies and War, have records that throw light on the history of French possessions as well as the socio-political conditions. The records of the Dutch East India Company is available in Rijksarchief, The Hague, and that of the Danish and Portuguese are kept in Copenhagen and Lisbon, respectively.

Apart from the archives of the European nations, the archives preserved in Pakistan are of utmost importance. The West Pakistan Record Office, Lahore, Record Office, Peshawar, records available in Sind, etc., give information about the regional history of the Indian subcontinent besides shedding light on India's relations with Afghanistan, Iran, and other neighbouring countries in the colonial era.

Biographies, Memoirs, and Travel Accounts

Many travellers, traders, missionaries, and civil servants who came to India have left accounts of their experiences and their impressions of various parts of India. An important group among these writers was that of the missionaries who wrote to encourage their respective societies to send more missionaries to India for the purpose of envangelising its inhabitants. In this genre, Bishop Heber's Journal and Abbe Dubois's *Hindu Manners and Customs,* provide useful information on the socio-economic life of India during the period of decline of the Indian powers and the rise of the British.

Some of the famous British travellers who wrote travel accounts were—George Forster, Benjamin Heyne, James Burnes *(Narrative of a Visit to the Court of Sinde),* Alexander Burnes *(Travels Into Bokhara)*, C.J.C. Davidson *(Diary of the Travels and Adventures in Upper India),* and John Butler *(Travels and Adventures in the Province of*

Assam). Famous non-British travellers who wrote about India include Victor Jacquemont *(Letters from India: Describing a Journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet, Lahore, and Cashmere During the Years 1828, 1829, 1830 1831.),* Baron Charles *(Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab),* and William Moorcroft. These travel accounts are indispensable and generally reliable sources for constructing the history of modern India, especially as they supplement the official papers.

Newspapers and Journals

Newspapers and journals of the 19th and 20th centuries, published in English as well as in the different vernacular languages, form an important and authentic source of information for the construction of the history of modern India. The first attempts to publish newspapers in India were made by the disgruntled employees of the English East India Company who sought to expose the malpractices of private trade. For instance, in 1776, William Bolts, being censured by the Court of Directors for private trading, resigned from the Company and announced his intention to publish a newspaper. The official response to Bolts' scheme was strong and his plan ended before materialising. In 1780, James Augustus Hickey published the first newspaper in India entitled *The Bengal Gazette* or *Calcutta General Advertiser*. Hickey's press was seized within two years, owing to his outspoken criticism of government officials. Afterwards, many publications appeared such as *The Calcutta Gazette* (1784), *The Madras Courier* (1788), and *The Bombay Herald* (1789). The newspapers and journals of the early period primarily aimed at catering to the intellectual entertainment of the Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

From the second half of the 19th century, many powerful newspapers appeared, edited/published by distinguished and fearless journalists. Interestingly, nearly

one-third of the founding fathers of the Indian National Congress in 1885 were journalists. Some of their publications were: *The Hindu* and *Swadesamitran* under the editorship of G. Subramaniya Iyer; *Kesari* and *Mahratta* under Bal Gangadhar Tilak; *Bengalee* under Surendranath Banerjea; *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* under Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh; *Sudharak* under Gopal Ganesh Agarkar; *Indian Mirror* under N.N. Sen; *Voice of India* under Dadabhai Naoroji; and *Hindustan* and *Advocate* under G.P. Varma. The *Tribune* and *Akhbar-i-Am* in Punjab; *Indu Prakash, Dnyan Prakash, Kal,* and *Gujarati* in Bombay; and *Som Prakash Banganivasi* and *Sadharani* in Bengal were other noted newspapers of the time. Indian nationalists and revolutionaries living abroad published newspapers and journals—*Indian Sociologist* (London, Shyamji Krishnavarma), *Bande Matram* (Paris, Madam Cama), *Talwar* (Berlin, Virendranath Chattopadhyay), and *Ghadar* (San Francisco, Lala Hardayal)—to infuse a feeling of nationalism among Indians living abroad.

Newspapers depict almost all aspects of life in colonial India from around the 1870s onwards. From the 1920s onwards, newspapers tracked the major events during the freedom struggle. However, newspaper accounts cannot be seen as unprejudiced or completely objective. The accounts that were published in a newspaper in London by the pro-British Raj people were bound to be different from the report in an Indian nationalist paper.

✠ Oral Evidence

Oral history refers to the construction of history with the help of non-written sources, for instance, personal reminiscence. Oral sources allow historians to broaden the boundaries of their discipline and corroborate their findings from other sources of history. However, many historians remain sceptical of the veracity of oral history.

Creative Literature

The most significant outcome of the Indo-European contact was the literary genre of the novel which emerged in the latter half of the 19th century. The first important writer of that period was the Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-94). His novels are mostly historical, the best known among them being *Anandamath* (1882), noted for its powerful lyric '*Vandemataram'* and depiction of the Sanyasi Revolt (1760s). His last novel *Rajasimha* can be called the grand finale to his remarkable career. Iccharam Suryaram Desai (1853–1912) was a fine scholar of medieval Gujarati literary history. His first novel *Hind ane Britannia* was one of the earliest Indian novels with political overtones. Tamil writers like Girija Devi and Ramatirthammal, who wrote *Mohana Rajani* (1931) and *Dasikalin Mosavalai* (1936) respectively, also made the novel an effective vehicle of social experience. G.V. Krishna Rao's *Keelubommalu* (The Puppets, 1956) in Telugu was concerned with the moral aspects and behaviour of the rural people. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer (1910–1994) was one of the eminent writers in Malayalam whose famous novel *Balyakalasakhi* (The Childhood Friends, 1944) was a tragic tale of love. Similarly, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai became prominent for his two extremely well-written works in Malayalam, *Tottiyude Makan* (Son of a Scavenger, 1948) and *Chemmeen* (Shrimps, 1956). Despite having different educational backgrounds and social outlooks, all these writers shared a strong sense of realism and deep interest in the life of the marginalised and oppressed sections of the society. These novels give a picture of the social milieu of the days they relate to.

Painting

Some information on the socio-economic, political, and cultural life during the colonial period can be obtained from the paintings of that period. The Company Paintings, also

referred as 'Patna Kalam' emerged under the patronage of the East India Company. They picturise the people and scenes as they existed at the time. Trades, festivals, dances, and the attire of people are visible in these works. Company paintings continued to be popular in the 19th century until the introduction of photography in India in the 1840s.

The pictorial images produced by the British and Indians—paintings, pencil drawings, etchings, posters, cartoons, and bazaar prints—are especially important records of the great revolt of 1857. The British pictures offer images that were meant to provoke a range of different emotions and reactions. Some of them commemorate the British heroes who saved the English and repressed the rebels. *Relief of Lucknow*, painted by Thomas Jones Barker in 1859, is one such example. Another painting of this period, *In Memoriam* by Joseph Noel Paton, recorded in painting two years of the revolt of 1857. One can see English women and children huddled in a circle, looking helpless and innocent, seemingly waiting for the inevitable—dishonour, violence, and death. These paintings of the mutiny period are important for the historian to interpret and understand the worldviews of the British and the Indians regarding this major event.

Kalighat painting that came to the fore in Calcutta in the 19th century depicted not only mythological figures but also ordinary people engaged in their everyday lives. The latter pictures captured the social changes taking place in the Calcutta of the time. These paintings made a comment on the social evils of the time; some of these paintings satirised certain modes adopted by the people of the time.

In the last decades of the 19th century, a new art movement emerged, which received its primary stimulus from the growing nationalism in India. Artists like Nandalal Bose and Raja Ravi Varma were representatives of this new trend. In the rise of the Bengal School led by Abanindranath Tagore (nephew of Rabindranath Tagore), E.B. Havell (who joined the art school in Calcutta as principal), and Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (son of an important Tamil political

leader in Sri Lanka) played a vital role. Though many of the paintings of this new trend primarily focused on themes of Indian mythology and cultural heritage, they are important sources for studying the modern art movement in India and for the art historians.

Summary

Sources of Modern Indian History

Archival Materials consist of public, private, and foreign repositories

Public Archives include the archives of the Governments of India, archives of state governments, archives of the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, and judicial records.

Private Archives Papers and documents of individuals and families of note who played a significant role in the development of modern India.

Foreign Repositories Indian office Records in London, Record Office, Lahore, etc.

Biographies and Memoirs Accounts of travellers, traders, missionaries and civil servants during the 18th and 19th centuries as well as memoirs written by Indian leaders during the Independence movement.

Newspapers and Journals Published in India as well as abroad.

Others Oral tradition, creative literature, painting

CHAPTER 2

Major Approaches to the History of Modern India

Looking at how histories are written is part of the study of the intellectual history of the period under discussion and can provide a variety of ideas and explanations. The starting point in the history of a society, therefore, has to be a familiarity with its **historiography**—the study of historical interpretation. This provides recognition of the intellectual context of history, instead of seeing history as just a narration of events. The modern history of India, for the convenience of understanding, can be read broadly under four historiographic approaches—the Colonial (or the Imperialist), Nationalist, Marxist, and Subaltern—each with its own distinct characteristics and modes of interpretation. However, there are other approaches—Communalist, Cambridge, Liberal and Neo-liberal, and Feminist interpretations—which have also influenced historical writing on modern India.

View

The production of histories of India has become very frequent in recent years and may well call for some explanations… The reason is a two-fold one: changes in the Indian scene requiring a reinterpretation of the facts and changes in the attitudes of historians about the essential elements of Indian history.

—Percival Spear

Colonial Approach

For the major part of the 19th century, the Colonial School occupied a high position in India. The term 'colonial approach' has been used in two senses. One relates to the history of the colonial countries, while the other refers to the works which were influenced by the colonial ideology of domination. It is in the second sense that most historians today write about the colonial historiography. In fact, the practice of writing about the colonial countries by the colonial officials was related to the desire for domination and justification of the colonial rule. Hence, in most such historical works, there was criticism of indigenous society and culture. Simultaneously, there was praise for the Western culture and values and glorification of the individuals who established the colonial empires. The histories of India written by James Mill, Mountstuart Elphinstone, Vincent Smith, and many others are pertinent examples of the colonial historiographical trend. Certain characteristics common to most of the works of these historians are the following:

(i) 'Orientalist' representation of India;
(ii) the opinion that the British brought unity to India;
(iii) the notions of Social Darwinism—the English considered themselves superior to the 'natives' and the fittest to rule;
(iv) India viewed as a stagnant society which required guidance from the British (White Man's burden); and
(v) establishing Pax Britannica to bring law and order and peace to a bickering society.

Nationalist Approach

The nationalist approach to Indian history can be described as one which tends to contribute to the growth of nationalist feelings and to unify people in the face of religious, caste, or linguistic differences or class differentiation. This approach

looks at the national movement as a movement of the Indian people, which grew out of the growing awareness among all people of the exploitative nature of colonial rule. This approach developed as a response to and in confrontation with the colonial approach. It should be noted that the nationalist historians of modern India did not exist before 1947. Before 1947, nationalist historiography mainly dealt with the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history. However, in the last quarter of the 19th century, a detailed and scientific critique of colonialism for the adverse economic aspects of alien rule was developed by nationalists like Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G. Ranade, G.V. Joshi, R.C. Dutt, K.T. Telang, G.K. Gokhale, and D.E. Wacha. (Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, a close associate of Sri Aurobindo, popularised the ideas of Naoroji and Ranade in his *Desher Katha* published in 1904 in Bengali.) The only accounts of the national movement was by nationalist leaders (not historians) such as R.G. Pradhan, A.C. Mazumdar, J.L. Nehru, and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. R.C. Majumdar and Tara Chand are noted nationalist historians of modern India.

Marxist Approach

The beginning of the Marxist approach in India was heralded by two classic books—Rajni Palme Dutt's *India Today* and A.R. Desai's *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*. Originally written for the famous Left Book Club in England, *India Today,* first published in 1940 in England, was later published in India in 1947. A.R. Desai's *Social Background of Indian Nationalism,* was first published in 1948.

Unlike the imperialist/colonial approach, the Marxist historians clearly see the primary contradiction between the interests of the colonial masters and the subject people, as well as the process of the nation-in-the-making. Unlike the nationalists, they also take full note of the inner contradictions between the different sections of the people of the Indian society. However, some of them, particularly Rajni Palme

Dutt, were unable to fully integrate their treatment of the primary anti-imperialist contradiction and the secondary inner contradictions and tended to counterbalance the anti-imperialist struggle with the class or social struggle. They tend to see the national movement as a structured bourgeois movement, if not the bourgeoisie's movement, and miss its open-ended and all-class character. Another noted Marxist historian, who made a critique of R.P. Dutt's paradigm, is Sumit Sarkar; he considers Dutt's paradigm as a "simplistic version of the Marxian class approach". He looks at the nationalist leaders in the light of intelligentsia which acts as a "kind of proxy for as yet passive social forces with which it had little organic connection".

A.R. Desai traces the growth of the national movement in five phases, each phase based on particular social classes which supported and sustained it.

Subaltern Approach

This school of thought began in the early 1980s under the editorship of Ranajit Guha, as a critique of the existing historiography, which was faulted for ignoring the voice of the people. Right from the beginning, subaltern historiography took the position that the entire tradition of Indian historiography had had an elitist bias. For the subaltern historians, the basic contradiction in Indian society in the colonial epoch was between the elite, both Indian and foreign, on the one hand, and the subaltern groups, on the other, and not between colonialism and the Indian people. However, they do not subscribe to the Marxist theory of the nature of the exploitation by the nationalist movement: they point out that the Indian society of the time could not be seen in terms of class alone, as capitalism in the country was just nascent at the time. This school sees nationalism as exploitative in terms of caste, gender, religious, and creed divisions. Nationalism, say the subalterns, ignored the internal contradictions within the society as well as what the

View

A few historians have of late initiated a new trend, described by its proponents as subaltern, which dismisses all previous historical writing, including that based on a Marxist perspective, as elite historiography, and claims to replace this old, 'blinkered' historiography with what it claims is a new people's or subaltern approach.

—Bipan Chandra

marginalised represented or had to say. They believe that the Indian people were never united in a common anti-imperialist struggle, that there was no such entity as the Indian national movement. Instead, they assert, there were two distinct movements or streams: the real anti-imperialist stream of the subalterns and the bogus national movement of the elite. The elite streams, led by the 'official' leadership of the Indian National Congress, were little more than a cloak for the struggle for power among the elite.

Communalist Approach

The historians of this school, relying completely on the colonial historiography of medieval India and colonial era textbooks, viewed Hindus and Muslims as permanent hostile groups whose interests were mutually different and antagonistic to each other. This view was not only reflected in the writings of the historians but also took a more virulent form in the hands of the communal political leaders. In their view, India's medieval history was one long story of Hindu-Muslim conflict. As a corollary of this view, it was then argued that the 19th- and 20th-century Muslims had the 'happy' and 'proud' everpresent memory of having been the ruling class, while Hindus had the 'sad' and 'humiliating' memory of having been the subject race. This, ultimately, developed mutual hatred among these groups often resulting in communal riots and, in the end, led to the partition of India.

Cambridge School Approach

According to this school of thought, the fundamental contradiction under colonial rule was not between imperialism and the Indian people, but among the Indians themselves. Further, Indian nationalism was not the product of a struggle of the Indian people against colonial exploitation, but what arose from conflict among the Indians for getting the benefits given to them by the British rulers. The leaders of the national movement, according to this school, were inspired by the quest for power and material benefits. This approach has been criticised by many scholars on the ground that it takes the mind or ideals out of human behaviour and reduces nationalism to 'animal politics'.

Liberal and Neo-Liberal Approach

According to this interpretation, the economic exploitation of the colonies was not beneficial to the British people as a whole. The availability of markets for British industrial goods in the colonial world and capital investment in overseas markets (like laying of railways in India) might have actually discouraged domestic investment and delayed the development of the 'new' industries in Britain. The proponents of this school of thought are Patrick O'Brian, Hopkins, and Cain.

Feminist Approach

The shift in terms of the writing of women's history began with the women's movement of the 1970s which provided the context and impetus for the emergence of women's studies in India. Very soon, women's history broadened and assumed the more complex shape of gender history. In the early years, the endeavour was to write a history of women to supplement the writings of mainstream history. Also, an attempt was made to research and compile an archive of

women's writing. An important area of research has been analysis of the way in which colonial structures, such as the legal structure, affected women's lives. Women's vulnerability due to the denial of ownership of productive resources has been focused on, in the analysis of how progressive laws shaped gender relations. In the colonial period, two works based upon the women's question in India—*The High Caste Hindu Woman* (1887) by Pandita Ramabai, and *Mother India* (1927) by Katherine Mayo—attracted international attention.

Summary

Different Approaches

Colonial Approach is influenced by the colonial ideology of domination. It focuses on criticism of indigenous society and culture, and praises the Western culture and values. James Mill, Vincent Smith, etc., followed this approach.

Nationalist Approach evolved as a response to and in confrontation with the colonial approach. Before independence, this school dealt with the ancient and medieval periods of Indian history, and not the modern period. After independence, this school focused on modern India. R.C. Majumdar and Tara Chand belonged to this school.

Marxist Approach focuses on the primary contradiction between the interests of the colonial masters and the native subjects. It also takes notice of the inner contradictions between the different sections of Indian society. R.P. Dutt and A.R. Desai were noted Marxist historians of India.

Subaltern Approach takes the position that the entire tradition of Indian historiography has an elitist bias and the role of the common masses has been neglected. Ranajit Guha belonged to this school.

Communalist Approach views Hindus and Muslims as permanently hostile groups whose interests are mutually different and antagonistic to each other.

Cambridge School envisages Indian nationalism as a product of conflicts among the Indians themselves for getting the benefits from the British rulers. For them, Indian nationalist leaders were inspired by the greed of power and material benefits.

Liberal and Neo-liberal Interpretations imply that the economic exploitation of the colonies was not beneficial to the people of Britain as it delayed the development of the 'new' industries in Britain.

Feminist Historiography focuses on areas of research that analyse colonial structures, such as the legal structure, which affected women's lives. It also focuses on women's vulnerability due to the denial of ownership of productive resources.

UNIT 2

Advent of Europeans and Consolidation of British Power in India

Chapters 3 to 5

CHAPTER 3

Advent of the Europeans in India

Though we talk of ancient, medieval, and modern periods in history, history is a continuity. It is not always easy to distinguish clearly when one period ends and another begins. So, if we think of the history of modern India as beginning with the advent of the Europeans, we need to go back to what is generally considered the medieval period, i.e., the 15th century itself—indeed to a time even before the Mughals came and established their empire.

The Portuguese in India

The Quest for and Discovery of a Sea Route to India

After the decline of the Roman Empire in the 7th century, the Arabs had established their domination in Egypt and Persia. Direct contact between the Europeans and India declined, and, with that, the easy accessibility to the Indian commodities like spices, calicoes, silk, and various precious stones that were greatly in demand was affected. In 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks, who were on the ascendant. Merchandise from India went to the European markets through Arab Muslim intermediaries. The Red Sea trade route was a state monopoly from which Islamic rulers earned tremendous revenues. The land routes to India were also controlled by the Arabs. In the circumstances, the Europeans were keen to find a direct sea route to India.

Fifteenth-century Europe was gripped by the spirit of the Renaissance with its call for exploration. At the same time, Europe made great advances in the art of ship-building and navigation. Hence, there was an eagerness all over Europe for adventurous sea voyages to reach the unknown corners of the East.

The economic development of many regions of Europe was also progressing rapidly with expansion of land under cultivation, the introduction of an improved plough, scientific crop management such as crop rotation, and increased supply of meat (which called for spices for cooking as well as for preservation). Prosperity also grew, and with it the demand for oriental luxury goods also increased.

Venice and Genoa which had earlier prospered through trade in oriental goods were too small to take on the mighty Ottoman Turks or to take up major exploration on their own. The north Europeans were ready to aid Portugal and Spain with money and men, even as the Genoese were ready to provide ships and technical knowledge. It is also to be noted that Portugal had assumed the leadership in Christendom's

resistance to Islam even as it had taken on itself the spirit of exploration that had characterised the Genoese.

Historians have observed that the idea of finding an ocean route to India had become an obsession for Prince Henry of Portugal, who was nicknamed the 'Navigator'; also, he was keen to find a way to circumvent the Muslim domination of the eastern Mediterranean and all the routes that connected India to Europe. Pope Nicholas V gave Prince Henry a bull in 1454, conferring on him the right to navigate the "sea to the distant shores of the Orient", more specifically "as far as India" in an attempt to fight Islamic influence and spread the Christian faith. However, Prince Henry died before his dream could become a reality.

In 1497, under the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), the rulers of Portugal and Spain divided the non-Christian world between them by an imaginary line in the Atlantic, some 1,300 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands. Under the treaty, Portugal could claim and occupy everything to the east of the line while Spain could claim everything to the west. The situation was thus prepared for the Portuguese incursions into the waters around India.

It was in 1487 that the Portuguese navigator, Bartholomew Dias, rounded the Cape of Good Hope in Africa and sailed up the eastern coast; he was well convinced that the long-sought-after sea route to India had been found. But it was only ten years later that an expedition of Portuguese ships set out for India (in 1497) and arrived in India in slightly less than 11 months' time, in May 1498.

From Trading to Ruling

Vasco Da Gama

The arrival of three ships under Vasco Da Gama, led by a Gujarati pilot named Abdul Majid, at Calicut in May 1498 profoundly affected the course of Indian history. The Hindu ruler of Calicut, the Zamorin (Samuthiri), however, had no apprehensions as to the European's intentions. As the prosperity of his kingdom was due to Calicut's position as an entrepot,

he accorded a friendly reception to Vasco Da Gama. The Arab traders, who had a good business on the Malabar Coast were apprehensive and were not keen on the Portuguese getting a hold there.

For centuries, the trading system in the Indian Ocean had had numerous participants—Indians, Arabs, Africans from the east coast, Chinese, Javanese, among others—but these participants had acted according to some tacit rules of conduct and none had sought overwhelming dominance though all were in it for profit. The Portuguese changed that: they wanted to monopolise the hugely profitable eastern trade by excluding competitors, especially the Arabs.

Vasco da Gama stayed in India for three months. When he returned to Portugal, he carried back with him a rich cargo and sold the merchandise in the European market at a huge profit. The importance of direct access to the pepper trade was made clear by the fact that elsewhere the Europeans, who had to buy through Muslim middlemen, would have had to spend ten times as much for the same amount of pepper. Not surprisingly, other profit-seeking merchants of European nations were tempted to come to India and trade directly.

A voyage was undertaken by **Pedro Alvarez Cabral** to trade for spices; he negotiated and established a factory at Calicut, where he arrived in September 1500. There was an incident of conflict when the Portuguese factory at Calicut was attacked by the locals, resulting in the death of several Portuguese. In retaliation, Cabral seized a number of Arab merchant ships anchored in the harbour, and killed hundreds of their crew besides confiscating their cargo and burning the ships. Calicut was bombarded by Cabral. Later, Cabral succeeded in making advantageous treaties with the local rulers of Cochin and Cannanore.

Vasco da Gama once again came to India in 1501. The Zamorin declined to exclude the Arab merchants in favour of the Portuguese when Vasco Da Gama combined commercial greed with ferocious hostility and wreaked vengeance on Arab shipping wherever he could. His rupture with the Zamorin

View

The landing of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498 ... is generally regarded as the beginning of a new era in world history, especially in the relationship between Asia and Europe. Although Asia and Europe had been in commercial relations with each other since antiquity, the opening of the direct sea-relations between the two was not only the fulfilment of an old dream (according to the Greek historian, Herodotus, the Phoenicians had rounded Africa in the 6th century BC), it presaged big increase of trade between the two. This, however, was only one of the objectives of the Portuguese. For the Portuguese, the opening of a new sea-route to India would give a big blow to the Muslims, the Arabs, and the Turks, who were the traditional enemies of Christianity, and were posing a new threat to Europe by virtue of the growing military and naval power of the Turks. A direct sea-link with India would displace the virtual monopoly of the Arabs and Turks over the trade in eastern goods, especially spices. They also vaguely hoped by their exploration of Africa they would be able to link up with the kingdom of the legendary Prester John, (also called Presbyter John or John the Elder, believed to have been a Christian ruler of the East and popularised as such in medieval chronicales of the West) and be in a position to attack the Muslims from two sides. Thus, the commercial and religious objectives supported and justified each other.

—**Satish Chandra**

thus became total and complete. Vasco da Gama set up a trading factory at Cannanore. Gradually, Calicut, Cannanore, and Cochin became the important trade centres of the Portuguese.

Gradually, under the pretext of protecting the factories and their trading activities, the Portuguese got permission to fortify these centres.

Francisco De Almeida

In 1505, the King of Portugal appointed a governor in India for a three-year term and equipped the incumbent with sufficient force to protect the Portuguese interests. Francisco De Almeida, the newly appointed governor, was asked to consolidate the position of the Portuguese in India and to destroy Muslim trade by seizing Aden, Ormuz, and Malacca. He was also advised to build fortresses at Anjadiva, Cochin,

View

As long as you may be powerful at sea you will hold India as yours; and if you do not possess this power, little will avail you a fortress on shore.

—Francisco De Almeida

Cannanore, and Kilwa. What Almeida, however, encountered along with the opposition of the Zamorin, was a threat from the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt. Encouraged by the merchants of Venice, whose lucrative commerce was now at risk due to the Portuguese interference, the Egyptians raised a fleet in the Red Sea to stop the advance of the Portuguese. In 1507, the Portuguese squadron was defeated in a naval battle off Diu by the combined Egyptian and Gujarat navies, and Almeida's son was killed. Next year, Almeida avenged his defeat by totally crushing the two navies. Almeida's vision was to make the Portuguese the master of the Indian Ocean. His policy was known as the **Blue Water Policy** (*cartaze system*).

Alfonso de Albuquerque

Albuquerque, who succeeded Almeida as the Portuguese governor in India, was the real founder of the Portuguese power in the East, a task he completed before his death. He secured for Portugal the strategic control of the Indian Ocean by establishing bases overlooking all the entrances to the sea. There were Portuguese strongholds in East Africa, off the Red Sea, at Ormuz; in Malabar; and at Malacca. The Portuguese, under Albuquerque bolstered their stranglehold by introducing a permit system for other ships and exercising control over the major ship-building centres in the region. The non-availability of timber in the Gulf and Red Sea regions for ship-building also helped the Portuguese in their objectives. Albuquerque acquired Goa from the Sultan of Bijapur in 1510 with ease; the principal port of the Sultan of Bijapur became "the first bit of Indian territory to be under the Europeans since the time of Alexander the Great". An interesting feature of his rule was the abolition of *sati*.

View

Bitter persecution of Muslims was one serious drawback of Albuquerque's policy. This could have been due to his resolve to further the interests of his countrymen by complete extinction of Muslim commercial interests in the East. During his rule, Albuquerque did his best to strengthen the fortifications of Goa and enhance its commercial importance. In order to secure a permanent Portuguese population in India he encouraged his men to take Indian wives. *The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II

The Portuguese men who had come on the voyages and stayed back in India were, from Albuquerque's day, encouraged to take local wives. In Goa and the Province of the North, they established themselves as village landlords, often building new roads and irrigation works, introducing new crops like tobacco and cashew nut, or better plantation varieties of coconut besides planting large groves of coconut to meet the need for coir rigging and cordage. In the cities, they settled as artisans and master-craftsmen, besides being traders. Most of such Portuguese came to look upon their new settlements, rather than Portugal, as home.

Nino da Cunha

Nino da Cunha assumed office of the governor of Portuguese interests in India in November 1529 and almost one year later shifted the headquarters of the Portuguese government in India from Cochin to Goa. Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, during his conflict with the Mughal emperor Humayun, secured help from the Portuguese by ceding to them in 1534 the island of Bassein with its dependencies and revenues. He also promised them a base in Diu. However, Bahadur Shah's relations with the Portuguese became sour when Humayun withdrew from Gujarat in 1536. Since the inhabitants of the town started fighting with the Portuguese, Bahadur Shah wanted to raise a wall of partition. Opposing this, the Portuguese started negotiations, in the course of which the ruler of Gujarat was invited to a Portuguese ship and killed in 1537. Da Cunha also attempted to increase Portuguese influence in Bengal by settling many Portuguese nationals there with Hooghly as their headquarters.

Favourable Conditions for Portuguese

In India, excepting Gujarat, which was ruled by the powerful Mahmud Begarha (or Begada) from 1458 to 1511, the northern part was much divided among many small powers. In the Deccan, the Bahmani Kingdom was breaking up into smaller kingdoms. None of the powers had a navy worth its name, nor did they think of developing their naval strength. In the Far East, the imperial decree of the Chinese emperor limited the navigational reach of the Chinese ships. As regards the Arab merchants and ship-owners who until then dominated the Indian Ocean trade, they had nothing to match the organisation and unity of the Portuguese. Moreover, the Portuguese had cannons placed on their ships.

Portuguese State

The general tendency is to underestimate the Portuguese hold in India. However, the Estado Português da India (State of the Portuguese India) was in fact a larger element in Indian history than it is given credit for. Many of the coastal parts of India had come under Portuguese power within fifty years of Vasco da Gama's arrival. The Portuguese had occupied some sixty miles of coast around Goa. On the west coast from Mumbai to Daman and Diu to the approaches to Gujarat, they controlled a narrow tract with four important ports and hundreds of towns and villages. In the south, they had under them a chain of seaport fortresses and trading-posts like Mangalore, Cannanore, Cochin, and Calicut. And though their power in Malabar was not consolidated, it was enough to ensure influence or control over the local rulers who held the spice-growing land. The Portuguese established further military posts and settlements on the east coast at San Thome (in Chennai) and Nagapattinam (in Tamil Nadu). Towards the end of the 16th century, a wealthy settlement had grown at Hooghly in West Bengal.

Envoys and ambassadors were exchanged between Goa and many of the major kingdoms in India of the time. Treaties were signed between Goa and the Deccan sultans in 1570, which were regularly renewed as long as their kingdoms

lasted. The Portuguese always had a role to play in the successive battles for the balance of power between Vijayanagara and the Deccan sultans, between the Deccanis and the Mughals, and between the Mughals and the Marathas.

Interestingly, the Portuguese, the first Europeans to come to India, were also the last to leave this land. It was 1961 before the Government of India recaptured Goa, Daman and Diu from them.

Portuguese Administration in India

The head of the administration was the viceroy who served for three years, with his secretary and, in later years, a council. Next in importance came the *Vedor da Fazenda,* responsible for revenues and the cargoes and dispatch of fleets. The fortresses, from Africa to China, were under captains, assisted by 'factors', whose power was increased by the difficulties of communication and was too often used for personal ends.

Religious Policy of the Portuguese

The Moors were the bitter enemies of the Portuguese in North Africa. So were the Arabs. Arriving in the East, the Portuguese brought with them the same zeal to promote Christianity and the wish to persecute all Muslims. Intolerant towards the Muslims, the Portuguese were initially quite tolerant towards the Hindus. However, over time, after the introduction of the Inquisition in Goa, there was a change and Hindus were also persecuted.

But, in spite of this intolerant behaviour, the Jesuits made a good impression at the court of Akbar, mainly due to the Mughal emperor's interest in questions of theology.

In September 1579, Akbar forwarded a letter to the authorities at Goa, requesting them to send two learned priests. The Church authorities in Goa eagerly accepted the invitation, seeing in it a chance to convert the emperor to Christianity, and with him his court and the people. Jesuit fathers, Rodolfo Aquaviva and Antonio Monserrate, were selected for the purpose. When they reached Fatehpur Sikri on February 28, 1580, they were received with honour.

Aquaviva and Monserrate went back in 1583, belying the hopes the Portuguese entertained of Akbar's conversion to the Christian faith. The second mission called by Akbar in 1590 also ended on a similar note in 1592. The third mission, again invited by Akbar, arrived in 1595 at Lahore (where the court was then residing) and continued as a sort of permanent institution, thereby extending its influence on secular politics. Fathers Jerome Xavier and Emanuel Pinheiro were the leaders of the mission, and their letters from the court became very widely known for the information they provided on the later part of Akbar's reign.

Prince Salim, on ascending the throne as Jahangir, assuaged the Muslims by neglecting the Jesuit fathers. Gradually, however, his temporary estrangement from the Jesuits ended, and in 1606, he renewed his favours to them. The elegant and spacious church at Lahore was allowed to be retained by them along with the collegium or the priests' residence. In 1608, a number of baptisms were carried out in Agra, the priests publicly acting with as much liberty as in Portugal.

Jahangir's conduct was such that the Jesuit priests became hopeful of bringing him within the Christian fold. However, these hopes were belied. Moreover, arrogant actions on the part of the Portuguese viceroys created a rift with the Mughal emperor.

Portuguese Lose Favour with the Mughals

In 1608, Captain William Hawkins with his ship *Hector* reached Surat. He brought with him a letter from James I, King of England, to the Mughal court of Jahangir, requesting permission to do business in India. Father Pinheiro and the Portuguese authorities did their best to prevent Hawkins from reaching the Mughal court, but they did not succeed. Jahangir accepted the gifts Hawkins brought for him and gave Hawkins a very favourable reception in 1609. As Hawkins knew the Turki language well, he conversed with the emperor in that language without the aid of an interpreter. Pleased with

Hawkins, Jahangir appointed him as a mansabdar of 400 at a salary of Rs 30,000 (apparently, he never received it). Hawkins was also married to the daughter of an Armenian Christian named Mubarak Shah (Mubarikesha).

The grant of trading facilities to the English offended the Portuguese. However, after negotiations, a truce was established between the Portuguese and the Mughal emperor. The Portuguese stopped the English ships from entering the port of Surat. A baffled Hawkins left the Mughal court in 1611, unable to counter the Portuguese intrigues or check the vacillating Mughal policies. However, in November 1612, the English ship *Dragon* under Captain Best along with a little ship, the *Osiander,* successfully fought a Portuguese fleet. Jahangir, who had no navy worth its name, learnt of the English success and was greatly impressed.

The Portuguese acts of piracy also resulted in conflict with the imperial Mughal government. In 1613, the Portuguese offended Jahangir by capturing Mughal ships, imprisoning many Muslims, and plundering the cargoes. An enraged Jahangir ordered Muqarrab Khan, who was then in charge of Surat, to obtain compensation. However, it was during the reign of Shah Jahan, that the advantages which the Portuguese enjoyed in the Mughal court were lost forever. Also lost were the hopes of converting the royal family and Mughal India to Christianity, a hope that the Portuguese held because of the welcome accorded to them and their religion by Akbar and Jahangir.

Capture of Hooghly

On the basis of an imperial farman circa 1579, the Portuguese had settled down on a river bank which was a short distance from Satgaon in Bengal to carry on their trading activities. Over the years, they strengthened their position by constructing big buildings which led to the migration of the trade from Satgaon to the new port known as Hooghly. They monopolised the manufacture of salt, built a custom house of their own, and started enforcing strictly the levy of duty on tobacco, which had become an important article of trade since its introduction at the beginning of the 17th century.

The Portuguese not only made money as traders but also started a cruel slave trade by purchasing or seizing Hindu and Muslim children, whom they brought up as Christians. In the course of their nefarious activities, they seized two slave girls of Mumtaz Mahal. On June 24, 1632, the Mughal siege of Hooghly began, ending in its capture three months later. Shah Jahan ordered the Bengal governor Qasim Khan to take action against the Portuguese. The siege of Hooghly finally led to the Portuguese fleeing. The Mughals suffered a loss of 1,000 men, but also took 400 prisoners to Agra. The prisoners were offered the option to convert to Islam or become slaves. The persecution of Christians continued for some time after which it died down gradually.

Decline of the Portuguese

By the 18th century, the Portuguese in India lost their commercial influence, though some of them still carried on trade in their individual capacity and many took to piracy and robbery. In fact, Hooghly was used by some Portuguese as a base for piracy in the Bay of Bengal. The decline of the Portuguese was brought about by several factors. The local advantages gained by the Portuguese in India were reduced with the emergence of powerful dynasties in Egypt, Persia, and North India and the rise of the turbulent Marathas as their immediate neighbours. (The Marathas captured Salsette and Bassein in 1739 from the Portuguese.)

The religious policies of the Portuguese, such as the activities of the Jesuits, gave rise to political fears. Their antagonism for the Muslims apart, the Portuguese policy of conversion to Christianity made Hindus also resentful.

Their dishonest trade practices also evoked a strong reaction. The Portuguese earned notoriety as sea pirates. Their arrogance and violence brought them the animosity of the rulers of small states and the imperial Mughals as well.

The discovery of Brazil diverted colonising activities of Portugal to the West.

The union of the two kingdoms of Spain and Portugal in 1580–81, dragging the smaller kingdom into Spain's wars

View

The Portuguese entered India with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in the other; finding much gold, they laid aside the crucifix to fill their pockets, and not being able to hold them up with one hand, they were grown so heavy, they dropped the sword, too; being found in this posture by those who came after, they were easily overcome.

—**Alfonso de Souza**, the Portuguese Governor in India (1542–45)

with England and Holland, badly affected Portuguese monopoly of trade in India.

The earlier monopoly of knowledge of the sea route to India held by the Portuguese could not remain a secret forever; soon enough the Dutch and the English, who were learning the skills of ocean navigation, also learnt of it. As new trading communities from Europe arrived in India, there began a fierce rivalry among them. In this struggle, the Portuguese had to give way to the more powerful and enterprising competitors. The Dutch and the English had greater resources and more compulsions to expand overseas, and they overcame the Portuguese resistance. One by one,

Portuguese Rise and Fall

1498:	Arrival of Vasco-da-Gama at Calicut and his grand reception by the local king, Zamorin
1503:	Establishment of the first Portuguese fort at Cochin
1505:	Establishment of the second Portuguese fort at Cannanore
1509:	Defeat of the combined fleet of Gujarat, Egypt, and Zamorin by the Portuguese governor Francisco Almeida
1510:	Alfonso Albuquerque, the Portuguese governor, captures Goa from Bijapur
1530:	Declaration of Goa as the Portuguese capital
1535:	Subjugation of Diu
1559:	The Portuguese capture Daman
1596:	Ouster of the Portuguese by the Dutch from South-East Asia
1612:	Loss of Surat to the English
1663:	The Dutch win all Portuguese forts on the Malabar Coast to oust the Portuguese

the Portuguese possessions fell to its opponents. Goa which remained with the Portuguese had lost its importance as a port after the fall of the Vijayanagara empire and soon it did not matter in whose possession it was. The spice trade came under the control of the Dutch, and Goa was superseded by Brazil as the economic centre of the overseas empire of Portugal. In 1683, after two naval assaults, the Marathas invaded Goa.

Significance of the Portuguese

Most historians have observed that the coming of the Portuguese not only initiated what might be called the European era, it marked the emergence of naval power. The Cholas, among others, had been a naval power, but it was now for the first time a foreign power had come to India by way of the sea. The Portuguese ships carried cannon, and this was the first step in gaining monopoly over trade—with the threat or actual use of force. The Portuguese declared their intention to abide by no rules except their own, and they were intent on getting a decisive advantage over the Indians and over the Indian Ocean trading system.

In the Malabar of the 16th century, the Portuguese showed military innovation in their use of body armour, matchlock men, and guns landed from the ships. The Portuguese may have contributed by example to the Mughal use of field guns, and the 'artillery of the stirrup'. However, an important military contribution made by the Portuguese onshore was the system of drilling groups of infantry, on the Spanish model, introduced in the 1630s as a counter to Dutch pressure. The practice was adopted first by the French and English, and later taken up by the Marathas and Sikhs, and such armies of sepoys became new tools of empire in India.

The Portuguese were masters of improved techniques at sea. Their multi-decked ships were heavily constructed, designed as they were to ride out Atlantic gales rather than run before the regular monsoons; this permitted them to carry a heavier armament. Their use of castled prow and stern was a noteworthy method by which to repel or launch boarding

parties. Indian builders adapted both to their own use. However, the Portuguese skill at organisation—as in the creation of royal arsenals and dockyards and the maintenance of a regular system of pilots and mapping and pitting state forces against private merchant shipping—was even more noteworthy. The Mughals and Marathas may certainly have learnt from the Portuguese, but the more certain heirs of this knowledge were other Europeans, especially the Dutch and English, in Asia.

In India, the memory of religious persecution and cruelty detracts from the other contributions made by the Portuguese in the cultural field. However, it cannot be forgotten that the missionaries and the Church were also teachers and patrons in India of the arts of the painter, carver, and sculptor. As in music, they were the interpreters, not just of Portuguese, but of European art to India.

The art of the silversmith and goldsmith flourished in Goa, and the place became a centre of elaborate filigree work, fretted foliage, work, and metal work embedding jewels. However, though the interior of churches built under the Portuguese have plenty of woodwork and sculpture and sometimes painted ceilings, they are generally simple in their architectural plan.

The Dutch

Commercial enterprise led the Dutch to undertake voyages to the East. Cornelis de Houtman was the first Dutchman to reach Sumatra and Bantam in 1596. In 1602, the States-General of the Netherlands amalgamated many trading companies into the East India Company of the Netherlands. This company was also empowered to carry on war, to conclude treaties, to take possession of territory, and to erect fortresses.

Dutch Settlements

After their arrival in India, the Dutch founded their first factory in Masulipatnam (in Andhra) in 1605. They went on to establish trading centres in different parts of India and thus

became a threat to the Portuguese. They captured Nagapatam near Madras (Chennai) from the Portuguese and made it their main stronghold in South India.

The Dutch established factories on the Coromandel coast, in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, and Bihar. In 1609, they opened a factory in Pulicat, north of Madras. Their other principal factories in India were at Surat (1616), Bimlipatam (1641), Karaikal (1645), Chinsura (1653), Baranagar, Kasimbazar (near Murshidabad), Balasore, Patna, Nagapatam (1658), and Cochin (1663). Participating in the redistributive or carrying trade, they took to the islands of the Far East various articles and merchandise from India. They carried indigo manufactured in the Yamuna valley and Central India, textiles and silk from Bengal, Gujarat and the Coromandel, saltpetre from Bihar, and opium and rice from the Ganga valley.

Anglo-Dutch Rivalry

The English were also at this time rising to prominence in the Eastern trade, and this posed a serious challenge to the commercial interests of the Dutch. Commercial rivalry soon turned into bloody warfare.

The climax of the enmity between the Dutch and the English in the East was reached at Amboyna (a place in present-day Indonesia, which the Dutch had captured from the Portuguese in 1605) where they massacred ten Englishmen and nine Japanese in 1623.

This incident further intensified the rivalry between the two European companies. After prolonged warfare, both the parties came to a compromise in 1667 by which the British agreed to withdraw all their claims on Indonesia, and the Dutch retired from India to concentrate on their more profitable trade in Indonesia. They monopolised the trade in black pepper and spices. The most important Indian commodities the Dutch traded in were silk, cotton, indigo, rice, and opium.

Decline of the Dutch in India

The Dutch got drawn into the trade of the Malay Archipelago. Further, in the third Anglo-Dutch War (1672–74),

View

The Dutch rivalry with the English, during the seventeenth century, was more bitter than that of the Portuguese. The policy of the Dutch in the East was influenced by two motives: one was to take revenge on Catholic Spain, the foe of their independence, and her ally Portugal, and the other was to colonise and establish settlements in the East Indies with a view to monopolising commerce in that region. They gained their first object by the gradual decline of Portuguese influence. The realisation of their second object brought them into bitter competition with the English.

—R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri and **K. Datta**
in *An Advanced History of India*

communications between Surat and the new English settlement of Bombay got cut due to which three homebound English ships were captured in the Bay of Bengal by the Dutch forces. The retaliation by the English resulted in the defeat of the Dutch, in the **Battle of Hooghly** (November 1759), which dealt a crushing blow to Dutch ambitions in India.

The Dutch were not much interested in empire building in India; their concerns were trade. In any case, their main commercial interest lay in the Spice Islands of Indonesia from where they earned a huge profit through business.

The English

Charter of Queen Elizabeth I

Francis Drake's voyage around the world in 1580 and the English victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 generated a new sense of enterprise in the British, encouraging sailors to venture out to the East. As the knowledge grew of the high profits earned by the Portuguese in Eastern trade, English traders too wanted a share. So, in 1599, a group of English merchants calling themselves the 'Merchant Adventurers' formed a company. On December 31, 1600, Queen Elizabeth I issued a charter with rights of exclusive trading to the company named the 'Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies'. Initially, a monopoly of 15 years was granted, which in May

1609 was extended indefinitely by a fresh charter. As the Dutch were already concentrating more on the East Indies, the English turned to India in search of textiles and other commodities of trade.

Progress of the English Company

Foothold in West and South

Captain Hawkins arrived in the court of Jahangir in April 1609 itself. But the mission to establish a factory at Surat did not succeed due to opposition from the Portuguese, and Hawkins left Agra in November 1611. In 1611, the English had started trading at Masulipatnam on the south-eastern coast of India and later established a factory there in 1616. It was in 1612 that Captain Thomas Best defeated the Portuguese in the sea off Surat; an impressed Jahangir granted permission to the English in early 1613 to establish a factory at Surat under Thomas Aldworth. In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe came as an accredited ambassador of James I to the court of Jahangir, staying on there till February 1619. Though he was unsuccessful in concluding a commercial treaty with the Mughal emperor, he was able to secure a number of privileges, including permission to set up factories at Agra, Ahmedabad, and Broach.

The English company did not have a smooth progress. It had to contend with the Portuguese and the Dutch in the beginning. But the changing situation helped them and turned things in their favour. Bombay had been gifted to King Charles II by the King of Portugal as dowry when Charles married the Portuguese princess Catherine in 1662. Bombay was given over to the East India Company on an annual payment of 10 pounds only in 1668. Later, Bombay was made the headquarters by shifting the seat of the Western Presidency from Surat to Bombay in 1687. So, there was tacit peace between the English and the Portuguese now. There was also an Anglo-Dutch compromise as mentioned earlier by which the Dutch agreed not to interfere with the English company's trade in India. Thus, the English were rid of two arch-rivals in India.

The English company's position was improved by the 'Golden Farman' issued to them by the Sultan of Golconda in 1632. On a payment of 500 pagodas a year, they earned the privilege of trading freely in the ports of Golconda. A member of the Masulipatnam council, the British merchant Francis Day in 1639 received from the ruler of Chandragiri permission to build a fortified factory at Madras which later became the Fort St. George and replaced Masulipatnam as the headquarters of the English settlements in south India. Thereafter, the English extended their trading activities to the east and started factories at Hariharpur in the Mahanadi delta and at Balasore (in Odisha) in 1633.

Foothold in Bengal

Bengal was then a large and rich province in India, advanced in trade and commerce. Commercial and political control over Bengal naturally appeared an attractive proposition to the profit-seeking English merchants. Bengal was also an important province of the Mughal empire.

Shah Shuja, the subahdar (or governor) of Bengal in 1651, allowed the English to trade in Bengal in return for an annual payment of Rs 3,000, in lieu of all duties. Factories in Bengal were started at Hooghly (1651) and other places like Kasimbazar, Patna, and Rajmahal. Nevertheless, despite the privileges of the *farmans,* the Company's business was now and then obstructed by customs officers in the local checkposts who asked for payment of tolls. In pursuance of its changed policy, the Company wanted to have a fortified settlement at Hooghly so that force could be used if necessary. William Hedges, the first agent and governor of the Company in Bengal, appealed to Shaista Khan, the Mughal governor of Bengal in August 1682, for redressal of the grievance. As nothing came out of the appeal, hostilities broke out between the English and the Mughals. Four years later, Hooghly was sacked by the imperial Mughals in October 1686. The English retaliated by capturing the imperial forts at Thana (modern Garden Reach), raiding Hijli in east Midnapur and storming the Mughal fortifications at

Balasore. However, the English were forced to leave Hooghly and were sent to an unhealthy location at the mouth of River Ganga.

After the Mughal raid on Hooghly, **Job Charnock**, a company agent, started negotiations with the Mughals so as to return to a place called Sutanuti. Charnock signed a treaty with the Mughals in February 1690, and returned to Sutanuti in August 1690. Thus, an English factory was established on February 10, 1691, the day an imperial farman was issued, permitting the English to "continue contentedly their trade in Bengal" on payment of Rs 3,000 a year in lieu of all dues.

A zamindar in Bardhaman district, Sobha Singh, rebelled, subsequently giving the English the pretext they were looking for, to fortify their settlement at Sutanuti in 1696. In 1698, the English succeeded in getting the permission to buy the zamindari of the three villages of Sutanuti, Gobindapur, and Kalikata (Kalighat) from their owners on payment of Rs 1,200. The fortified settlement was named **Fort William** in the year 1700 when it also became the seat of the eastern presidency (Calcutta) with Sir Charles Eyre as its first president.

Farrukhsiyar's Farmans

In 1715, an English mission led by John Surman to the court of the Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar secured three famous *farmans*, giving the Company many valuable privileges in Bengal, Gujarat and Hyderabad. The *farmans* thus obtained were regarded the Magna Carta of the Company. Their important terms were:

- In Bengal, the Company's imports and exports were exempted from additional customs duties excepting the annual payment of 3,000 rupees as settled earlier.
- The Company was permitted to issue *dastaks* (passes) for the transportation of such goods.
- The Company was permitted to rent more lands around Calcutta.
- In Hyderabad, the Company retained its existing

privilege of freedom from duties in trade and had to pay the prevailing rent only for Madras.

- In Surat, for an annual payment of 10,000 rupees, the East India Company was exempted from the levy of all duties.
- It was decreed that the coins of the Company minted at Bombay were to have currency throughout the Mughal empire.

Apparently, the English East India Company managed to earn a number of trading concessions in Bengal from the Mughal authority by means of flattery and diplomacy.

But the English had to vanquish the French before they

Formative Years of the East India Company

1600 : The East India Company is established.
1609 : William Hawkins arrives at Jahangir's court.
1611 : Captain Middleton obtains the permission of the Mughal governor of Surat to trade there.
1613 : A permanent factory of East India Company is established at Surat.
1615 : Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of King James I, arrives at Jahangir's court. By 1618, the ambassador succeeds in obtaining two *farmans* (one each from the emperor and Prince Khurram) confirming free trade with exemption from inland tolls.
1616 : The Company establishes its first factory in the south in Masulipatnam.
1632 : The Company gets the golden *farman* from the Sultan of Golconda ensuring safety and prosperity of their trade.
1633 : The Company establishes its first factory in east India in Hariharpur, Balasore (Odisha).
1639 : The Company gets the lease of Madras from a local king.
1651 : The Company is given permission to trade at Hooghly (Bengal).
1662 : The British King, Charles II, is given Bombay as dowry for marrying a Portuguese princess (Catherine of Braganza).
1667 : Aurangzeb gives the English a *farman* for trade in Bengal.
1691 : The Company gets the imperial order to continue their trade in Bengal in lieu of payment of Rs 3,000 a year.
1717 : The Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar issues a *farman*, called Magna Carta of the Company, giving the Company a large number of trade concessions.

could be rid of competitors and establish their complete sway over India.

Merging of Two English Companies

After the English revolution of 1688, the Whigs, with their enhanced influence, opposed the monopoly of the East India Company. Thus, a rival company was formed which deputed Sir William Norris as its ambassador to the court of Aurangzeb (January 1701–April 1702) to gain trading privileges for itself. The new company, however, proved a failure. Under pressure from the Crown and the Parliament, the two companies were amalgamated in 1708 under the title of 'United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies'. This was the East India Company—from 1708 to 1873—which was to establish British political power in India.

The French

Foundation of French Centres in India

Although the French harboured a wish to engage in the commerce of the East since the opening years of the 16th century, their appearance on the Indian coasts was late. Indeed, the French were the last Europeans to come to India with the purpose of trade. During the reign of Louis XIV, the king's famous minister Colbert laid the foundation of the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* (French East India Company) in 1664, in which the king also took a deep interest. The *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* was granted a 50-year monopoly on French trade in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The French king also granted the company a concession in perpetuity for the island of Madagascar, as well as any other territories it could conquer. The Company spent a lot of its money and resources in trying to revive the colonies of Madagascar but without any success. Then, in 1667, Francois Caron headed an expedition to India, setting up a factory in Surat. Mercara, a Persian who accompanied Caron, founded another French factory in Masulipatnam in 1669 after obtaining a patent from the Sultan of Golconda. In 1673, the

French obtained permission from Shaista Khan, the Mughal subahdar of Bengal, to establish a township at Chandernagore near Calcutta.

Pondicherry—Nerve Centre of French Power in India

In 1673, Sher Khan Lodi, the governor of Valikondapuram (under the Bijapur Sultan), granted Francois Martin, the director of the Masulipatnam factory, a site for a settlement. Pondicherry was founded in 1674. In the same year, Francois Martin replaced Caron as the French governor.

The French company established its factories in other parts of India also, particularly in the coastal regions. Mahe, Karaikal, Balasore, and Qasim Bazar were a few important trading centres of the French East India Company.

After taking charge of Pondicherry in 1674, Francois Martin developed it as a place of importance. It was, indeed, the stronghold of the French in India.

Early Setbacks to the French East India Company

The French position in India was badly affected with the outbreak of war between the Dutch and the French. Bolstered by their alliance with the English since the Revolution of 1688, the Dutch captured Pondicherry in 1693. Although the **Treaty of Ryswick** concluded in September 1697 restored Pondicherry to the French, the Dutch garrison held on to it for two more years. Once again, under Francois Martin's able guidance, Pondicherry flourished and turned out to be the most important settlement of the French in India. Again there was a bad turn in the fortunes of the French company in India when the War of Spanish Succession broke out in Europe. Consequent to this, they had to abandon their factories at Surat, Masulipatnam, and Bantam in the early 18th century. The French in India had another setback when Francois Martin died on December 31, 1706.

Reorganisation of the French Company

In 1720, the French company was reorganised as the 'Perpetual Company of the Indies' which revived its strength. This was

further enhanced by the stewardship of two active and wise governors, Lenoir and Dumas, between 1720 and 1742. Further, the French India was backed by the French possession of Mauritius and Reunion in the southern Indian Ocean.

The Anglo-French Struggle for Supremacy: the Carnatic Wars

Background of Rivalry

Though the British and the French came to India for trading purposes, they were ultimately drawn into the politics of India. Both had visions of establishing political power over the region. The Anglo-French rivalry in India reflected the traditional rivalry of England and France throughout their histories; it began with the outbreak of the Austrian War of Succession and ended with the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. Specifically in India, the rivalry, in the form of three Carnatic wars, decided once for all that the English and not the French were to become masters of India.

In 1740, the political situation in south India was uncertain and confused. Nizam Asaf Jah of Hyderabad was old and fully engaged in battling the Marathas in the western Deccan while his subordinates were speculating upon the consequences of his death. To the south of his kingdom lay the Coromandel Coast without any strong ruler to maintain a balance of power. Instead, there was the remnant of the old Vijayanagara empire in interior Mysore, Cochin, and Travancore on the Malabar Coast, and in the east the small states of Madura (Madurai), Tanjore (Thanjavur), and Trichinopoly (Thiruchirapally). The decline of Hyderabad was the signal for the end of Muslim expansionism and the English adventurers got their plans ready. Also, there was the Maratha kingdom of Tanjore, providing the Peshwa of Pune an excuse for interference whenever he pleased.

First Carnatic War (1740–48)

Background Carnatic was the name given by the Europeans to the Coromandel Coast and its hinterland. The First Carnatic War was an extension of the Anglo-French War

in Europe which was caused by the Austrian War of Succession.

Immediate Cause Although France, conscious of its relatively weaker position in India, did not favour an extension of hostilities to India, the English navy under Barnet seized some French ships to provoke France. France retaliated by seizing Madras in 1746 with the help of the fleet from Mauritius, the Isle of France, under Admiral La Bourdonnais, the French governor of Mauritius. Thus began the first Carnatic War.

Result The First Carnatic War ended in 1748 when the ***Treaty of Aix-La Chapelle*** was signed, bringing the Austrian War of Succession to a conclusion. Under the terms of this treaty, Madras was handed back to the English, and the French, in turn, got their territories in North America.

Significance The First Carnatic War is remembered for the Battle of St. Thome (in Madras) fought between the French forces and the forces of Anwaruddin, the Nawab of Carnatic, to whom the English appealed for help. A small French army under Captain Paradise defeated the strong Indian army under Mahfuz Khan at St. Thome on the banks of the River Adyar. This was an eye-opener for the Europeans in India: it revealed that even a small disciplined army could easily defeat a much larger Indian army. Further, this war adequately brought out the importance of naval force in the Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan.

Second Carnatic War (1749–54)

Background The background for the Second Carnatic War was provided by rivalry in India. Dupleix, the French governor who had successfully led the French forces in the First Carnatic War, sought to increase his power and French political influence in southern India by interfering in local dynastic disputes to defeat the English.

Immediate Cause The opportunity was provided by the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the founder of the independent kingdom of Hyderabad, in 1748, and the release of Chanda Sahib, the son-in-law of Dost Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic,

by the Marathas in the same year. The accession of Nasir Jung, the son of the Nizam, to the throne of Hyderabad was opposed by Muzaffar Jung, the grandson of the Nizam, who laid claim to the throne saying that the Mughal Emperor had appointed him as the governor of Hyderabad. In the Carnatic, the appointment of Anwaruddin Khan as the Nawab was resented by Chanda Sahib.

The French supported the claims of Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib in the Deccan and Carnatic, respectively, while the English sided with Nasir Jang and Anwaruddin.

Course of the War The combined armies of Muzaffar Jang, Chanda Sahib, and the French defeated and killed Anwaruddin at the Battle of Ambur (near Vellore) in 1749. Muzaffar Jang became the subahdar of Deccan, and Dupleix was appointed governor of all the Mughal territories to the south of the River Krishna. A French army under Bussy was stationed at Hyderabad to secure French interests there. Territories near Pondicherry and also some areas on the Orissa coast (including Masulipatnam) were ceded to the French.

Having failed to provide effective assistance to Muhammad Ali at Trichinopoly, Robert Clive, then an agent ('factor') of the English company, put forward the proposal for a diversionary attack on the governor of Madras, Saunders. He suggested a sudden raid on Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, so as to relieve the pressure on Trichinopoly. He reasoned that in such an event Chanda Sahib would rush to save his capital. Thus, in August 1751, with only a force of 210 men, Robert Clive attacked and captured Arcot. As expected, Chanda Sahib hastened to his capital, taking a force of 4,000 men from Trichinopoly, but failed to get back the fort even after a siege of 53 days, from September 23 to November 14. Now Mysore, Tanjore, and the Maratha chief, Morari Rao, came to the aid of Trichinopoly, and of Clive and Stringer Lawrence. Trichinopoly was first relieved of its siege, while General Law of France with Chanda Sahib remained cooped up in the island of Srirangam. They were forced to surrender in June 1752 when Muhammad Ali executed Chanda Sahib, the British failing to interfere.

Rise and Fall of Dupleix in India

Joseph Francis Dupleix, born in 1697, was the son of a wealthy Farmer-General of Taxes and Director-General of the Company of the Indies. He got a high post at Pondicherry in 1720, allegedly on the basis of influence of his father. At Pondicherry, he made a lot of money by private trade, which was then permitted to servants of the French company. In December 1726, he was suspended owing to drastic change in the constitution of the French company and some confusions arising out of that. In 1730, Dupleix won his case, and was appointed as governor of Chandernagore as compensation. In 1741, he was appointed as the Director-General of French colonies in India. Later, he was conferred the title of Nawab by the Mughal emperor and the subahdar of Deccan, Muzzaffar Jang.

According to historians, Dupleix possessed qualities of an administrator, a diplomat, and a leader besides having political insight with a broad vision.

Dupleix in the Role of Administrator

In 1741, Dupleix became the Governor, General of Pondicherry. He found Pondicherry facing several problems—Maratha invasion, famine, uncultivated land, and chaotic conditions in the Carnatic. Apart from these, the Directors of the Company sought a drastic cut in expenditure of the French East India Company, owing to the priority given to the French colonies in North America. So, Dupleix reduced public expenditure, despite opposition from his council, and balanced income and expenditure, coupled with a cut on salaries of officers. However, he decided to disobey the directors on the matter of fortification of settlements. He enhanced the defences of Pondicherry, even spending a large sum from his personal wealth. He made Pondicherry the emporium of commerce in south India by taking practical steps to develop the trade of the colony. Later, the Directors of the Company praised Dupleix for taking the right decisions, even in contradiction of the directors.

Dupleix as a Master of Diplomacy

The analysis of the first two Carnatic wars proves the diplomacy of Dupleix as a leader who visualised the path of the European conquest of India.

Dupleix used the Nawab of Carnatic to forbid the English from waging war in his territories so that the French settlements at Pondicherry could be protected till the French forces acquired enough strength. In return, the nawab was promised Madras after the English got defeated. But Dupleix, using his diplomacy, did

not give Madras to the nawab and even defeated him at St. Thome (1746).

Dupleix convinced Admiral La Bourdonnais to break promises made to the English, citing examples from history that promises made under certain circumstances were never binding. Further, he said that since the position of the governor general was superior to that of the commander of navy, the compact entered into between the latter and the English was *ultra vires.* Thus, he was able to convince his subordinate to do what was considered unethical in general terms, but best suited for one's nation.

Dupleix was the first European to interfere in the internal politics of the Indian rulers. He supported Muzzaffar Jang for Hyderabad and Chanda Sahib for Carnatic, and his candidates emerged successful and, in return, gave great concessions to Dupleix.

Dupleix was, in fact, the originator of the practice of subsidiary alliance in India. He placed a French army at Hyderabad at the expense of the subahdar.

Why Dupleix Failed in India

Dupleix was recalled in 1754 due to the initial defeat of the French army in the Second Carnatic War and the heavy cost incurred by the company due to Dupleix's political decisions. Many historians have called the recall of Dupleix by the directors as a blunder—a result of a compromise between France and England over issues in America. However, there were some weaknesses in Dupleix also, which can be put in brief as follows:

(i) Dupleix suffered from an over-sanguine temperament. He hoped too often for too long, thus losing the advantage in critical situations.

(ii) The peers of Dupleix did not like his autocratic behaviour and on many occasions quarrelled with him on this matter.

(iii) Dupleix was not a man of action: he planned a campaign, directed his lieutenants, but never led an army in the battlefield like Lawrence or Clive. The French failed to capture Trichinopoly (1752–53) because the schemes thought out by Dupleix could not be turned into action by his commanders.

Result The French authorities, annoyed at the heavy financial losses that Dupleix's policy involved, decided to recall him in 1754. Godeheu succeeded Dupleix as the French governor general in India. Godeheu adopted a policy of negotiations with the English and concluded a treaty with them. The English and the French agreed not to interfere in

Views

The struggle between Dupleix and Clive in India, the defence of Arcot and the deeds which led to the founding of our Indian Empire… all these events were part of a desperate struggle for supremacy between England and France.

—J.R. Seeley

We may regard Dupleix as the most striking figure in the short Indian episode of that long and arduous contest for transmarine dominion which was fought out between France and England in the eighteenth century, although it was far beyond his power to influence the ultimate destiny of either nation in India, and although the result of his plans was that 'we accomplished for ourselves against the French exactly everything that the French intended to accomplish for themselves against us' (Clive). It is certain, moreover, that the conception of an Indian Empire had already been formed by others besides Dupleix, and that more than one clearheaded observer had perceived how easily the whole country might be subdued by an European power.

—Alfred Lyall

the quarrels of native princes. Also, each party was left in possession of the territories actually occupied by them at the time of the treaty. According to historians, the fear of serious repercussions in America prompted the French to suspend hostilities in India.

Implications It became evident that the countenance of Indian authority was no longer necessary for European success; rather Indian authority itself was becoming dependent on European support. Muhammad Ali in the Carnatic and Salabat Jang in Hyderabad became clients rather than patrons.

Third Carnatic War (1758–63)

Background In Europe, when Austria wanted to recover Silesia in 1756, the Seven Years' War (1756–63) started. Britain and France were once again on opposite sides.

Course of War in India In 1758, the French army under Count de Lally captured the English forts of St. David and Vizianagaram. Now, the English became offensive and inflicted heavy losses on the French fleet under Admiral D'Ache at Masulipatnam.

Battle of Wandiwash The decisive battle of the Third Carnatic War was won by the English on January 22, 1760 at Wandiwash (or Vandavasi) in Tamil Nadu. General Eyre Coote of the English totally routed the French army under Count Thomas Arthur de Lally and took Bussy as prisoner.

Pondicherry was gallantly defended by Lally for eight months before he surrendered on January 16, 1761. With the loss of Jinji and Mahe, the French power in India was reduced to its lowest. Lally, after being taken as prisoner of war at London, returned to France where he was imprisoned and executed in 1766.

Result and Significance The Third Carnatic War proved decisive. Although the ***Treaty of Peace of Paris*** (1763) restored to the French their factories in India, the French political influence disappeared after the war. Thereafter, the French, like their Portuguese and Dutch counterparts in India, confined themselves to their small enclaves and to commerce. The English became the supreme European power in the Indian subcontinent, since the Dutch had already been defeated in the Battle of Bidara in 1759.

The Battle of Plassey, in 1757, is usually regarded by historians as the decisive event that brought about ultimate British rule over India. However, one cannot quite ignore the view that the true turning point for control of the subcontinent was the victory of British forces over the French forces at Wandiwash in 1760. The victory at Wandiwash left the English East India Company with no European rival in India.

View

While the English received supplies of food and money from Bengal, recruits of men from Europe, and grain from their northern settlements, the French could receive nothing but what came to them laboriously by land. The first were constantly strengthened, the second was constantly weakened. And this enabled Coote to establish his military superiority over Lally in the field and to hem him within the walls of Pondicherry.

—H.H. Dodwell

(The Cambridge History of India, Vol V)

Thus, they were ready to take over the rule of the entire country.

Significantly, in the Battle of Wandiwash, natives served in both the armies as sepoys. It makes one think: irrespective of which side won, there was an inevitability about the fall of India to European invaders. There was a lack of sensitivity to geopolitics of the day as well as a lack of foresight on the part of native rulers.

Causes for the English Success and the French Failure

The English company was a private enterprise—this created a sense of enthusiasm and self-confidence among the people. With less governmental control over it, this company could take instant decisions when needed without waiting for the approval of the government. The French company, on the other hand, was a State concern. It was controlled and regulated by the French government and was hemmed in by government policies and delays in decision-making.

The English navy was superior to the French navy; it helped to cut off the vital sea link between the French possessions in India and France.

The English held three important places, namely, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, whereas the French had only Pondicherry.

The French subordinated their commercial interest to territorial ambition, which made the French company short of funds.

In spite of their imperialistic motives, the British never neglected their commercial interests. So, they always had the funds and the consequent sound financial condition to help them significantly in the wars against their rivals.

A major factor in the success of the English in India was the superiority of the commanders in the British camp. In comparison to the long list of leaders on the English side —Sir Eyre Coote, Major Stringer Lawrence, Robert Clive, and many others—there was only Dupleix on the French side.

About the Goods in Trade Initially

There are accounts by various European travellers and traders about the activities in port towns such as Surat which give details of the intricate steps that went into the creation of fabrics collectively called 'Indian'.

Great demand was there for cotton longcloth, (usually 35 to 50 m in length), salempores (staple cotton cloth), and morees (superior quality cotton cloth). Other much desired fabrics were the painted cloths and prints, the silks, and the dyes. These textiles were not just in demand in Europe but also in other parts of Asia. Indians had traded in textiles for centuries before the Europeans arrived. In China, Japan, and the Indonesian archipelago, Indian cotton was popular for its light weight, yet strong qualities. When the Dutch, English, and French acquired materials from India, it was not only for their home countries, but for transport to Malacca or Java, for example, where they were traded for spices. By the 18th century, the French had coloured patterned handkerchiefs specially woven for particular island markets, which proved a successful entrepreneurial effort.

A corollary to the trade in textiles and spices was the trade in slaves. It is generally considered that slave trade concerned Europe, Africa, and the Americas (the 'New World'), but this ignores the fact that trade between Europe and Asia also helped to sustain slavery. French ships took European goods to Asia, where they acquired cowry shells and Indian textiles that were highly valued in West Africa. Traders exchanged these goods in Africa for slaves, who were sent to the colonies of France in the Americas. "The circle was completed," says the Yale Center for the Study of Globalisation, "when sugar and other goods from the Americas were loaded on board and shipped back to France."

When the French East India Company started trading in India, they entered an already well-established, complex economic system, an intricate network of production, negotiation, delivery, and distribution. Large commercial fleets as well as prosperous shore-based businesses were run by Indian merchants. Weavers and merchants worked with overland freight operators and brokers, who worked with exporters and ship owners. These agents had also to negotiate with local state officials for commercial privileges. The European traders had to learn well-established rules and practices and successfully collaborate with indigenous envoys.

The factories of all the European trading groups were to be found in practically the same places. At the peak of the Indian trade, the demand for Indian goods exceeded the supply by weavers and other artisans; even so there was no serious rivalry initially.

But as the three companies—the Dutch, the English, and the French—grew more competitive, the English, better funded and better conversant in local business practices and customs, were able to expand their factory outposts to larger industrial towns under their jurisdiction. Gradually, these commercial strongholds turned into political enclaves, ultimately enabling the English to expand and consolidate their power and control all over India.

The Danes

The Danish East India Company was established in 1616, and in 1620, they founded a factory at Tranquebar near Tanjore, on the eastern coast of India. Their principal settlement was at Serampore near Calcutta. The Danish factories, which were not important at any time, were sold to the British government in 1845. The Danes are better known for their missionary activities than for commerce.

Why the English Succeeded against Other European Powers

Of all the European nations who came as traders to India after new sea routes were discovered, England emerged as the most powerful and successful by the end of the 18th century. The major factors which can be attributed for the success of the English against other European powers—Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and Denmark—in the world in general and in India in particular were as follows.

Structure and Nature of the Trading Companies

The English East India Company, formed through amalgamation of several rival companies at home, was controlled by a board of directors whose members were elected annually. The shareholders of the company exercised considerable influence, as the votes could be bought and sold through purchase of shares. The trading companies of France and Portugal were largely owned by the State, and their nature was in many ways feudalistic.

In the French company, the monarch had more than 60 per cent share and, its directors were nominated by the monarch from the shareholders who were supposed to carry out the decisions of two high commissioners appointed by the government. The shareholders took very little interest in promoting the prosperity of the company, because the State guaranteed a dividend to the shareholders. The lack of public interest could be inferred from the fact that between 1725 and 1765, there was no meeting of the shareholders and the company was simply managed as a department of the State.

Naval Superiority

The Royal Navy of Britain was not only the largest, it was the most advanced of its times. The victory against the Spanish Armada and against the French at Trafalgar had put the Royal Navy at the peak of the European naval forces. In India too, the British were able to defeat the Portuguese and the French due to strong and fast movement of the naval ships. The English learnt from the Portuguese the importance of an efficient navy and improved their own fleet technologically.

Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution started in England in the early 18th century, with the invention of new machines like the spinning Jenny, steam engine, the power loom, and several others. These machines greatly improved production in the fields of textiles, metallurgy, steam power, and agriculture. The industrial revolution reached other European nations late, and this helped England to maintain its hegemony.

Military Skill and Discipline

The British soldiers were a disciplined lot and well-trained. The British commanders were strategists who tried new tactics in warfare. Technological developments equipped the military well. All this combined to enable smaller groups of English fighters defeat larger armies.

Stable Government

With the exception of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Britain witnessed stable government with efficient monarchs.

Other European nations like France witnessed violent revolution in 1789 and afterwards the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon's defeat in 1815 significantly weakened France's position, and from then on it was forced to side with Britain. The Italians got united as a nation as late in 1861. The Dutch and Spain were also involved in the 80-years war in the 17th century, which weakened Portuguese imperialism. The Dutch East India Company, affected by bankruptcy in 1800 coupled with the revolution in 1830, was forced to sell its possessions to Britain and quit Asia.

Lesser Zeal for Religion

Britain was less zealous about religion and less interested in spreading Christianity, as compared to Spain, Portugal, or the Dutch. Thus, its rule was far more acceptable to the subjects than that of other colonial powers.

Use of Debt Market

One of the major and innovative reasons why Britain succeeded between the mid-18th century and the mid-19th century, while other European nations fell, was that it used the debt markets to fund its wars. The world's first central bank—the Bank of England—was established to sell government debt to the money markets on the promise of a decent return on Britain's defeating rival countries like France and Spain. Britain was thus enabled to spend much more on its military than its rivals. Britain's rival France could not match the expenditure of the English; between 1694 and 1812, first under the monarchs, then under the revolutionary governments, and finally under Napoleon Bonaparte, France simply went bankrupt with its outdated ways of raising money.

Summary

Why a Sea Route to India

(i) Spirit of renaissance in the 15th-century Europe
(ii) European economy growing rapidly, leading to prosperity and demand for luxury goods; increase in the supply of meat requiring spices for preservation

(iii) Capture of Constantinople in 1453, and Syria and Egypt later by the Ottoman Turks calling for a new route to reach India without dealing with Arabs and Turks
(iv) Venice and Genoa too small to stand up to the Turks
(v) Spain and Portugal aided with money and men by the North Europeans and by ships and technical knowledge by the Genoese
(vi) The Portuguese the pioneers, followed by the Dutch, English, Danes, and the French respectively to reach India

The Portuguese

Vasco Da Gama discovered sea route to India in 1498.

Vasco's second visit in 1502 led to the establishment of trading stations at Calicut, Cochin, and Cannanore.

Francisco de Almeida (1505–09) First governor, initiated the blue water policy (cartaze system).

Alfonso de Albuquerque (1509–1515) Considered to be the founder of the Portuguese power in India: captured Goa from Bijapur; persecuted Muslims; captured Bhatkal from Sri Krishna Deva Rai (1510) of Vijayanagara; and initiated the policy of marrying with the natives of India and banned the practice of *sati* in his area of influence.

Nino da Cunha (1529–38) shifted the capital from Cochin to Goa in 1530. In his rule, Diu and Bassein came under the Portuguese occupation from Gujarat King Bahadur Shah. Bahadur Shah got killed in 1537 at Diu while negotiating with the Portuguese.

Factors for Decline of the Portuguese in India (a) Emergence of powerful dynasties in Egypt, Persia, and north India and the appearance of the Marathas as neighbours; (b) political fears aroused by the activities of Jesuit missionaries, and hatred of persecution (such as inquisition) that caused reaction against Portuguese spiritual pressure; (c) rise of the English and Dutch commercial ambitions challenging the Portuguese supremacy; (d) rampant corruption, greed, and selfishness along with piracy and clandestine trade practices of the Portuguese administration in India; (e) diversion of Portuguese colonising ambitions towards the West due to the discovery of Brazil.

The Dutch

(i) The United East India Company of the Netherlands ***(Verehgidge Oost Indische Compagnie),*** formed in March

1602 by the Charter of Dutch Parliament, had the powers to wage wars, make treaty, and build forts.

(ii) **Dutch Factories in India** Masulipatnam (1605), Pulicat (1610), Surat (1616), Bimlipatam (1641), Karikal (1645), Chinsurah (1653), Cassimbazar (Kasimbazar), Baranagore, Patna, Balasore, Nagapatam (1658), and Cochin (1663)

(iii) **Decline in India** The defeat of the Dutch in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry and the shifting of Dutch attention towards the Malay Archipelago

(iv) **Battle of Bidara (1759)** The English defeated the Dutch.

The English

Factors for Foundation Drake's voyage round the world, and English victory over the mighty Spanish Armada leading to great ambitions

Formation English East India Company was formed on December 31, 1600 by the charter issued by Queen Elizabeth I, which gave the company monopoly to trade in the East Indies for 15 years.

Settlements in India (i) With Captain Thomas Best's victory over the Portuguese (1612), the English established their first factory at Surat (1613). Subsequently, Sir Thomas Roe secured permission from Jehangir to establish factories at Agra, Ahmedabad, and Broach.

(ii) Bombay came under the control of the Company, with Charles II (who received it as a part of the Portuguese dowry) leasing it out to the English Company for an annual rent of 10 pounds.

(iii) Madras with the Fort St. George replaced Masulipatnam as the English headquarters on the east coast, when the former was given by the Chandragiri chief to the English in 1639.

(iv) The city of Calcutta grew from the development of three villages Sutanuti, Gobindapur, and Kalikata secured from the Mughal governor of Bengal. The fortified settlement was named Fort William (1700), and it became the seat of British power in India till 1911.

Farrukhsiyar's Farmans In 1717, the Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar's farmans, called Magna Carta of the East India Company, gave significant privileges to the Company in Bengal, Gujarat, and Hyderabad.

Merger of Companies In 1635, a rival company named Courteen

Association later called the Assada company, formed by Sir William Courteen, was given license to trade by Charles I. In 1657, both the companies merged.

In 1698, another rival company emerged. In 1702, the rivalry between the old and the new company came to an end, but their final amalgamation took place in 1708 under the title 'The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies', after the arbitration of the Earl of Godolphin. This Company ruled in India till 1858.

The French

Foundation In 1664, Colbert, a minister of Louis XIV, laid the foundations of *Compagnie des Indes Orientales.*

Settlements in India Pondicherry, developed as headquarters, was granted to Francois Martin, the director of Masulipatnam factory, by Valikondapuram governor Sher Khan Lodi in 1673. Finally incorporated into the Indian Union in 1954.

Anglo-French Rivalry in India The Anglo-French rivalry in India coincided with the wars between the English and French in Europe.

Causes ● For protection and expansion of commercial interests.

- Political developments in southern India and Europe provided pretexts to contest their claims which culminated in three Carnatic wars.

First Carnatic War (1740–48) It was an extension of the Anglo-French rivalry in Europe and ended in 1748 with the Treaty of **Aix-La Chapelle.**

Second Carnatic War (1749–54) Although inconclusive, it undermined the French power in South India vis-à-vis the English.

Third Carnatic War (1758–63) ● A decisive war, known for the Battle of Wandiwash (1760–61)

- An echo of the Anglo-French struggle in Europe
- By the **Treaty of Paris** (1763), the French were allowed to use Indian settlements for commercial purposes only and fortification of settlements were banned.

Causes of the French Failure ● Inadequate Military and Financial Support

- France's Involvement in Europe
- Ill-managed Policy of Imperial France
- Lack of Commercial Incentive to the French Company
- Sound Commercial Base of the English Company

CHAPTER 4

India on the Eve of British Conquest

The first half of the 18th century saw the decline of the mighty Mughals, who had been the envy of their contemporaries for almost two centuries. The reign of Aurangzeb (1658–1707) proved to signify the beginning of the end of Mughal rule in India. It is argued that Aurangzeb's misguided policies weakened the stability of the state and the decline gained momentum after his death due to wars of succession and weak rulers. Though Muhammad Shah ruled for a long spell of 29 years (1719–48), a revival of the imperial fortunes did not take place as he was an incompetent ruler. Muhammad Shah's reign witnessed the establishment of the independent states of Hyderabad, Bengal, Awadh, and Punjab. Several local chiefs began to assert their independence and the Marathas began to make their bid to inherit the imperial mantle.

Challenges before the Mughals

External Challenges

In the absence of internal strength, the Mughals could not put a tough front against external challenges which came in the form of several invasions from the north-west. The north-western borders had been neglected by the later Mughals and not much effort was expended in protecting the border.

View

Nader Shah was Mughal emperor for only fifty-seven days, in 1739, but those days created aftershocks that transformed India's politics. They broke existing centres of authority, massively shrinking the scope of Mughal power. They set loose bands of mounted warriors who ransacked the countryside seeking wealth from villages and towns. They pushed traders behind the walls of whichever power had the strongest forts. For a short period plunder, rather than negotiation, became the most effective tool for creating new centres of wealth. Those fifty-seven days laid the ground which allowed the East India Company to conquer territory in India for the first time.

—**Jon Wilson**, *India Conquered*

Nadir Shah, the Persian emperor, attacked India in 1738–39, conquered Lahore, and defeated the Mughal army at Karnal on February 13, 1739. Later, Muhammad Shah was captured, and Delhi was looted and devastated. According to an estimate, apart from the Peacock Throne and the *Kohinoor* diamond, seventy crore rupees were collected from the official treasury and the safes of the rich nobles. Nadir Shah gained the strategically important Mughal territory to the west of the Indus including Kabul. Thus, India once again became vulnerable to the attacks from the north-west.

Ahmad Shah Abdali (or Ahmad Shah Durrani), who was elected the successor of Nadir Shah after the latter's death in 1747, invaded India several times between 1748 and 1767. He continuously harassed the Mughals who tried to buy peace in 1751–52 by ceding Punjab to him. In 1757, Abdali captured Delhi and left behind an Afghan caretaker to watch over the Mughal emperor. Before his return, Abdali had recognised Alamgir II as the Mughal emperor and the Rohilla chief, Najib-ud-Daula, as Mir Bakhshi of the empire, who was to act as personal 'supreme agent' of Abdali. In 1758, Najib-ud-Daula was expelled from Delhi by the Maratha chief, Raghunath Rao, who also captured Punjab. In 1759, Ahmad Shah Abdali returned to India to take revenge on the Marathas. In 1761, Abdali defeated the Marathas in the *Third Battle of Panipat*. The last of Abdali's invasions came in 1767.

Why Many Empire-shaking Battles at Panipat?

Panipat and its adjacent region, located in present Haryana on the banks of the Yamuna and between the fertile plains of the Ganga and Indus rivers, have witnessed several battles. These battles changed the course of Indian history at different points of time.

- The first Battle of Panipat in 1526 was between Babur and Ibrahim Lodi. The result of the battle laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire by ending the rule of the Delhi Sultanate.
- The Second Battle of Panipat in 1556 was between Akbar and Hemu; it decided in favour of the continuation of the Mughal rule.
- The Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali put an end to the Maratha ambition of ruling over India.

Why Panipat was a favourite battlefield

- Panipat had a strategic location. One of the parties of the war generally came from the north/northwest through the Khyber Pass to get hold over Delhi, the political capital of northern India. To move a military through rough terrains—deserts of Rajasthan or the other northern areas infested with dense forests—was very risky and difficult. On the other hand, the rulers at Delhi considered Panipat as a confrontable strategic ground and hence they preferred to take the fight there.
- Its proximity to Delhi made it easier for the Indian rulers to transport weapons, military, and food supplies, etc., to the battleground, and still keep the capital insulated from the conflict at hand.
- Panipat's surrounding region has a flat ground which was suitable for cavalry movement—the main mode of warfare at the time.
- After the construction of the Grand Trunk Road by Sher Shah Suri (1540–45), Panipat was on this route. It became easier for conquerors to find their way there.
- The duration of monsoon rainfall in the region is short in comparison to other areas, making it easier to fight.
- The artisans/smiths of these regions were experts in making warfare-related materials, and, hence, it became easier for forces of both parties to replenish their war materials.

Weak Rulers after Aurangzeb—An Internal Challenge

Bahadur Shah I (ruled 1707–12) After a nearly two-year-long war of succession, the 63-year-old Prince Mu'azzam, the eldest son of Aurangzeb, became the emperor, taking the title Bahadur Shah. He was later called Bahadur Shah I). He had killed his brothers Muhammad Azam and Kam Bakhsh in the war of succession. Khafi Khan gave the title of 'Shah-i-Bekhabar' to Bahadur Shah.

He adopted a pacific policy with the Marathas, the Rajputs, and the Jats. Shahu, the Maratha prince, was released from Mughal captivity, and Rajput chiefs were confirmed in their respective states. However, the Sikh leader Banda Bahadur attacked the Muslims in Punjab, and, hence, the emperor took action against him. Bahadur Shah I died in February 1712.

Jahandar Shah (ruled 1712–13) With the help of Zulfikar Khan, Jahandar Shah became the emperor. Zulfikar Khan was appointed prime minister; he introduced *izara* system to improve the financial condition of the empire. Jahandar Shah abolished Jaziya.

Farrukhsiyar (ruled 1713–1719) After killing Jahandar Shah with the help of Sayyid brothers—Abdulla Khan and Hussain Ali (known as 'King Makers'), Farrukhsiyar became the new emperor. He followed a policy of religious tolerance by abolishing Jaziya and pilgrimage tax. In 1717, he gave *farmans* to the British. In 1719, the Sayyid brothers, with the help of Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath, dethroned Farrukhsiyar. Later, he was blinded and killed. It was the first time in the Mughal history that an emperor was killed by his nobles.

Rafi-ud-Darajat (ruled Feb. 28–June 6, 1719) He ruled for the shortest period among the Mughals.

View

He (Bahadur Shah I) was the last Emperor of whom anything favourable can be said. Henceforth, the rapid and complete abasement and practical dissolution of the Empire are typified in the incapacity and political insignificance of its sovereigns.

—Sidney Owen

Rafi-ud-Daula (ruled June 6–Sep. 17, 1719) The Sayyid brothers placed Rafi-ud-Daula with the title **Shah Jahan II** on the throne. The new emperor was an opium addict.

Muhammad Shah (ruled 1719–48) After the death of Rafi-ud-Daula, Raushan Akhtar became the choice of the Sayyid Brothers. Muhammad Shah, as he came to be known in history, was given the title of 'Rangeela' due to his luxurious lifestyle.

Muhammad Shah, with the help of Nizam-ul-Mulk, killed the Sayyid Brothers. In 1724, Nizam-ul-Mulk became the *wazir* and founded the independent state of Hyderabad. In 1737, Baji Rao I, the Maratha Peshwa, invaded Delhi with a small army of 500 horsemen. In 1739, Nadir Shah defeated the Mughals in the **Battle of Karnal** and later imprisoned Muhammad Shah and annexed areas west of the Indus into the Persian empire.

Ahmad Shah Bahadur (ruled 1748–1754) Ahmad Shah was an incompetent ruler who left the state affairs in the hands of Udham Bai, the 'Queen Mother'. Udham Bai, given the title of Qibla-i-Alam, was a lady of poor intellect who ruled with the help of her paramour, Javid Khan (a notorious eunuch).

Alamgir II (ruled 1754–59) Alamgir II was a son of Emperor Jahandar Shah. Ahmed Shah Abdali, the Iranian invader, reached Delhi in January 1757. During his reign, the **Battle of Plassey** was fought in June 1757. Alamgir II was assassinated.

Shah Jahan III (ruled 1759–60) Also known as Muhi-ul-millat, he was placed on the throne as a result of the intrigues in Delhi, but was latter deposed through Maratha intervention.

Shah Alam II (ruled Oct. 1760–July 1788; Oct. 1788–Nov. 1806) His reign saw two decisive battles—the **Third Battle of Panipat** (1761) and the **Battle of Buxar** (1764). In 1765, according to the terms of Treaty of Allahabad (August 1765), he was taken under the East India Company's protection and resided at Allahabad. He also issued a *farman* granting to the Company in perpetuity the

Diwani (the right to collect revenue) of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. In 1772, the Marathas took him to Delhi where he lived till 1803. In 1803, he again accepted the protection of the English, after the defeat of Daulat Rao Scindia by the English. Afterwards, the Mughal emperor became the pensioner of the English.

Akbar Shah II (ruled 1806–37) He gave the title of 'Raja' to Rammohan Roy. During his regime, in 1835, the East India Company discontinued calling itself subject of the Mughal emperor, and stopped issuing coins in the name of the Mughal emperor.

Bahadur Shah II (ruled 1837–57) Bahadur Shah II or Bahadur Shah Zafar (Zafar being his surname) was the last Mughal emperor. The Revolt of 1857 had made a futile attempt to declare him the Emperor of India. He was captured by the English and sent to Rangoon where he died in 1862. In legal terms, the Mughal Empire came to an end on November 1, 1858 with the declaration of Queen Victoria.

Causes of Decline of the Mughal Empire

Why the Mughal Empire declined has been a subject of debate among historians. Scholarly opinion can be divided along two broad lines—those who view the matter as generally **empire-related** and those who regard the developments as **region-related**. The empire-related or Mughal-centric view sees the causes of the decline within the structure and functioning of the empire itself. The region-related view finds the causes of Mughal decline in the turmoil and instability in the different parts of the empire. The decline was due to both aspects.

The process of disintegration of the Mughal Empire began during the reign of Aurangzeb, but it picked up momentum only after his death in 1707. At his death, conditions were not such that the process of decline could not be checked. Although Mughal authority was challenged by several chiefs and rulers, none could assert independence

in the face of the imperial might. The Sikhs, Marathas, and Rajputs did not possess the capacity to overthrow the empire; they merely resisted Mughal power to gain and keep their independence in their respective territories. Thus, if the successors of Aurangzeb had been capable rulers, the empire might not have fallen. Most of the emperors who came after Aurangzeb proved to be incapable, weak, and licentious monarchs who hastened the process of disintegration of the empire and, finally, its collapse.

The major factors which contributed to the downfall of the Mughal Empire are discussed below.

Shifting Allegiance of Zamindars

Two classes shared the power of the State with the emperor during the medieval period—the zamindars and the nobles. The zamindars were hereditary owners of their lands who enjoyed certain privileges on hereditary basis, and were variously known as *rais, rajas, thakurs, khuts,* or *deshmukhs*. They occupied an important place in the empire because they helped in the collection of revenue and in local administration, for which they maintained soldiers. Though the Mughals had tried to curb the power of the zamindars and maintain direct contact with the peasants, they had not wholly succeeded. During the reign of Aurangzeb itself, there was a marked increase in the power and influence of the zamindars. The biggest fallout of this was that regional loyalties were encouraged. Many local zamindars helped the nobility, the other powerful class within the empire, to take advantage of the weakness of the empire and carve out independent kingdoms for themselves.

Jagirdari Crisis

The nobility comprised people who were either assigned large jagirs and mansabs or appointed subahdars of Mughal subas and given the responsibility of maintaining these. To this class belonged many Rajput rulers, subahdars, and mansabdars. Mughal rule has often been defined as "the rule of the nobility", because these nobles played a central role in administering the empire. Although Akbar had provided a

Views

The roots of the disintegration of the Mughal empire may be found in the Medieval Indian economy; the stagnation of trade, industry and scientific development within the limits of that economy; the growing financial crisis which took the form of a crisis of the *jagirdari* system and affected every branch of state activity; the inability of the nobility to realise in the circumstances their ambitions in the service of the state and consequently the struggle of factions and the bid of ambitious nobles for independent dominion; the inability of the Mughal emperors to accommodate the Marathas and to adjust their claims within the framework of the Mughal empire, and the consequent breakdown of the attempt to create a composite ruling class in India; and the impact of all these developments on politics at the court and in the country, and upon the security of the north-western passes. Individual failings and faults of character also played their due role but they have necessarily to be seen against the background of these deeper, more impersonal factors.

—Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court*, 1707–40

Various explanations are put forward for the revolts which brought about the collapse of the Mughal Empire... Here our main concern is with what our 17th and early 18th century authorities have to say. And it will be seen that they, at any rate, put the greatest store by the economic and administrative causes of the upheaval and know little of religious reaction or national consciousness... Thus was the Mughal Empire destroyed. No new order was, or could be, created by the forces ranged against it.

—Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*

The more I study the period, the more I am convinced that military inefficiency was the principal, if not the sole, cause of that empire's final collapse. All other defects and weaknesses were as nothing in comparison with this...Long before it disappeared, it had lost all military energy at the centre, and was ready to crumble to pieces at the first touch. The rude hand of no Persian or Afghan conqueror, no Nadir, no Ahmad Abdali, the genius of no European adventurer, a Dupleix or a

Clive, was needed to precipitate it into the abyss. The empire of the Mughals was already doomed before any of these had appeared on the scene; and had they never been heard of there can be little doubt that some Mahratta bandit or Sikh freebooter would in due time have seated himself on the throne of Akbar and Shahjahan.

—William Irvine, *Army of the Indian Mughals*

A common impression is, that...the decline, fall of the Mughal Empire were due to the degeneracy of its sovereigns. But...it was irretrievably ruined in the reign of Aurangzeb, a monarch of great ability, energy and determination, but lacking in political insight, and a bigoted Mussulman. He struck the first mortal blow by reversing Akbar's wise and generous policy of ignoring distinctions of race and religion, and reimposing the *jizya* or poll tax, on his Hindu subjects; whereby he estranged them, and turned the noblest and most warlike of them—the Rajputs, hitherto the staunchest supporters of the throne—into deadly and persistent enemies. And Shivaji and his followers not only vindicated their independence, but struck a second mortal blow at the integrity of the Empire. They destroyed its military reputation. They exhausted its accumulated treasure. They spread disorder and devastation over the Deccan and beyond it...They established an *imperium in imperio.* Thus the Empire, though not dissolved, was hopelessly debilitated. The effective authority of the central government was thenceforth in abeyance...Nadir Shah, after inflicting the extremity of humiliation on the Emperor and his capital, annexed the Imperial territory west of the Indus. The dissolution of the Empire was complete.

—Sidney Owen, *The Fall of the Mughal Empire*

The Mughal Empire and with it the Maratha overlordship of Hindustan fell because of the rottenness at the core of Indian society. The rottenness showed itself in the form of military and political helplessness. The country could not defend itself; royalty was hopelessly depraved or imbecile; the nobles were selfish and short-sighted; corruption, inefficiency and treachery disgraced all branches of the public service. In the midst of this decay and confusion, our literature, art and even true religion had perished.

—J.N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Vol. IV

well-knit organisation for them, there was divisiveness among the nobility on the basis of religion, homeland, and tribe, and each category formed a group of its own. Mutual rivalry, jealousy, and contest for power among the various groups during the rule of the later Mughals (in the absence of a strong central leadership) not only reduced the prestige of the emperor but also contributed to the decline of the empire.

Rise of Regional Aspirations

Aurangzeb's reign itself witnessed rebellions by regional groups like the Jats, Sikhs, and Marathas. They defied the authority of the Mughal state in their bid to create kingdoms of their own. They did not succeed in their efforts, but they influenced the future course of political events in their respective regions. Their continuous struggle against the empire for political ascendancy weakened the empire

Causes of the Mughals' Downfall in a Nutshell

Some of the main causes for the decline of the Mughals, briefly put, were as follows:

(i) The government of the Mughals was a personal despotism, and so its success depended on the character of the reigning ruler. The later Mughals were worthless and neglected the administration of the state.

(ii) With the absence of a definite law of succession, there always occurred a war of succession; this weakened the stability of the government and fostered partisanship at the cost of patriotism.

(iii) The degeneration of the rulers led to the degeneration of the nobility, with factious quarrels and intrigues costing the empire heavily.

(iv) The deterioration of the army also proved disastrous for the empire.

(v) The empire had become too vast and unwieldy to be efficiently governed from a central authority under weak rulers, especially under the existing conditions of transport and communication.

(vi) Aurangzeb's religious policy was largely responsible for leading to revolts by Rajputs, Sikhs, Jats, and Marathas.

(vii) Aurangzeb's Deccan policy was a complete failure and was an important cause of the downfall of the Mughal empire.

(viii) Invasions of Irani and Durrani kingdoms gave a death blow to the Mughal empire.

considerably. Aurangzeb, and after him Bahadur Shah I, by attempting to suppress the Rajputs, spurred them to battle against the Mughals. The later Mughals made an effort to follow a policy of reconciliation with the Rajputs, but by then it was already too late: the Rajputs no longer trusted the Mughals enough to ally with them for the welfare of the empire.

The Marathas too were becoming a formidable enemy. Their aim was at first limited only to regaining control over the region of Maharashtra; but it soon went on to include getting legal sanction from the Mughal emperor for collecting *sardeshmukhi* and *chauth* throughout India. They forged northwards and, by 1740, succeeded in spreading their influence over the provinces of Gujarat, Malwa, and Bundelkhand. The Rajput struggle against the empire and the growing ambition and power of the Marathas, thus, adversely affected the Mughal might.

Economic and Administrative Problems

The number of amirs and their ranks or mansabs had increased sharply over time; there was little land left to be distributed among them as jagirs. Aurangzeb tried to solve the problem of acute shortage of jagirs or bejagiri by showing enhanced income from the jagirs on record. But this was a short-sighted measure as the amirs tried to recover the recorded income from their jagirs by pressurising the peasantry. So, both the amirs and the peasantry were antagonised. Then there were the wars, the luxurious lifestyles of the emperors and amirs alike, and the reduction in khalisa land, all of which burdened the state. The result was that the expenditure of the state much exceeded its income.

There was, moreover, no significant scientific and technological advance that could have improved a stagnant economy. The once flourishing trade did not enrich the empire's coffers even as the inroads by European traders grew along coastal India.

These economic and administrative problems only multiplied following the death of Aurangzeb. The empire had become too vast to be efficiently administered by a centralised system when the rulers were weak and incompetent.

Rise of Regional States

The states that emerged as a result of the decline of the Mughal Empire can be classified into the following three broad categories:

(i) **Successor States** These were the Mughal provinces that turned into states after breaking away from the empire. Though they did not challenge the sovereignty of the Mughal ruler, the establishment of virtually independent and hereditary authority by their governors showed the emergence of autonomous polity in these territories. Some examples are Awadh, Bengal, and Hyderabad.

(ii) **Independent Kingdoms** These states came into existence primarily due to the destabilisation of the Mughal control over the provinces, examples being Mysore and the Rajput states.

(iii) **The New States** These were the states set up by the rebels against the Mughal empire, examples being the Maratha, the Sikh, and the Jat states.

Survey of Regional Kingdoms

Hyderabad

The founder of the Asaf-Jah house of Hyderabad was Kilich Khan, popularly known as Nizam-ul-Mulk. It was Zulfikar Khan who had first conceived the idea of an independent state in the Deccan. But with his death in 1713, the dream remained unfulfilled. Kilich Khan, disgusted with the Mughal emperor who had appointed Mubariz Khan as a full-fledged viceroy of the Deccan, decided to fight Mubariz Khan. He defeated and later killed Mubariz Khan in the Battle of Shakr-Kheda (1724). He now assumed control of the Deccan. In 1725, he became the viceroy and conferred on himself the title of Asaf-Jah.

Awadh

The founder of the independent principality of Awadh was Saadat Khan, popularly known as Burhan-ul-Mulk. Saadat Khan was a Shia. He had joined in a conspiracy against the Sayyid brothers, which resulted in his being given an increased mansab. Later, driven out of the court, he was prompted to found a new independent state. Saadat Khan committed

suicide due to pressure from Nadir Shah who was demanding a huge booty from him. He was succeeded by Safdar Jang as the Nawab of Awadh.

Bengal

Murshid Kuli Khan was the founder of the independent state of Bengal. He was a capable ruler and made Bengal a prosperous state. He was succeeded in 1727 by his son Shuja-ud-din. His successor, Sarfaraz Khan, was killed in 1740 by Alivardi Khan, the deputy governor of Bihar at Gheria, who assumed power and made himself independent of the Mughal emperor by giving yearly tribute.

The Rajputs

The Rajputs tried to re-establish their independence in the 18th century. This forced the Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah I to march against Ajit Singh (1708), who had formed an alliance with Jai Singh II and Durgadas Rathor. But the alliance was broken and the situation was saved for the Mughals. At one time the Rajputs controlled the entire territory extending from the south of Delhi up to the western coast.

Mysore

Another important state to make its appearance in the 18th century was that of Mysore. This territory located at the junction of the Eastern and Western Ghats was ruled by the Wodeyars. Various powers, interested in this territory, turned the area into a constant battlefield. In the end, the Mysore state was brought under the rule of Haider Ali who ruled the state but not without trouble. He was involved in constant warfare with the British and so was his son Tipu Sultan.

Kerala

Martanda Varma established an independent state of Kerala with Travancore as his capital. He extended the boundaries of his state from Kanyakumari to Cochin. He made efforts to organise his army along the Western model and adopted various measures to develop his state.

The Jats

The agriculturist Jat settlers living around Delhi, Mathura, and Agra revolted against the oppressive policies of Aurangzeb.

The first major rebellion by the Jats against Mughal imperial forces occurred in Mathura district in 1669. It was led by Gokula. It was not successful. After some initial setbacks, Churaman and Badan Singh succeeded in setting up the Jat kingdom of Bharatpur in the 18th century. But it was under Suraj Mal that Jat power reached its zenith. He not only provided an efficient system of administration but also greatly extended the territory of the state. His state included territories from Ganga in the east to Chambal in the south and included the *Subahs* of Agra, Mathura, Meerut, and Aligarh. However, the Jat state suffered a decline after the death of Suraj Mal in 1763. Thereafter, the state split into small areas controlled by petty zamindars who mainly lived by plunder.

The Sikhs

In 1675, Aurangzeb arrested and executed the ninth Sikh guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, who had refused to embrace Islam. According to Sikh tradition, the guru had supported the rights of Kashmiri Pandits and protected them against persecution by the Mughals. Guru Gobind Singh, who succeeded Guru Tegh Bahadur, openly rebelled against Aurangzeb. He transformed the Sikhs into a militant sect in defence of their religion and liberties. Banda Bahadur, who later assumed the leadership of the Sikhs in 1708, was defeated and killed. In the wake of the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Sikhs once again asserted their authority. At this stage, they organised themselves into 12 *misls* or confederacies which exercised control over different parts of the kingdom. The credit for establishing a strong kingdom of Punjab goes to Ranjit Singh. He was the son of Mahan Singh, the leader of the Sukarchakiya *misl.* Ranjit Singh brought under control the area extending from the Sutlej to the Jhelum. He conquered Lahore in 1799 and Amritsar in 1802. By the Treaty of Amritsar with the British, Ranjit Singh acknowledged the British right over the Cis-Sutlej territories. Ranjit Singh proved to be an efficient administrator. He greatly modernised his army with the help of Europeans. But towards the close of his reign, the English forced him to sign the Tripartite Treaty in 1838 with Shah Shuja and the

English Company whereby he agreed to provide passage to the British troops through Punjab with a view to placing Shah Shuja on the throne of Kabul. Ranjit Singh died in 1839. His successors could not keep the state intact, and, soon enough, the British took control over it.

The Marathas

Perhaps the most formidable province to emerge was that of the Marathas. Under the capable leadership of the Peshwas, the Marathas uprooted the Mughal authority from Malwa and Gujarat and established their rule. At one time they claimed the right to be the chief inheritors of the Mughal dominion, but their authority was challenged by Ahmad Shah Abdali in the Third Battle of Panipat (1761). The Marathas quickly recovered from the defeat and offered the most formidable challenge to the English East India Company in the struggle for political supremacy in India.

Rohilakhand and Farukhabad

The states of Rohilakhand and the kingdom of the Bangash Pathans were a fallout of the Afghan migration into India. Large-scale immigration of Afghans into India took place in mid-18th century because of political and economic turmoil in Afghanistan. Ali Muhammad Khan took advantage of the collapse of authority in North India following Nadir Shah's invasion, to set up a petty kingdom, Rohilakhand. This was the area of the Himalayan foothills between Kumaon in the north and the Ganga in the south. The Rohillas, as the inhabitants of Rohilakhand were known, suffered heavily at the hands of the other powers in the area, the Jats and the Awadh rulers and, later, the Marathas and the British. Mohammad Khan Bangash, an Afghan, set up an independent kingdom to the east of Delhi in the area around Farrukhabad, during the reigns of Farrukhsiyar and Muhammad Shah.

Nature and Limitations of Regional States

The independent political systems that emerged in the provinces continued to maintain ties with the Mughal imperial authority and acknowledged the emperor's importance as an umbrella. Even rebel chieftains of the Marathas and Sikhs recognised the Mughal emperor as the supreme authority.

The polity that emerged in these states was regional in character, and functional with the collaborative support of the different local groups like the zamindars, merchants, local nobles, and chieftains. The provincial rulers had to take care of these various local interests in order to maintain themselves. Of course, there were exceptions; for instance, in Mysore, rulers did not recognise the local chieftains.

The regional states had certain limitations. The provincial rulers failed to develop a system based on sound financial, administrative, and military organisation. Though some of them tried to modernise, notably Mysore, on the whole, they were backward in science and technology. Another drawback was the constant warfare these states had with the neighbouring regional powers—wars in which none could ultimately dominate. In fact, these states were strong enough to challenge Mughal power, but none was able to replace it with a stable polity at an all-India level.

The jagirdari crisis intensified as income from agriculture declined, and the number of contenders for a share of the surplus multiplied. Though trade, internal and foreign, continued without disruption and even prospered, the rest of the economy stagnated.

Socio-Economic Conditions

India, in the 18th century, failed to make progress economically, socially, or culturally, at an adequate pace. India became a land of contrasts because extreme poverty and extreme luxury existed side by side. The common populace remained impoverished, backward, and oppressed and lived at the bare subsistence level; the rich and the powerful enjoyed a life of luxury and lavishness. But it is worth noting that the life of the Indian masses was, by and large, better in the 18th century than it was after 100 years of British rule.

Agriculture

Though agriculture was technically backward, it was worked by the hard labour of peasants. But this hard-working class seldom got the fruits of their labour. Even though the

agricultural produce supported the rest of the society, a peasant's own reward was miserably inadequate. They were forced to pay exorbitant amounts to the state, the zamindars, the jagirdars, and the revenue-farmers. But this worsened under the British rule.

Trade and Industry

On account of being self-sufficient in handicrafts and agricultural products, India did not import foreign goods on a large scale. On the other hand, its industrial and agricultural products were in good demand in foreign markets. Hence, its exports were more than its imports; trade was balanced by import of silver and gold. India was known as a sink of precious metals.

Items of Import From the ***Persian Gulf Region***—

Views

Bear in mind that the commerce of India is the commerce of the world and… he who can exclusively command it is the dictator of Europe.

—**Peter the Great**

India was a far greater industrial and manufacturing nation than any in Europe or any other in Asia. Her textile goods—the fine products of her looms, in cotton, wool, linen and silk—were famous over the civilised world; so were her exquisite jewellery and her precious stones cut in every lovely form; so were her pottery, porcelains, ceramics of every kind, quality, color and beautiful shape; so were her fine works in metal—iron, steel, silver and gold.

She had great architecture—equal in beauty to any in the world. She had great engineering works. She had great merchants, great businessmen, great bankers and financiers. Not only was she the greatest shipbuilding nation, but she had great commerce and trade by land and sea which extended to all known civilised countries. Such was the India which the British found when they came.

—**J.T. Sunderland**

For centuries the handloom weavers of Bengal had produced some of the world's most desirable fabrics, especially the fine muslins, light as 'woven air', that were coveted by European dressmakers. As late as the mid-eighteenth century, Bengal's textiles were still being exported to Egypt, Turkey and Persia in the West, and to Java, China and Japan in the East, along well-established trade routes, as well as to Europe.

—**Shashi Tharoor**, *An Era of Darkness*

pearls, raw silk, wool, dates, dried fruits, and rose water; from ***Arabia***—coffee, gold, drugs, and honey; from ***China***—tea, sugar, porcelain, and silk; from ***Tibet***—gold, musk, and woollen cloth; from ***Africa***—ivory and drugs; from ***Europe***—woollen cloth, copper, iron, lead and paper.

Items of Export Cotton textiles, raw silk and silk fabrics, hardware, indigo, saltpetre, opium, rice, wheat, sugar, pepper and other spices, precious stones, and drugs.

Important Centres of Textile Industry Dacca, Murshidabad, Patna, Surat, Ahmedabad, Broach, Chanderi, Burhanpur, Jaunpur, Varanasi, Lucknow, Agra, Multan, Lahore, Masulipatnam, Aurangabad, Chicacole, Vishakhapatnam, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Madurai, etc.; Kashmir was a centre of woollen manufactures.

Ship-building Industry Maharashtra, the Andhra region, and Bengal were the leaders in ship-building. Indian shipping also flourished on the Kerala coast at Calicut and Quilon. The Zamorin of Calicut used the Muslim Kunjali Maraikkars (who were well known for their seafaring ability) for his navy. Shivaji Bhonsle's navy put up a good defence on the west coast against the Portuguese. According to Bipan Chandra, the European companies bought many Indian-made ships for their use.

Status of Education

The education imparted in 18th-century India was still traditional which could not match with the rapid developments in the West. The knowledge was confined to literature, law, religion, philosophy, and logic and excluded the study of physical and natural sciences, technology, and geography. In fact, due to over-reliance placed on ancient learning, any original thought got discouraged. Elementary education among the Hindus and the Muslims was quite widespread. The Hindu and Muslim elementary schools were called *pathshalas* and *maktabs* respectively. The education was confined to reading, writing, and arithmetic. Children from the lower caste sometimes attended the schools, but female presence was rare.

Chatuspathis or *Tols*, as they were called in Bihar and Bengal, were the centres of higher education. Some of the

famous centres for Sanskrit education were Kasi (Varanasi), Tirhut (Mithila), Nadia, and Utkala. *Madrasahs* were the institutions of higher learning for Persian and Arabic, Persian being the court language and learnt by the Muslims as well as the Hindus. Azimabad (Patna) was a famous centre for Persian education. People interested in the study of the Quran and Muslim theology had to acquire proficiency in Arabic.

Societal Set-up

Many Castes, Many Sects

The society of 18th-century India was characterised by traditional outlook and stagnation. Though there existed a certain degree of broad cultural unity, people were divided by caste, religion, region, tribe, and language. The family system was primarily patriarchal and caste was the central feature of the social life of the Hindus. Apart from the four *varnas*, Hindus were divided into numerous sub-castes which permanently fixed their place in the social scale. Though the choice of profession was mainly determined by caste considerations, exceptions occurred on a large scale, making caste status quite fluid in some parts of the country. Caste councils and *panchayats* enforced caste norms and regulations. Even though Islam enjoined social equality on the Muslims, they too were divided by considerations of caste, race, tribe, and status. Religious considerations not only kept the *Sunni* and *Shia* nobles apart but also the Irani, Afghan, Turani, and Hindustani Muslim nobles and officials apart from one another. The *sharif* Muslims consisting of nobles, scholars, priests, and army officers often looked down upon the *ajlaf* Muslims or the lower-class Muslims in a manner similar to the way of the higher-caste Hindus treated the lower-caste Hindus. Religious conversions occurred and caste proved to

View

A Hindu woman can go anywhere alone, even in the most crowded places, and she need never fear the impertinent looks and jokes of idle loungers.

—**Abbe Dubois**, commented at beginning of the 19th century

be a major divisive force and element of disintegration in 18th-century India.

Position of Women in Society

In the patriarchal family system in India (except in some social groups in Kerala), women possessed little individuality of their own, though there were a few exceptions. While upper-class women remained at home, lower-class women worked in fields and outside their homes supplementing the family income. Certain outdated and exploitative social customs and traditions such as the *purdah, sati,* child marriage, and polygamy did exist which hindered the progress of women. The plight of the Hindu widow was usually miserable. The evil of dowry was especially widespread in Bengal and Rajputana. Sensitive Indians were often touched by the hard and harsh life of the widows. Raja Sawai Jai Singh of Amber and the Maratha General Prashuram Bhau tried to promote widow remarriage but failed.

Menace of Slavery

European travellers and administrators, who came in the 17th century, reported the widespread prevalence of slaves in India. It is believed that some people were compelled to sell their offspring due to economic distress, famines, natural calamities, and extreme poverty. Generally, higher classes of Rajputs, Khatris, and Kayasthas kept women slave for domestic work. However, the status of slaves in India was better than that in Europe. Slaves were usually treated as hereditary servants rather than as menials. Marriages took place among the slaves, and the offspring coming out of such wedlock were considered free citizens.

The advent of Europeans heightened the slavery and slave trade in India. European trading companies purchased slaves from the markets of Bengal, Assam, and Bihar and took them to the European and American market. Abyssinian slaves were sold at Surat, Madras, and Calcutta.

Developments in Art, Architecture, and Culture

The decline of the imperial Mughals forced talented people to seek the patronage of newly established state courts like

Hyderabad, Lucknow, Jaipur, Murshidabad, Patna, Kashmir, etc.

At Lucknow, Asaf-ud-Daula built the *Bara Imambara* in 1784. In the first half of the 18th century, Sawai Jai Singh built the pink city of Jaipur and five astronomical observatives at Delhi, Jaipur, Benares, Mathura, and Ujjain. He also prepared a set of timetables called *Jij Muhammad-shahi,* to help the people in the study of astronomy. In the south, in Kerala, the Padmanabhapuram Palace, famous for its architecture and mural paintings, was constructed.

New schools of painting were born and achieved distinction. The paintings of the Rajputana and Kangra schools became prominent and revealed new vitality and taste.

A distinct feature of the literary life of the 18th century was the growth of Urdu language and poetry. It was the period of Urdu poets like Mir, Sauda, Nazir, and Mirza Ghalib (19th century). In South India, Malayalam literature flourished under the patronage of the Travancore rulers. Kalakkathu Kunchan Nambiar was a noted Malayalam poet. The Tamil language was enriched by *sittar* poetry. Tayumanavar (1706–44), one of the best exponents of *sittar* poetry, protested against the abuses of temple rule and the caste system. *Heer Ranjha,* the romantic epic in Punjabi literature, was composed by Warris Shah. In Sindhi literature, Shah Abdul Latif composed *Risalo,* a collection of poems. These are just some examples of literary works in regional languages.

Summary

Why the Mughal Empire Decined

- ***Weak Successors*** The Mughal empire was a personal despotism, and its success depended upon a strong and capable monarch.
- ***Absence of Definite Law of Succession*** Continuous wars of succession (absence of law of primogeniture) fostered partisanship at the cost of patriotism.
- ***Aurangzeb's Religious and Deccan Policies*** The religious policy antagonised the Rajputs, Sikhs, Jats, and Marathas; Deccan policy kept the emperor away from the capital for a long duration.
- ***Degeneration of Rulers and Nobles***
- ***Deterioration of Army***

- ***Too Vast an Empire*** The vast empire became a difficult task for weak rulers to administer efficiently.
- ***External Invasions*** Invasions of Irani and Durrani kingdoms (Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali) gave a death blow.
- ***Economic Decline*** Endless wars, stagnation in agriculture, and decline in trade and industry emptied the royal treasury.
- ***Advent of Europeans*** European companies interfered in native politics, hastening the disintegration of empire.
- ***Shifting Allegiance of Zamindars***
- ***Jagirdari Crisis***
- ***Rise of Regional Aspirations*** Rise and establishment of Awadh, Bengal, Hyderabad, Mysore, Kerala, Rajput states, and Jat states accelerated the process of disintegration.

Rise of Regional States

- Three categories
- ***Successor States*** Hyderabad (1724, Nizam-ul-Mulk), Bengal (1717, Murshid Quli Khan), and Awadh (1722, Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk).
- ***Independent States*** Mysore (under Haidar Ali), Kerala (King Martanda Varma), and Rajput States (Raja Sawai Singh of Amber).
- ***New States*** Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, and Afghans

Socio-Economic Conditions

Agriculture • Stagnant and technologically backward agriculture, compensated by very hard labour of peasants

- Peasants paid revenues to state, zamindars, jagirdars, and revenue farmers.
- Major produce/crops: rice, wheat, sugar, pepper, spices, cotton, etc.

Trade and Industry Trade flourished. Cotton textiles, raw silk, silk fabrics, hardware, indigo, saltpetre, opium, rice, wheat, sugar, pepper, spices, precious stones, and drugs were exported.

Gold, musk, woollen cloth, copper, iron, lead, paper, porcelain, pearls, dates, dried fruits, coffee, tea, ivory, rose water, etc., were imported.

The textile industry was famous for its produce. The ship-building industry flourished. The metal industry was also well-developed.

Education • Elementary education imparted through *pathshalas* and *maktabs*

- *Chatuspathis* or *Tols* among Hindus, and *Madrasahs* among Muslims were the institutes of higher learning.
- Absence of the study of science and technology and geography was a general feature.

Society • Apart from the four *varnas*, Hindus were divided into many *sub-castes* which differed in their nature from place to place.

- Muslims were also divided by considerations of caste, race, tribe, and status, even though their religion propagated equality.

Art, Architecture, and Culture • Asaf-ud-Daula, in 1784, built *Bara Imambara* at Lucknow.

- Sawai Jai Singh built pink city of Jaipur and five astronomical observatories (Delhi, Jaipur, Mathura, Benares, and Ujjain).
- Painting schools of Kangra and Rajputana came into prominence.
- In northern India, growth of Urdu language and poetry took place. Prominent Urdu poets were Mir, Sauda, Nazir, and Mirza Ghalib.
- Regional languages developed. Tamil language was enriched by *Sittar* poetry.

CHAPTER 5

Expansion and Consolidation of British Power in India

The British Imperial History

The entire imperial history of Britain can be periodised into two phases, the 'first empire' stretching across the Atlantic towards America and the West Indies, and the 'second empire' beginning around 1783 (Peace of Paris) and swinging towards the East—Asia and Africa. The imperial history of Britain started with the conquest of Ireland in the 16th century. The English then sprang up as the 'new Romans', charged with civilising so-called backward races throughout the world. For this, the post-Enlightenment intellectuals of Britain, in particular, and of Europe, in general, started certifying themselves as civilised vis-a-vis the Orient peoples and others. Owing to various spatial and situational forces, the nature of imperial ideology of Britain changed over time but its fundamentals remained the same.

Was the British Conquest Accidental or Intentional?

Historians have debated over the fundamental query, whether the British conquest of India was accidental or intentional. John Seeley leads the group which says that the British

Views

Our acquisition of India was made blindly. Nothing great that has ever been done by Englishman was done so unintentionally and so accidentally, as the conquest of India.

—John Seeley

The deeper reasons of intention and motive for the Company's acquisition of vast areas of territory are more obscure...for the expansion occurred in such different parts of India at different times. In each particular situation the precise British interests at stake varied, and the perceived danger to them; as did the relative weight in decision-making of different British groups concerned in Indian affairs.

—Judith Brown

conquest of India was made blindly, unintentionally, and accidentally, and in a "fit of absent-mindedness". This school of opinion argues that the British came to trade in India and had no desire to acquire territories or to squander their profits on war waged for territorial expansion. The English, it is argued, were unwillingly drawn into the political turmoil created by the Indians themselves and were almost forced to acquire territories.

The other group says that the British came to India with the clear intention of establishing a large and powerful empire, a plan which they completed by working on it bit by bit over the years. They dismiss as propaganda the claim of the peaceful intent and political neutrality of the English East India Company in its early days.

Both the schools of opinion appear to be overstating their viewpoints. Initially, perhaps, the Company officials started acquiring territory just to promote and protect their trade interests, especially when they saw how factionalised the political situation was. They came to realise how easily they could pit one local ruler against another and began to interfere in local politics and, in the process, acquired territories. But later on, the British politicians back in Britain and the administrators sent by them to India worked on a clear desire and plan to acquire territories and establish an empire.

The enormous profits from the trade in the East,

notably India, attracted the English traders (the Company) as it did other Europeans. A desire for quick profits, personal ambitions of individuals, plain avarice, and effects of political developments in Europe were some of the factors that made the British increase their political clout in India. At times, they waged wars to protect their commercial interests, and at others, they did so to protect their Indian allies from the attacks of potential rivals. B.L. Grover writes: "Lord Wellesley resorted to aggressive application of the subsidiary alliance system to extend British dominion in India as a defensive counter measure against the imperialistic designs of France and Russia. From 1798 to 1818 the British motives were consciously imperialistic. Lord Hastings further carried the policy of Wellesley and treated India as a conquered rather than an acquired country. Thereafter, the British seemed to work on a set design to conquer the whole of India, and even some neighbouring states."

When did the British Period Begin in India?

In mid-18th-century India, various historical forces were at work, consequent to which the country moved towards a new direction. Some historians regard the year 1740, when the Anglo-French struggle for supremacy in India began in the wake of the War of Austrian Succession in Europe, as the beginning of the British period. Some see the year 1757, when the British defeated the Nawab of Bengal at Plassey, as the designated date. Still others regard 1761, the year of the Third Battle of Panipat when the Marathas were defeated by Ahmad Shah Abdali, as the beginning of this phase of Indian history. However, all such chronological landmarks are somewhat arbitrary because the political transformation which began around that time took about eighty years to complete.

For instance, as we think of 1761, the British would certainly come to mind (because of their victory over the Nawab of Bengal at Plassey and over the French) but we would not entirely write off the Marathas and would probably also consider the prospects of Haidar Ali. In fact, it was a

period of Indian history which it would probably be a mistake to interpret in terms of what we know in the present. Nonetheless, the circumstances under which the British succeeded are not clear, and the few bottlenecks which they faced were not of a serious nature. It is this paradox which makes the causes of British success in establishing an empire in India a matter of considerable interest.

Causes of British Success in India

The entire process of expansion and consolidation of the British power in India took almost a century. In these hundred odd years, the English used many diplomatic and military tactics, apart from other mechanisms, to finally emerge as the rulers of India. Both war and administrative policies were used by the English to impose their power over various kingdoms and finally to consolidate their own rule over the entire India. The British were not averse to using unscrupulous tactics to exploit a situation or a regional ruler to get their own way. The causational forces and factors for the success of the British are as follows:

Superior Arms, Military, and Strategy

The firearms used by the English, which included muskets and cannons, were better than the Indian arms both in speed of firing and in range. On realising this, many Indian rulers imported European arms and employed European officers to train their troops, but, unfortunately, the Indian military officers and the ranks could never match the English officers and English armies; in the absence of originality, the military officers and armies of Indian rulers became mere imitators.

Better Military Discipline and Regular Salary

A regular system of payment of salaries and a strict regime of discipline were the means by which the English Company ensured that the officers and the troops were loyal. On their part, most of the Indian rulers did not have enough money

to pay salaries regularly. The Marathas at times diverted their military campaigns to collect revenue so as to pay their troops. Also, the Indian rulers were dependent on personal retinues or a rabble of mercenary elements who were not amenable to discipline and could turn rebellious or join the opponents when the going was not good.

Civil Discipline and Fair Selection System

The Company officers and troops were given charge on the basis of their reliability and skill and not on hereditary or caste and clan ties. They themselves were subject to strict discipline and were aware of the objectives of their campaigns. In contrast, the Indian administrators and military officers were appointed on the basis of caste and personal relations, often disregarding merit and ability. As a result, their competence was doubtful and they often tended to be rebellious and disloyal in order to pursue their own interests.

Brilliant Leadership and Support of Second-Line Leaders

Clive, Warren Hastings, Elphinstone, Munro, Marquess of Dalhousie, etc., displayed rare qualities of leadership. The English also had the advantage of a long list of secondary leaders like Sir Eyre Coote, Lord Lake, and Arthur Wellesley, who fought not for the leader but for the cause and the glory of their country. The Indian side too had brilliant leaders like Haidar Ali, Tipu Sultan, Chin Qilich Khan, Madhu Rao Scindia, and Yashwant Rao Holkar, but they often lacked a team of second-line trained personnel. Moreover, the Indian leaders were as much fighting against one another as against the British. The spirit of fighting for a united cause was not their motivation. Thus, they often supported the British against neighbouring rulers. The consciousness of 'India' was lacking.

Strong Financial Backup

The income of the Company was adequate enough to pay its shareholders handsome dividends as also to finance the English wars in India. Furthermore, England was earning fabulous profits from its trade with the rest of the world. This vast amount of resources in money, materials, and men

was available to the British in times of need, thanks to their superiority in sea power.

Nationalist Pride

An economically thriving British people believing in material advancement and proud of their national glory faced the 'weak, divided-amongst-themselves Indians' bereft of a sense of unified political nationalism. The lack of materialistic vision among Indians was also a reason for the success of the English Company.

British Conquest of Bengal

Bengal on the Eve of British Conquest

Bengal, the richest province of the Mughal Empire, included present-day Bangladesh, and its Nawab had authority over the region constituting present-day states of Bihar and Odisha. Exports from Bengal to Europe consisted of raw products such as saltpetre, rice, indigo, pepper, sugar, silk, cotton textiles, handicrafts, etc. The English East India Company had vital commercial interests in trading in Bengal, as nearly 60 per cent of the British imports from Asia consisted of goods from Bengal. During the 1630s, regular contact of the British with Bengal continued when they established factories in Balasore, Hooghly, Kasimbazar, Patna, and Dacca. By the 1690s, the foundation of Calcutta by the English company completed the process of English commercial settlement in Bengal. The Company paid a sum of Rs 3,000 (£ 350) per annum to the Mughal emperor who allowed them to trade freely in Bengal. In contrast, the Company's exports from Bengal were worth more than £ 50,000 per annum.

In 1700, Murshid Quli Khan became the Dewan of Bengal and ruled till his death in 1727. He was succeeded by his son-in-law, Shujauddin, who ruled till 1739. After that, for a year (1739–40), Sarfaraz Khan, an incapable son of Murshid Quli Khan, became the ruler; he was killed by Alivardi Khan. Alivardi Khan ruled till 1756 and also stopped paying tributes to the Mughal emperor. Under the rule of these rulers, Bengal made unprecedented progress. There were other factors too, which made Bengal prosperous, for

instance, the rest of India was disturbed by inter-border disputes, the Maratha invasions, Jat revolts, and external invasions by Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali. The region of Bengal was fortunate enough to escape these challenges. The population of Calcutta rose from 15,000 (in 1706) to 100,000 (in 1750), and other cities like Dacca and Murshidabad became highly populous.

Almost all the governors of Bengal strongly resented the special privileges enjoyed by the English company as it meant a huge loss to the provincial exchequer. So, the friction between the English commercial interests and the Bengal government became the chief cause for conflict between the two. During a short period between 1757 and 1765, the power gradually got transferred from the Nawabs of Bengal to the British, with the latter defeating the former.

Alivardi Khan and the English

In 1741, Alivardi Khan, the Deputy Governor of Bihar, killed the Nawab of Bengal Sarfaraz Khan in a battle and certified his own position as the new Subahdar of Bengal by paying a large sum of money to the Mughal Emperor, Muhammad Shah. Alivardi Khan ruled for 15 years, during which he fought off the Marathas. The English, too, took the advantage of the Maratha incursions in Bengal, by obtaining a permission from the nawab to dig a ditch and throw up an entrenchment around their settlement of Fort William. Later, Alivardi Khan's apprehensions were drawn to the Carnatic region, where the European companies had usurped all power; on realising this, he was urged to expel the Europeans from Bengal. But he died in April 1756 and was succeeded by his grandson, Siraj-ud-Daulah, the son of Alivardi's youngest daughter.

Challenges Before Siraj-ud-Daulah

A youth just in his twentieth year, Siraj inherited many troubles from his grandfather. He had a rival in his cousin, the Nawab of Purnea, Shaukat Jang; a hostile aunt, Ghasiti Begum, a childless widow; a rebellious commander of the army, Mir Jafar, husband of Alivardi Khan's sister; and an alarmed (Hindu) subject population. There was a dominant

group in his court comprising Jagat Seth, Omichand, Rai Ballabh, Rai Durlabh, and others who were opposed to him. To these internal rivals were added the threat to Siraj's position from the ever-growing commercial activity of the English company. Impulsive by nature and lacking experience, Siraj felt insecure, and this prompted him to act in ways which proved counter-productive. He defeated Shaukat Jang and killed him in a battle, divested Ghasiti Begum of her treasures and secured her, and dismissed Mir Jafar, appointing Mir Madan in his place. A Kashmiri officer, Mohan Lal, was appointed as the overall administrator, and he acted almost like a prime minister.

The Battle of Plassey

Prelude to the Battle

The officials of the Company made rampant misuse of its trade privileges that adversely affected the nawab's finances. The English fortified Calcutta without the nawab's permission. The Company further tried to mislead him, and compounded their sin by giving asylum to a political fugitive, Krishna Das, son of Raj Ballabh who had fled with immense treasures against the nawab's will. The Company, on its part, suspected that Siraj would drastically reduce its trade privileges in collusion with the French in Bengal. Thus, when Siraj attacked and seized the English fort at Calcutta, it brought their hostility into the open.

Mention may be made here of the much propagated 'Black Hole Tragedy'. Siraj-ud-Daulah is believed to have imprisoned 146 English persons, who were lodged in a very tiny room due to which 123 of them died of suffocation. However, historians either do not believe this story, or say that the number of victims must have been much smaller.

The Battle

The arrival of a strong force under the command of Robert Clive at Calcutta from Madras strengthened the English position in Bengal. Clive forged a secret alliance with the traitors of the nawab—Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh, Jagat Seth (an influential banker of Bengal), and Omichand. Under the deal, Mir Jafar was to be made the nawab, who, in turn, would

reward the Company for its services. The secret alliance of the Company with the conspirators further strengthened the English position. So, the English victory in the Battle of Plassey (June 23, 1757) was decided before the battle was even fought. Due to the conspiracy of the nawab's officials, the 50,000-strong force of Siraj was defeated by a handful of Clive's forces. Siraj-ud-Daulah was captured and murdered by the order of Mir Jafar's son, Miran. The Battle of Plassey placed at the disposal of the English vast resources of Bengal. After Plassey, the English virtually monopolised the trade and commerce of Bengal.

Significance of the Battle of Plassey

As a result of this victory, Mir Jafar became the Nawab of Bengal. He gave large sums of money plus the *zamindari* of 24 *parganas* to the English.

The Battle of Plassey had political significance, for it laid the foundation of the British empire in India; it has been rightly regarded as the starting point of British rule in India. The battle established the military supremacy of the English in Bengal. Their main rivals, the French, were ousted. They obtained a grant of territories for the maintenance of a properly equipped military force, and their prestige increased manifold. But there was no apparent change in the form of government, though the supreme control of affairs passed to Clive, on whose support the new nawab, Mir Jafar, was entirely dependent for maintaining his newly acquired position. The sovereignty of the English over Calcutta was recognised, and the English posted a resident at the nawab's court.

Mir Kasim and the Treaty of 1760

Mir Jafar was increasingly irritated by the interference of Clive. He entered into a conspiracy with the Dutch at Chinsura. But the Dutch were defeated and humbled by the English forces at Bedara in November 1759. The treachery of Mir Jafar and his failure to make the payments due to the Company, annoyed the English. Meanwhile, Miran, the son of Jafar died and there started a fight for the nawabship of Bengal between Mir Kasim, the son-in-law of Mir Jafar, and Miran's son. Vansittart, the new Governor of Calcutta,

agreed to support Mir Kasim's claim after a treaty between Mir Kasim and the Company was signed in 1760. Important features of the treaty were as follows:

(i) Mir Kasim agreed to cede to the Company the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur, and Chittagong.
(ii) The Company would get half of the share in *chunam* trade of Sylhet.
(iii) Mir Kasim agreed to pay off the outstanding dues to the Company.
(iv) Mir Kasim promised to pay a sum of five lakh rupees towards financing the Company's war efforts in southern India.
(v) It was agreed that Mir Kasim's enemies were the Company's enemies, and his friends, the Company's friends.
(vi) It was agreed that tenants of the nawab's territory would not be allowed to settle in the lands of the Company, and vice-versa.

Under the pressure of the Company, Mir Jafar decided to resign in favour of Mir Kasim. A pension of Rs 1,500 per annum was fixed for Mir Jafar.

Steps taken by Mir Kasim

Mir Kasim was the ablest nawab among the successors of Alivardi Khan. After assuming power, Mir Kasim shifted the capital from Murshidabad to Munger in Bihar. The move was taken to allow a safe distance from the Company at Calcutta. His other important steps were reorganising the bureaucracy with the men of his own choice and remodelling the army to enhance its skill and efficiency.

The Battle of Buxar

Prelude to the Battle

The Company had thought that Mir Kasim would prove to be an ideal puppet for them. However, Mir Kasim belied the expectations of the Company. Ram Narayan, the deputy-governor of Bihar, was not responding to repeated requests by the nawab to submit the accounts of the revenues of Bihar. Mir Kasim could not tolerate this open defiance of his authority. But Ram Narayan was supported by the English

officials of Patna. The misuse of the Company's *dastak* or trade permit (a permit which exempted the goods specified from payment of duties) by Company officials also resulted in tensions between the nawab and the English.

The misuse of the *dastak* meant the loss of tax revenue to the nawab. It also made the local merchants face unequal competition with the Company merchants. By an imperial *farman,* the English company had obtained the right to trade in Bengal without paying transit dues or tolls. However, the servants of the Company also claimed the same privileges for their private trade. The Company's servants also sold *dastak* to Indian merchants for a commission. Besides, they used coercive methods to get goods at cheaper rates, which was against the spirit of the duty-free trade. The duty-free trade simply meant buying cheap in an otherwise competitive market. Mir Kasim decided to abolish the duties altogether, but the British protested against this and insisted upon having preferential treatment as against other traders.

The Nawab-Company tussle over transit duty led to the outbreak of wars between the English and Mir Kasim in 1763. The English gained successive victories at Katwah, Murshidabad, Giria, Sooty, and Munger. Mir Kasim fled to Awadh (or Oudh) and formed a confederacy with the Nawab of Awadh, Shuja-ud-Daulah, and the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, with a view to recover Bengal from the English.

The Battle

The combined armies of Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Awadh, and Shah Alam II were defeated by the English forces under Major Hector Munro at Buxar on October 22, 1764 in a closely contested battle. The English campaign against Mir Kasim was short but decisive.

The importance of this battle lay in the fact that not only the Nawab of Bengal but also the Mughal Emperor of India was defeated by the English. The victory made the English a great power in northern India and contenders for the supremacy over the whole country.

After the battle, Mir Jafar, who was made Nawab in 1763 when relations between Mir Kasim and the Company became strained, agreed to hand over the districts of

Robert Clive

A survey of this period of British rule cannot be complete without a reference to Robert Clive, who joined the army after resigning from a clerk's post. He was instrumental in laying the foundations of British power in India. He was made the Governor of Bengal twice from 1757 to 1760 and then from 1765 to 1767. He administered Bengal under the dual government system till his return to England where he allegedly committed suicide in 1774.

Midnapore, Burdwan, and Chittagong to the English for the maintenance of their army. The English were also permitted duty-free trade in Bengal, except for a duty of 2 per cent on salt. After the death of Mir Jafar, his minor son, Najim-ud-daula, was appointed nawab, but the real power of administration lay in the hands of the naib-subahdar, who could be appointed or dismissed by the English.

The Treaty of Allahabad

Robert Clive concluded two important treaties at Allahabad in August 1765—one with the Nawab of Awadh and the other with the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II.

Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula agreed to:

(i) surrender Allahabad and Kara to Emperor Shah Alam II;

(ii) pay Rs 50 lakh to the Company as war indemnity; and

(iii) give Balwant Singh, *Zamindar* of Banaras, full possession of his estate.

Shah Alam II agreed to:

(i) reside at Allahabad, to be ceded to him by the Nawab of Awadh, under the Company's protection;

(ii) issue a *farman* granting the *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to the East India Company in lieu of an annual payment of Rs 26 lakh; and

(iii) a provision of Rs 53 lakh to the Company in return for *nizamat* functions (military defence, police, and administration of justice) of the said provinces.

Clive did not want to annex Awadh because it would have placed the Company under an obligation to protect an

extensive land frontier from the Afghan and the Maratha invasions. The treaty made the Nawab a firm friend of the Company, and turned Awadh into a buffer state. Similarly, Clive's arrangement with Shah Alam II was inspired by practical considerations. It made the emperor a useful 'rubber stamp' of the Company. Besides, the emperor's *farman* legalised the political gains of the Company in Bengal.

Mir Kasim, the dethroned Nawab of Bengal, spent the rest of his life in abject misery as a homeless wanderer and died in June 1777.

Dual Government in Bengal (1765–72)

After the battle of Buxar, the East India Company became the real masters of Bengal. Robert Clive introduced the dual system of government, i.e., the rule of the two—the Company and the Nawab—in Bengal in which both the *diwani*, i.e., collecting revenues, and *nizamat*, i.e., police and judicial functions, came under the control of the Company. The Company exercised *diwani* rights as the diwan and the *nizamat* rights through its right to nominate the deputy subahdar. The Company acquired the *diwani* functions from the emperor and *nizamat* functions from the subahdar of Bengal.

The system held a great advantage for the Company. It left the appearance of authority to the puppet Indian ruler while keeping the sovereign power in the hands of the Company. The nawab was responsible for maintaining peace and order, but he depended both for funds and forces upon the Company because the latter controlled the army and revenues.

For the exercise of *diwani* functions, the Company appointed two deputy *diwans*, Mohammad Reza Khan for Bengal and Raja Sitab Roy for Bihar. Mohammad Reza Khan also acted as deputy nazim or deputy subahdar.

The dual system led to an administrative breakdown and proved disastrous for the people of Bengal. Neither the Company nor the Nawab cared for administration and public welfare. Warren Hastings did away with the dual system in 1772.

Views

Whether regarded as a duel between the foreigner and the native, or as an event pregnant with vast permanent consequences, Buxar takes rank amongst the most decisive battles ever fought. Not only did the victory of the English save Bengal, not only did it advance the British frontier to Allahabad, but it bound the rulers of Awadh to the conqueror by ties of admiration, of gratitude, of absolute reliance and trust, ties which made them for the ninety-four years that followed the friends of his friends and the enemies of his enemies.

—G.B. Malleson

Clive was not a founder but a harbinger of the future. He was not a planner of empire but an experimenter who revealed something of the possibilities. Clive was the forerunner of the British Empire.

—Percival Spear

Mysore's Resistance to the Company

The Wodeyar / Mysore Dynasty

After the battle of Talikota (1565) gave a deadly blow to the great kingdom of Vijayanagara, many small kingdoms emerged from its remnants. In 1612 a Hindu kingdom under the Wodeyars emerged in the region of Mysore. Chikka Krishnaraja Wodeyar II ruled from 1734 to 1766. During the second half of the 18th century, Mysore emerged as a formidable power under the leadership of Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan. The English felt their political and commercial interests in South India was threatened because of Mysore's proximity with the French and Haidar Ali and Tipu's control over the rich trade of the Malabar Coast. Mysore's power was also seen as a threat to the control of the English over Madras.

Rise of Haidar Ali

In the early 18th century two brothers, Nanjaraj (the *sarvadhikari)* and Devaraj (the *Dulwai*) had reduced Chikka Krishnaraja Wodeyar to a mere puppet. Haidar Ali, born in 1721 in an obscure family, started his career as a horseman in the Mysore army under the ministers, Nanjaraj and Devaraj.

Though uneducated, he possessed a keen intellect and was a man of great energy and determination.

Repeated incursions of the Marathas and of the Nizam's troops into the territories of Mysore resulted in heavy financial demands made by the aggressors from Mysore. Mysore became financially and politically weak. The need of the hour was a leader with high degree of military powers and diplomatic skill. Haidar Ali fulfilled that need and usurped the royal authority by becoming the *de facto* ruler of Mysore in 1761. He realised that the exceedingly mobile Marathas could be contained only by a swift cavalry, that the cannons of the French-trained Nizami army could be silenced only by an effective artillery, and that the superior arms from the West could only be matched by arms brought from the same place or manufactured with the same know-how.

Haidar Ali took the help of the French to set up an arms factory at Dindigul (now in Tamil Nadu), and also introduced Western methods of training for his army. He also started to use his considerable diplomatic skill to outmanoeuvre his opponents. With his superior military skill, he captured Dod Ballapur, Sera, Bednur, and Hoskote in 1761–63, and brought to submission the troublesome Poligars of South India (in what is now Tamil Nadu). Recovering from their defeat at Panipat, the Marathas under Madhavrao attacked Mysore, and defeated Haidar Ali in 1764, 1766, and 1771. To buy peace, Haidar Ali had to give them large sums of money, but after Madhavrao's death in 1772, Haidar Ali raided the Marathas a number of times during 1774–76 and recovered all the territories he had previously lost, besides capturing new areas.

First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69)

Background

After their easy success in Bengal, the English were confident of their military strength. They concluded a treaty with the Nizam of Hyderabad (1766), persuading him to give them the Northern Circars (region) in lieu of which they said they would protect the Nizam from Haidar Ali. Haidar already had territorial disputes with the Nawab of Arcot and differences with the Marathas.

Changing Alliances
The Nizam, the Marathas, and the English allied together against Haidar Ali. Haidar acted with considerable tact and diplomatic skill. He paid the Marathas to turn them neutral and, promising to share conquered territories with the Nizam, converted the Nizam into his ally. He then joined the Nizam to attack the Nawab of Arcot.

Course of War
The war continued for a year-and-a-half without any conclusion. Haidar changed his strategy and suddenly appeared before the gates of Madras. There was complete chaos and panic at Madras forcing the English to conclude a very humiliating treaty with Haidar on April 4, 1769—***the Treaty of Madras***. The treaty provided for the exchange of prisoners and mutual restitution of conquests. Haidar Ali was promised the help of the English in case he was attacked by any other power.

Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780–84)

Background
Haidar Ali accused the English of breach of faith and non-observance of the Treaty of Madras when in 1771 he was attacked by the Marathas, and the English failed to come to his aid. Also, he found that the French were much more helpful than the English in meeting his army's requirement of guns, saltpetre, and lead. Consequently, through Mahe, a French possession on the Malabar Coast, some French war material was brought to Mysore. Meanwhile, the American war of independence had broken out in which the French were on the side of the rebels against the English. Under the circumstances, Haidar Ali's friendship with the French caused even more concern to the English. They, therefore, tried to capture Mahe, which Haidar regarded to be under his protection. Haidar considered the English attempt to capture Mahe a direct challenge to his authority.

Course of War
Haidar forged an anti-English alliance with the Marathas and the Nizam. He followed it up by an attack in the Carnatic, capturing Arcot, and defeating the English army under

Colonel Baillie in 1781. In the meantime, the English (under Sir Eyre Coote) detached both the Marathas and the Nizam from Haidar's side, but the undeterred Haidar faced the English boldly only to suffer a defeat at **Porto Novo** in November 1781. However, he regrouped his forces and defeated the English and captured their commander, Braithwaite.

Treaty of Mangalore Haidar Ali died of cancer on December 7, 1782. Now his son, Tipu Sultan, carried on the war for one year without any positive outcome. Fed up with an inconclusive war, both sides opted for peace, negotiating the Treaty of Mangalore (March, 1784) under which each party gave back the territories it had taken from the other.

Third Anglo-Mysore War

Background

A dispute arose between Tipu and the state of Travancore. Travancore had purchased Jalkottal and Cannanore from the Dutch in the Cochin state. As Cochin was a feudatory of Tipu, he considered the act of Travancore as a violation of his sovereign rights. So, in April 1790, Tipu declared war against Travancore for the restoration of his rights.

Course of War

The English, siding with Travancore, attacked Tipu. In 1790, Tipu defeated the English under General Meadows. In 1791, Cornwallis took the leadership and at the head of a large army marched through Ambur and Vellore to Bangalore (captured in March 1791) and from there to Seringapatam. Coimbatore fell to them, but they lost it again, and at last with the support of the Marathas and the Nizam, the English attacked Seringapatam for the second time. Tipu offered serious opposition, but the odds were against him. Consequently, he had to pay heavily under the Treaty of Seringapatam.

Treaty of Seringapatam Under this treaty of 1792, nearly half of the Mysorean territory was taken over by the victors. Baramahal, Dindigul, and Malabar went to the English, while the Marathas got the regions surrounding the Tungabhadra and its tributaries and the Nizam acquired the areas from the Krishna to beyond the Pennar. Besides, a war damage of three

View

We have crippled our enemy effectively without making our friends too formidable.

—Lord Cornwallis

crore rupees was also taken from Tipu. Half of the war indemnity was to be paid immediately, while the rest was to be given in installments, for which Tipu's two sons were taken as hostages by the English.

Fourth Anglo-Mysore War

Background

The English as well as Tipu Sultan used the period 1792 to 1799 to recoup their losses. Tipu fulfilled all the terms of the Treaty of Seringapatam and got his sons released. In 1796, when the Hindu ruler of Wodeyar dynasty died, Tipu refused to place Wodeyar's minor son on the throne and declared himself sultan. He also decided to avenge his humilitating defeat and the terms put by the Treaty of Seringapatam.

In 1798, Lord Wellesley succeeded Sir John Shore as the new governor general. An imperialist to the core, Wellesley was concerned about Tipu's growing friendship with the French and aimed at annihilating Tipu's independent existence or force him to submission through the system of Subsidiary Alliance. So, the chargesheet against Tipu mentioned that he was plotting against the English with the Nizam and the Marathas and that he had sent emissaries to Arabia, Afghanistan, Kabul, and Zaman Shah, as also to Isle of France (Mauritius) and Versailles, with treasonable intent. Tipu's explanation did not satisfy Wellesley.

Course of War

The war began on April 17, 1799 and ended on May 4, 1799 with the fall of Seringapatam. Tipu was defeated first by English General Stuart and then by General Harris. Arthur Wellesley, the brother of Lord Wellesley, also participated in the war. The English were again helped by the Marathas and the Nizam. The Marathas had been promised half of the

Estimate of Tipu Sultan

Tipu Sultan was born in November 1750 to Haidar Ali and Fatima. A well-educated man, he could freely converse in Arabic, Persian, Kanarese, and Urdu.

Tipu was a great warrior (he was known as the 'Tiger of Mysore') and gave maximum care to the raising and maintenance of an efficient military force. He organised his army on the European model with Persian words of command. Though he took the help of the French officers to train his soldiers, he never allowed them (French) to develop into a pressure group. Like his father, Tipu realised the importance of a naval force. In 1796, he set up a Board of Admiralty and planned for a fleet of 22 battleships and 20 large frigates. Three dockyards were established at Mangalore, Wajedabad, and Molidabad. However, his plans did not fructify.

Tipu was a patron of science and technology. He is credited as the 'pioneer of rocket technology' in India. He wrote a military manual explaining the operation of rockets. He was also a pioneer in introducing sericulture to the Mysore State.

Tipu was a great lover of democracy and a great diplomat. He gave his support to the French soldiers at Seringapatam in setting up a Jacobin Club in 1797. He ordered a salute of 2,300 cannons and 500 rockets to celebrate the occasion. Tipu himself became a member of the Jacobin Club and allowed himself to be called Citizen Tipu. He planted the Tree of Liberty at Seringapatam.

Some historians have depicted Tipu as a bigoted monarch. This was the main view of colonial historians. This estimation of the sultan is not fully correct. It is true that he crushed the Hindu Coorgs and Nairs. But at the same time he also punished the Muslim Moplahs when they defied his authority. Though he is reported to have demolished temples in Kerala when he conquered places there, Tipu is also known to have protected Hindu temples within his own kingdom. He sanctioned funds for the repair of the Sringeri Temple and installation of the idol of Goddess Sarada (the idol had been damaged during a Maratha raid in 1791). It is necessary not to judge characters of the past with modern yardsticks of secularism and democracy.

Tipu despised the use of palanquins and described them as fit only for use of women and the disabled. He is also credited with beginning capitalist development at a time when feudalism was prevalent.

Tipu was a man representing multiple traditions.

territory of Tipu and the Nizam had already signed the Subsidiary Alliance. Tipu laid down his life fighting bravely; his family members were interned at Vellore, and his treasures were confiscated by the English. The English chose a boy from the earlier Hindu royal family of Mysore as the maharaja and also imposed on him the subsidiary alliance system.

Mysore After Tipu

- Wellesley offered Soonda and Harponelly districts of Mysore Kingdom to the Marathas, which the latter refused.
- The Nizam was given the districts of Gooty and Gurramkonda.
- The English took possession of Kanara, Wynad, Coimbatore, Dwaraporam, and Seringapatam.
- The new state of Mysore was handed over to the old Hindu dynasty (Wodeyars) under a minor ruler Krishnaraja III, who accepted the subsidiary alliance.
- In 1831, William Bentinck took control of Mysore on grounds of misgovernance.
- In 1881, Lord Ripon restored the kingdom to its ruler.

Views

Tipu has been regarded by some writers as the first Indian nationalist and a martyr for India's freedom. But this is a wrong view arrived at by projecting the present into the past. In the age in which Tipu lived and ruled there was no sense of nationalism or an awareness among Indians that they were a subject people. It will, therefore, be too much to say that Tipu waged war against the English for the sake of India's freedom. Actually he fought in order to preserve his own power and independence...

—**Mohibbul Hasan**, *History of Tipu Sultan*

When a person travelling through a strange country finds it well cultivated, populous with industrious inhabitants, cities newly founded, commerce extending, towns increasing and everything flourishing so as to indicate happiness he will naturally conclude it to be under a form of government congenial to the minds of the people. This is a picture of Tippoo's country.

—**Lieutenant Moore**

Anglo-Maratha Struggle for Supremacy

Rise of the Marathas

As the Mughal Empire declined, one of the staunchest and hardiest of the empire's adversaries, the Marathas, got a chance to rise in power. They controlled a large portion of the country; besides, they also received tributes from areas not directly under their control. By the middle of the 18th century, they were in Lahore thinking of becoming rulers of the North Indian empire and in the court of the Mughals playing the role of kingmakers.

Though the Third Battle of Panipat (1761), in which they were defeated by Ahmad Shah Abdali, changed the situation, they regrouped, regained their strength, and, within a decade, achieved a position of power in India.

Bajirao I (1720–40), considered greatest of all the Peshwas, had started a confederacy of prominent Maratha chiefs to manage the rapidly expanding Maratha power, and to some extent appease the kshatriya section of the Marathas (Peshwas were brahmins) led by the *senapati* Dabodi. Under the arrangement of the Maratha confederacy, each prominent family under a chief was assigned a sphere of influence which he was supposed to conquer and rule, but in the name of the then Maratha king, Shahu. The Maratha families which emerged prominent were: (i) the Gaekwad of Baroda; (ii) the Bhonsle of Nagpur; (iii) the Holkars of Indore; (iv) the Sindhias of Gwalior; and (v) the Peshwa of Poona. The confederacy, under Bajirao I to Madhavrao I, worked cordially but the Third Battle of Panipat (1761) changed everything. The defeat at Panipat and later the death of the young Peshwa, Madhavrao I, in 1772, weakened the control of the Peshwas over the confederacy. Though the chiefs of the confederacy united on occasion, as against the British (1775–82), more often they quarrelled among themselves.

Entry of the English into Maratha Politics

The years between the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century witnessed the Marathas

and the English clashing thrice for political supremacy, with the English emerging victorious in the end. The cause of these conflicts was the inordinate ambition of the English, and the divided house of the Marathas that encouraged the English to hope for success in their venture. The English in Bombay wanted to establish a government on the lines of the arrangement made by Clive in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. So, it was a longed-for opportunity for the English when dissensions over a succession divided the Marathas.

First Anglo-Maratha War (1775–82)

Background

After the death of Madhavrao in 1772, his brother Narayanrao succeeded him as the fifth peshwa. However, Narayanrao's uncle, Raghunathrao, had his nephew assassinated and named himself as the next peshwa, although he was not a legal heir. Narayanrao's widow, Gangabai, gave birth to a son after her husband's death. The newborn infant was named 'Sawai' (One and a Quarter) Madhavrao and he was legally the next peshwa. Twelve Maratha chiefs (*Barabhai*), led by Nana Phadnavis, made an effort to name the infant as the new peshwa and rule for him as regents.

Treaties of Surat and Purandhar Raghunathrao, unwilling to give up his position in power, sought help from the English at Bombay and signed the ***Treaty of Surat*** in 1775. Under the treaty, Raghunathrao ceded the territories of Salsette and Bassein to the English along with a portion of the revenues from Surat and Bharuch districts. In return, the English were to provide Raghunathrao with 2,500 soldiers. The British Calcutta Council, on the other side of India, condemned the Treaty of Surat (1775) and sent Colonel Upton to Pune to annul it and make a new treaty (***Treaty of Purandhar***, 1776) with the regency renouncing Raghunath and promising him a pension. The Bombay government rejected this and gave refuge to Raghunath. In 1777, Nana Phadnavis violated his treaty with the Calcutta Council by granting the French a port on the west coast. The English retaliated by sending a force towards Pune.

Course of War

The English and the Maratha armies met on the outskirts of Pune. Though the Maratha army had a larger number of soldiers than the English, the latter had highly superior ammunition and cannons. However, the Maratha army was commanded by a brilliant general named Mahadji Scindia (also known as Mahadji Shinde). Mahadji lured the English army into the ghats (mountain passes) near Talegaon and trapped the English from all sides and attacked the English supply base at Khopali. The Marathas also utilised a **scorched earth policy**, burning farmland and poisoning wells. As the English began to withdraw to Talegaon, the Marathas attacked, forcing them to retreat to the village of Wadgaon. Here, the English army was surrounded on all sides by the Marathas and cut off from food and water supplies. The English surrendered by mid-January 1779 and signed the ***Treaty of Wadgaon*** that forced the Bombay government to relinquish all territories acquired by the English since 1775.

Treaty of Salbai (1782): End of the First Phase of the Struggle Warren Hastings, the Governor General in Bengal, rejected the Treaty of Wadgaon and sent a large force of soldiers under Colonel Goddard, who captured Ahmedabad in February 1779, and Bassein in December 1780. Another Bengal detachment led by Captain Popham captured Gwalior in August 1780. In February 1781, the English, under General Camac, finally defeated Sindhia at Sipri.

Sindhia proposed a new treaty between the Peshwa and the English, and the Treaty of Salbai was signed in May 1782; it was ratified by Hastings in June 1782 and by Phadnavis in February 1783. The treaty guaranteed peace between the two sides for twenty years. The main provisions of the Treaty of Salbai were:

(i) Salsette should continue in the possession of the English.

(ii) The whole of the territory conquered since the Treaty of Purandhar (1776), including Bassein, should be restored to the Marathas.

(iii) In Gujarat, Fateh Singh Gaekwad should remain in possession of the territory which he had before the war and should serve the Peshwa as before.

(iv) The English should not offer any further support to Raghunathrao and the Peshwa should grant him a maintenance allowance.

(v) Haidar Ali should return all the territory taken from the English and the Nawab of Arcot.

(vi) The English should enjoy the privileges at trade as before.

(vii) The Peshwa should not support any other European nation.

(viii) The Peshwa and the English should undertake that their several allies should remain at peace with one another.

(ix) Mahadji Scindia should be the mutual guarantor for the proper observance of the terms of the treaty.

Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–05)

Background

The Second Anglo-Maratha war started in circumstances similar to those of the first. After Peshwa Madhavrao Narayan committed suicide in 1795, Bajirao II, the worthless son of Raghunathrao, became the Peshwa. Nana Phadnavis, a bitter foe of Bajirao II, became the chief minister. The dissensions among the Marathas provided the English with an opportunity to intervene in Maratha affairs. The death of Nana Phadnavis in 1800 gave the British an added advantage.

Course of War

On April 1, 1801, the Peshwa brutally murdered the brother of Jaswantrao (also called Yashwantrao by some historians) Holkar, Vithuji. A furious Jaswant arrayed his forces against the combined armies of Scindia and Bajirao II. The turmoil continued, and on October 25, 1802, Jaswant defeated the armies of the Peshwa and Scindia decisively at Hadapsar near Poona and placed Vinayakrao, son of Amritrao, on the Peshwa's seat. A terrified Bajirao II fled to Bassein where, on December 31, 1802, he signed a treaty with the English.

Treaty of Bassein (1802) Under the treaty, the Peshwa agreed:

(i) to receive from the Company a native infantry (consisting of not less than 6,000 troops), with the usual proportion of field artillery and European artillery men attached, to be permanently stationed in his territories;

(ii) to cede to the Company territories yielding an income of Rs 26 lakh;

(iii) to surrender the city of Surat;

(iv) to give up all claims for *chauth* on the Nizam's dominions;

(v) to accept the Company's arbitration in all differences between him and the Nizam or the Gaekwad;

(vi) not to keep in his employment Europeans of any nation at war with the English; and

(vii) to subject his relations with other states to the control of the English.

Reduced to Vassalage After the Peshwa accepted the subsidiary alliance, Scindia and Bhonsle attempted to save Maratha independence. But the well-prepared and organised army of the English under Arthur Wellesley defeated the combined armies of Scindia and Bhonsle and forced them to conclude separate subsidiary treaties with the English.

In 1804, Yashwantrao Holkar made an attempt to form a coalition of Indian rulers to fight against the English. But his attempt proved unsuccessful. The Marathas were defeated, reduced to British vassalage and isolated from one another. [(i) Defeat of Bhonsle (December 17, 1803, ***Treaty of Deogaon***); (ii) Defeat of Scindia (December 30, 1803, ***Treaty of Surji-Anjangaon***); and (iii) Defeat of Holkar (1806, ***Treaty of Rajpurghat***)].

Significance of the Treaty of Bassein Admittedly, the treaty was signed by a Peshwa who lacked political authority, but the gains made by the English were immense. The provision of keeping English troops permanently in Maratha territory was of great strategical benefit. The Company already had troops in Mysore, Hyderabad, and Lucknow. The addition of Poona on the list meant that the Company's troops were now more evenly spread and could be rushed to any place without much delay in times of need. Though the Treaty of Bassein did not hand over India to the Company on a platter, it was a major development in that direction; the Company was now well placed to expand its areas of influence. In the circumstances, the observation that the treaty "gave the English the key to India," may be exaggerated, but appears understandable.

Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–19)

Background

Lord Hastings had the imperialistic design of imposing British paramountcy. By the Charter Act of 1813, the East India Company's monopoly of trade in China (except tea) ended and, hence, the company needed more markets.

The Pindaris, made up of many castes and classes, were attached to Maratha armies as mercenaries. When the Marathas became weak, the Pindaris could not get regular employment. As a consequence, they started plundering neighbouring territories, including those of the Company. The English charged the Marathas with giving shelter to the Pindaris. Pindari leaders like Amir Khan and Karim Khan surrendered, while Chitu Khan fled into the jungles.

The Treaty of Bassein, described as "a treaty with a cipher (the Peshwa)", wounded the feelings of the other Maratha leaders. They saw the treaty as an absolute surrender of independence.

Lord Hastings' actions taken against the Pindaris were seen as a transgression of the sovereignty of the Marathas; they served to once again unite the Maratha confederacy. A repentant Bajirao II made a last bid in 1817 by rallying together the Maratha chiefs against the English in course of the Third Anglo-Maratha War.

Course of War

The Peshwa attacked the British Residency at Poona. Appa Sahib of Nagpur attacked the residency at Nagpur, and the Holkar made preparations for war. But, by then, the Marathas had lost almost all those elements which are needed for the growth of a power. The political and administrative conditions of all the Maratha states were confused and inefficient. After the death of Jaswantrao Holkar, Tulsi Bai, the Holkar's favourite mistress, came to the helm of affairs in Poona. Though a clever and intelligent woman, she could not administer the state properly because she was influenced by some unworthy men such as Balram Seth and Amir Khan. The Bhonsle at Nagpur and the Scindia at Gwalior had also become weak. So, the English, striking back vigorously,

succeeded in not allowing the Peshwa to exert his authority again on the Maratha confederacy.

Result The Peshwa was defeated at Khirki, Bhonsle at Sitabuldi, and Holkar at Mahidpur.

Some important treaties were signed. These were:

- June 1817, ***Treaty of Poona***, with Peshwa.
- November 1817, ***Treaty of Gwalior***, with Scindia.
- January 1818, ***Treaty of Mandasor***, with Holkar.

In June 1818, the Peshwa finally surrendered and the Maratha confederacy was dissolved. The peshwaship was abolished. Peshwa Bajirao became a British retainer at Bithur near Kanpur. Pratap Singh, a lineal descendant of Shivaji, was made ruler of a small principality, Satara, formed out of the Peshwa's dominions.

Why the Marathas Lost

There were several reasons for the Marathas' defeat by the English. The main reasons were as follows:

(i) **Inept Leadership** The Maratha state was despotic in character. The personality and character of the head of the state had a great bearing on the affairs of the state. But, unfortunately, the later Maratha leaders Bajirao II, Daulatrao Scindia and Jaswantrao Holkar were worthless and selfish leaders. They were no match for the English officials such as Elphinstone, John Malcolm, and Arthur Wellesley (who later led the English to conquer Napoleon).

(ii) **Defective Nature of Maratha State** The cohesion of the people of the Maratha state was not organic but artificial and accidental, and hence precarious. There was no effort, right from the days of Shivaji, for a well-thought-out organised communal improvement, spread of education, or unification of the people. The rise of the Maratha state was based on the religio-national movement. This defect of the Maratha state became glaring when they had to contend with a European power organised on the best pattern of the West.

(iii) **Loose Political Set-up** The Maratha empire was a loose confederation under the leadership of the Chhatrapati and later the Peshwa. Powerful chiefs such as the Gaikwad, the Holkar, the Scindia, and the Bhonsle carved out semi-independent kingdoms for themselves and paid lip service to

the authority of the Peshwa. Further, there existed irreconcilable hostility between different units of the confederacy. The Maratha chief often took sides with one or the other. The lack of a cooperative spirit among the Maratha chiefs proved detrimental to the Maratha state.

(iv) **Inferior Military System** Though full of personal prowess and valour, the Marathas were inferior to the English in organisation of the forces, in war weapons, in disciplined action, and in effective leadership. The centrifugal tendencies of divided command accounted for much of the Maratha failures. Treachery in the ranks was instrumental in weakening the Maratha forces. The adoption of the modern techniques of warfare by the Marathas was inadequate. The Marathas neglected the paramount importance of artillery. Though the Poona government set up an artillery department, it hardly functioned effectively.

(v) **Unstable Economic Policy** The Maratha leadership failed to evolve a stable economic policy to suit the changing needs of time. There were no industries or foreign trade openings. So, the economy of the Maratha was not conducive to a stable political set-up.

(vi) **Superior English Diplomacy and Espionage** The English had better diplomatic skill to win allies and isolate the enemy. The disunity among the Maratha chiefs simplified the task of the English. Diplomatic superiority enabled the English to take a quick offensive against the target.

Unlike the Marathas' ignorance and lack of information about their enemy, the English maintained a well-knit spy system to gather knowledge of the potentialities, strengths, weaknesses, and military methods of their foes.

(vii) **Progressive English Outlook** The English were rejuvenated by the forces of Renaissance, emancipating them from the shackles of the Church. They were devoting their energies to scientific inventions, extensive ocean voyages, and acquisition of colonies. Indians, on the other hand, were still steeped in medievalism marked by old dogmas and notions. The Maratha leaders paid very little attention to mundane matters of the state. Insistence on maintenance of traditional social hierarchy based on the dominance of the priestly class made the union of an empire difficult.

In the end, it can be concluded that the English attacked a 'divided house' which started crumbling after a few pushes.

Conquest of Sindh

In the early 19th century, the English started to show an interest in Sindh where they enjoyed some trade facilities authorised by a *farman* of the Mughal Emperor in 1630. The *farman* provided the English with such privileges in the ports of Sindh which they enjoyed elsewhere.

Rise of Talpuras Amirs

In the 18th century, prior to the rule of Talpuras Amirs, Sindh was ruled by the Kallora chiefs. In 1758, an English factory was built at Thatta, owing to a *parwana* given by the Kallora prince, Ghulam Shah. In 1761, Ghulam Shah, on the arrival of an English resident in his court, not only ratified the earlier treaty, but also excluded other Europeans from trading there. This advantage was enjoyed by the English up to 1775 when a not-too-friendly ruler, Sarfraz Khan, made the English close their factory.

In the 1770s, a Baluch tribe called Talpuras, descended from the hills and settled in the plains of Sindh. They were excellent soldiers as well as adapted to hard life. They acquired great influence and soon usurped power in the new region. In 1783, the Talpuras, under the leadership of Mir Fath (Fatah) Ali Khan, established complete hold over Sindh and sent the Kallora prince into exile. The then Durrani monarch confirmed the claims of Mir Fath Khan and ordered the latter to share the country with his brothers (Mir's brothers, popularly known as *'Char Yar'*). When Mir Fath died in 1800, the *Char Yar* divided the kingdom among themselves, calling themselves the Amirs or Lords of Sindh. These amirs extended their dominion on all sides. They conquered Amarkot from the Raja of Jodhpur, Karachi from the chief of Luz, and Shaikarpur and Bukkar from the Afghans.

Gradual Ascendancy over Sindh

A common belief in the late 18th century was that Napoleon was conspiring with Tipu Sultan to invade India. In 1799, behind Lord Wellesley's efforts to revive commercial relations

with Sindh was the hidden aim to counteract the alliance of the French, Tipu Sultan and Shah Zaman, the Kabul monarch. Negotiations were opened with Fath Ali Khan. But under the influence of Tipu Sultan and the jealousy of the local traders, aided by the anti-British party at Hyderabad (Sindh), the amir in October 1800, ordered the British agent to quit Sindh within ten days. The British agent (Crow) left Sindh and the Company quietly suffered the insult.

Treaty of 'Eternal Friendship'

In June 1807, the alliance of Tilsit with Alexander I of Russia was joined by Napoleon Bonaparte. The alliance had as one of its conditions a combined invasion of India by the land route. Now the British wanted to create a barrier between Russia and British India. To achieve this, Lord Minto sent three delegations under the leadership of various prominent persons to forge alliances. Accordingly, Metcalfe was sent to Lahore, Elphinstone to Kabul, and Malcolm to Teheran. Sindh was visited by Nicholas Smith, who met the Amirs to conclude a defensive arrangement. After negotiations, the Amirs agreed to a treaty—their first-ever treaty with the English. After professing eternal friendship, both sides agreed to exclude the French from Sindh and to exchange agents at each other's court. The treaty was renewed in 1820, with the addition of an article excluding the Americans and resolving some border disputes on the side of Kachch after the final defeat of the Maratha confederacy in 1818.

Treaty of 1832

In 1832, William Bentinck sent Colonel Pottinger to Sindh to sign a treaty with the Amirs. The provisions of the treaty were as follows:

(i) Free passage through Sindh would be allowed to the English traders and travellers and the use of Indus for trading purposes; however, no warships would ply, nor any materials for war would be carried.

(ii) No English merchant would settle down in Sindh, and passports would be needed for travellers.

(iii) Tariff rates could be altered by the Amirs if found high and no military dues or tolls would be demanded.

(iv) The Amirs would work with the Raja of Jodhpur to put down the robbers of Kachch.

(v) The old treaties were confirmed and the parties would not be jealous of each other.

Lord Auckland and Sindh

Lord Auckland, who became the Governor General in 1836, looked at Sindh from the perspective of saving India from a possible Russian invasion and wished to obtain a counteracting influence over the Afghans. Ranjit Singh in Punjab was strong enough to resist coercion in this regard, but the Amirs were not. Thus, the English view was that they had to consolidate their position in Sindh as a necessary first step for their plans on Afghanistan. They got an opportunity when Ranjit Singh captured a frontier town of Sindh, Rojhan, and Pottinger was sent to Hyderabad to sign a new treaty with the Amirs. The treaty offered protection to the Amirs on the condition that the Company troops would be kept in the capital at the Amir's expense or alternatively the English would be given suitable concessions in return. The Amirs initially refused but later agreed reluctantly to sign the treaty in 1838 when the possibility of Ranjit Singh getting help from others was pointed out to them. The treaty permitted the English to intervene in the disputes between the Amirs and the Sikhs as also to establish the presence of a British resident who could go anywhere he liked escorted by English troops. Thus, Sindh was turned into a British protectorate in 1838.

Tripartite Treaty of 1838 To address the Afghan problem (as the British imagined it), the Company resorted to further duplicity. Firstly, they persuaded Ranjit Singh to sign a tripartite treaty in June 1838 agreeing to British mediation in his disputes with the Amirs, and then made

View

Under Auckland and his cabinet of secretaries British policy in India had fallen to a lower level of unscrupulousness than ever before and the plain fact is that the treatment of Sindh from this time onward, however expedient politically, was morally indefensible.

—P.E. Roberts

Emperor Shah Shuja give up his sovereign rights on Sindh, provided the arrears of tribute were paid. The exact amount of the tribute was to be determined by the English whose main objective was to obtain finances for the Afghan adventure and obtain so much of the Amirs' territory as would secure a line of operation against Afghanistan through Sindh.

Sindh Accepts Subsidiary Alliance (1839) The Company intended to persuade or compel the Amirs to pay the money and also to consent to the abrogation of that article in the treaty of 1832, which prohibited the movement of English troops in Sindh by land or by river. B.L. Grover writes: "Under threat of superior force, the Amirs accepted a treaty in February 1839 by which a British subsidiary force had to be stationed at Shikarpur and Bukkar and the Amirs of Sindh were to pay Rs 3 lakh annually for the maintenance of the Company's troops." Henceforth, the Amirs were debarred from having any negotiations with foreign states without the knowledge of the Company. Further, they were to provide a storeroom at Karachi for the Company's military supplies, besides abolishing all tolls on the Indus, and furnishing an auxiliary force for the Afghan war if called upon to do so.

Capitulation of Sindh The first Anglo-Afghan War (1839–42), fought on the soil of Sindh, was never liked by the Amirs of Sindh; neither did they like the presence of the British troops in their region. However, under the treaty they were asked to pay for all this, which they did. They were not rewarded or thanked for their services, but were charged with hostility and disaffection against the British government. The Amirs were charged with treasonable activities against the British, and Ellenborough, placed in a precarious position due to the Afghan war reverses, sent Outram to Sindh to negotiate a new treaty. Under this treaty, the Amirs were required to cede important provinces as the price of their past transgressions, to supply fuel to the Company's steamers plying on the Indus, and to stop minting coins. Furthermore, in a succession dispute, the English intervened through Napier and started a war when the Amirs rose in revolt. The whole of Sindh capitulated within a short time, and the Amirs

Views

We have no right to seize Sindh, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be.
—**Charles Napier**

...to remove such brutal tyrants (the Amirs) was worthy of England's greatness. The conquest of Sindh is therefore no iniquity...
—**Charles Napier**

I am sick of your policy; I will not say yours is the best, but it is undoubtedly the shortest, that of the sword...
—**James Outram**, Deputy of Napier at the time of annexation of Sindh.

were made captives and banished from Sindh. In 1843, under Governor General Ellenborough, Sindh was merged into the British Empire and Charles Napier was appointed its first governor.

Criticisms of the Conquest of Sindh

Historians generally condemn the acquisition of Sindh by the British in strong words. The causes for annexation were deliberately manufactured. Like many episodes in the British conquest of India, the Afghan war is also a tale of bullying tactics and deceit. However, in the instance of the First Afghan War, the English suffered terribly at the hands of the Afghans with a corresponding loss of prestige. To compensate for this, they annexed Sindh, which prompted Elphinstone to comment: "Coming from Afghanistan it put one in mind of a bully who has been knocked in the street and went home to beat his wife in revenge."

Conquest of Punjab

Consolidation of Punjab under the Sikhs

After the murder of the last Sikh guru, Guru Gobind Singh, a section of Sikhs under the leadership of Banda Bahadur revolted against the Mughals during the rule of Bahadur Shah. In 1715, Banda Bahadur was defeated by Farrukhsiyar and put to death in 1716. Thus, the Sikh polity, once again, became

leaderless and later got divided into two groups—*Bandai* (Liberal) and *Tat Khalsa* (Orthodox). This rift among the followers ended in 1721 under the influence of Bhai Mani Singh. Later, in 1784, Kapur Singh Faizullapuria organised the Sikhs under *Dal Khalsa,* with the objective of uniting followers of Sikhism, politically, culturally, and economically. The whole body of the Khalsa was formed into two sections—*Budha Dal,* the army of the veterans, and *Taruna Dal,* the army of the young.

The weakness of the Mughals and invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali created a general confusion and anarchy in Punjab. These political conditions helped the organised *Dal Khalsa* to consolidate further. The Sikhs consolidated in *misls,* which were military brotherhoods with a democratic set-up. *Misl* is an Arabic word which means equal or alike. Another meaning of *Misl* is State. During the period, 1763 to 1773, many *misls* started to rule the Punjab region under Sikh chieftains, from Saharanpur in the east to Attock in the west, from the mountaineous regions of the north to Multan in the south.

Sukarchakiya Misl and Ranjit Singh

At the time of the birth of Ranjit Singh (November 2, 1780), there were 12 important *misls—Ahluwaliya, Bhangi, Dallewalia, Faizullapuria, Kanhaiya, Krorasinghia, Nakkai, Nishaniya, Phulakiya, Ramgarhiya Sukharchakiya,* and *Shaheed*. The central administration of a *misl* was based on *Gurumatta Sangh,* which was essentially a political, social, and economic system. Ranjit Singh was the son of Mahan Singh, the leader of the *Sukarchakiya misl*. Mahan Singh died when Ranjit Singh was only 12 years old. But Ranjit Singh showed an early acumen at political affairs. Towards the close of the 18th century, all the important *misls* (except *Sukarchakiya*) were in a state of disintegration. Afghanistan was also engulfed in a civil war due to a power struggle which went on for the next three decades. These events in the neighbouring regions were fully exploited by Ranjit Singh, who followed a ruthless policy of 'blood and iron' and carved out for himself a kingdom in the central Punjab. In 1799, Ranjit Singh was appointed as the governor of Lahore by

Zaman Shah, the ruler of Afghanistan. In 1805, Ranjit Singh acquired Jammu and Amritsar, and, thus, the political capital (Lahore) and religious capital (Amritsar) of Punjab came under the rule of Ranjit Singh. He also maintained good relations with the Dogras and the Nepalese and enlisted them in his army.

Ranjit Singh and the English

The prospects of a joint Franco-Russian invasion of India through the land-route had alarmed the English. In 1807, Lord Minto sent Charles Metcalfe to Lahore. Ranjit Singh offered to accept Metcalfe's proposal of an offensive and defensive alliance on the condition that the English would remain neutral in case of a Sikh-Afghan war and would consider Ranjit Singh the sovereign of the entire Punjab, including the Malwa (cis-Sutlej) territories. However, the negotiations failed. In the changed political scenario in which the Napoleonic danger receded and the English became more assertive, Ranjit Singh agreed to sign the Treaty of Amritsar (April 25, 1809) with the Company.

Treaty of Amritsar

The Treaty of Amritsar was significant for its immediate as well as potential effects. It checked one of the most cherished ambitions of Ranjit Singh to extend his rule over the entire Sikh nation by accepting the river Sutlej as the boundary line for his dominions and the Company's. Now he directed his energies towards the west and captured Multan (1818), Kashmir (1819), and Peshawar (1834).

In June 1838, Ranjit Singh was compelled by political compulsions to sign the **Tripartite Treaty** with the English; however, he refused to give passage to the British army through his territories to attack Dost Mohammad, the Afghan Amir.

The relations of Raja Ranjit Singh with the Company, from 1809 to 1839, clearly indicate the former's weak position. Although he was conscious of his weak position, he took no step to organise a coalition of other Indian princes or maintain a balance of power. Ranjit Singh died in June 1839, and, with his death, the process of the decline of his empire began.

Punjab After Ranjit Singh

Beginning of Court Factions

Ranjit Singh's only legitimate son and successor, Kharak Singh, was not efficient, and during the brief period of his reign, court factions became active. Kharak Singh's sudden death in 1839 and the accidental death of his son, Prince Nau Nihal Singh (when he was returning from his father's funeral), led to an anarchic situation in Punjab. Plans and counter plans of various groups to capture the throne of Lahore provided an opportunity for decisive action by the English. The army—the pillar of the Sikh state—was far less strong than it appeared to be. Ranjit Singh's able generals—Mokham Chand, Dewan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, and Ram Dayal—were already dead. Already discontent was growing among the troops as a result of irregularity of payment. The appointment of unworthy officers led to indiscipline. The Lahore government, continuing the policy of friendship with the English company, permitted the British troops to pass through its territory—once, when they were fleeing from Afghanistan, and again, when they were marching back to Afghanistan to avenge their defeat. These marches resulted in commotion and economic dislocation in Punjab.

Rani Jindal and Daleep Singh

After the death of Nau Nihal Singh, Sher Singh, another son of Ranjit Singh succeeded, but he was murdered in late 1843. Soon afterwards, Daleep Singh, a minor son of Ranjit Singh, was proclaimed the Maharaja with Rani Jindan as regent and Hira Singh Dogra as wazir. Hira Singh himself fell a victim to a court intrigue and was murdered in 1844. The new wazir, Jawahar Singh, the brother of Rani Jindan, soon incurred the displeasure of the army and was deposed and put to death in 1845. Lal Singh, a lover of Rani Jindan, won over the army to his side and became the wazir in the same year, and Teja Singh was appointed as the commander of the forces.

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–46)

Causes

The outbreak of the first of the Anglo-Sikh wars has been attributed to the action of the Sikh army crossing the River

Sutlej on December 11, 1845. This was seen as an aggressive manoeuvre that provided the English with the justification to declare war. The causes were, however, much more complex and may be listed as follows:

(i) the anarchy in the Lahore kingdom following the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh resulting in a power struggle for domination between the court at Lahore and the ever-powerful and increasingly local army;
(ii) suspicions amongst the Sikh army arising from English military campaigns to achieve the annexation of Gwalior and Sindh in 1841 and the campaign in Afghanistan in 1842; and
(iii) the increase in the number of English troops being stationed near the border with the Lahore kingdom.

Course of War

The war began in December 1845, with 20,000 to 30,000 troops in the British side, while the Sikhs had about 50,000 men under the overall command of Lal Singh. But the treachery of Lal Singh and Teja Singh caused five successive defeats to the Sikhs at Mudki (December 18, 1845), Ferozeshah (December 21–22, 1845), Buddelwal, Aliwal (January 28, 1846), and at Sobraon (February 10, 1846). Lahore fell to the British forces on February 20, 1846 without a fight.

Treaty of Lahore (March 8, 1846) The end of the first Anglo-Sikh War forced the Sikhs to sign a humiliating treaty on March 8, 1846. The main features of the Treaty of Lahore were as follows:

- War indemnity of more than 1 crore rupees was to be given to the English.
- The Jalandhar Doab (between the Beas and the Sutlej) was annexed to the Company's dominions.
- A British resident was to be established at Lahore under Henry Lawrence.
- The strength of the Sikh army was reduced.
- Daleep Singh was recognised as the ruler under Rani Jindan as regent and Lal Singh as wazir.
- Since the Sikhs were not able to pay the entire war indemnity, Kashmir, including Jammu, was sold to Gulab Singh

and he was required to pay 75 lakh rupees to the Company as the price. The transfer of Kashmir to Gulab Singh was formalised by a separate treaty on March 16, 1846.

Treaty of Bhairowal The Sikhs were not satisfied with the Treaty of Lahore over the issue of Kashmir, so they rebelled. In December, 1846, the Treaty of Bhairowal was signed. According to the provisions of this treaty, Rani Jindan was removed as regent and a council of regency for Punjab was set up. The council consisted of 8 Sikh *sardars* presided over by the English Resident, Henry Lawrence.

Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848–49)

Causes

The defeat in the first Anglo-Sikh War and the provisions of the treaties of Lahore and Bhairowal were highly humiliating for the Sikhs. Inhuman treatment meted out to Rani Jindan, who was sent to Benares as a pensioner, added to the resentment of the Sikhs.

Mulraj, the governor of Multan, was replaced by a new Sikh governor over the issue of increase in annual revenue. Mulraj revolted and murdered two English officers accompanying the new governor. Sher Singh was sent to suppress the revolt, but he himself joined Mulraj, leading to a mass uprising in Multan. This could be considered as the immediate cause of the war. The then Governor General of India, Lord Dalhousie, a hardcore expansionist, got the pretext to annex Punjab completely.

Course of War

Lord Dalhousie himself proceeded to Punjab. Three important battles were fought before the final annexation of Punjab. These three battles were:

(i) Battle of Ramnagar, led by Sir Hugh Gough, the commander-in-chief of the Company

(ii) Battle of Chillhanwala, January, 1849

(iii) Battle of Gujarat, February 21, 1849; the Sikh army surrendered at Rawalpindi, and their Afghan allies were chased out of India. (Gujarat is a small town on the banks of River Jhelum.)

Result At the end of the war came:

- surrender of the Sikh army and Sher Singh in 1849;
- annexation of Punjab; and for his services the Earl of Dalhousie was given the thanks of the British Parliament and a promotion in the peerage, as Marquess;
- setting up of a three-member board to govern Punjab, comprising of the Lawrence brothers (Henry and John) and Charles Mansel.

In 1853, the board was nullified and Punjab was placed under a chief commissioner. John Lawrence became the first chief commissioner.

Significance of the Anglo-Sikh Wars

The Anglo-Sikh wars gave the two sides a mutual respect for each other's fighting prowess. The Sikhs were to fight loyally on the British side in the Revolt of 1857 and in many other campaigns and wars uptil the Indian independence in 1947.

Extension of British Paramountcy Through Administrative Policy

The process of imperial expansion and consolidation of British paramountcy was carried on by the Company during the 1757–1857 period through a two-fold method: (a) policy of annexation by conquest or war; and (b) policy of annexation by diplomacy and administrative mechanisms. We have already discussed how the Company defeated and subjugated, one by one, the major Indian powers like Bengal, Mysore, the Marathas, and the Sikhs, mainly by waging wars against them and through considerable deceit. But in the case of many other powers, the British applied diplomatic and administrative policies. In this context, we may cite examples of Warren Hastings' 'ring-fence' policy, Wellesley's system of 'subsidiary alliance', and Dalhousie's 'doctrine of lapse' to see how the British dominion expanded in India.

The Policy of Ring-Fence

Warren Hastings took charge as the governor general at a critical period of British rule when the British were to

encounter the powerful combination of the Marathas, Mysore, and Hyderabad. He followed a policy of ring-fence which aimed at creating buffer zones to defend the Company's frontiers. Broadly speaking, it was the policy of defence of their neighbours' frontiers for safeguarding their own territories. This policy of Warren Hastings was reflected in his war against the Marathas and Mysore. The chief danger to the Company's territories was from the Afghan invaders and the Marathas. To safeguard against these dangers, the Company undertook to organise the defence of the frontiers of Awadh on the condition that the Nawab would defray the expenses of the defending army. The defence of Awadh constituted the defence of Bengal during that time. Thus, the states brought under the ring-fence system were assured of military assistance against external aggression—but at their own expense. In other words, these allies were required to maintain subsidiary forces which were to be organised, equipped, and commanded by the officers of the Company who, in turn, were to be paid by the rulers of these states.

Wellesley's policy of subsidiary alliance was, in fact, an extension of the ring-fence system which sought to reduce the Indian states into a position of dependence on the British government.

Subsidiary Alliance

The subsidiary alliance system was used by Lord Wellesley, who was governor general from 1798–1805, to build an empire in India. Under the system, the allying Indian state's ruler was compelled to accept the permanent stationing of a British force within his territory and to pay a subsidy for its maintenance. The Indian ruler had to agree to the posting of a British resident in his court. The Indian ruler could not employ any European in his service without the prior consultation with the Company. Nor could he go to war or negotiate with any other Indian ruler without consulting the governor general. In return for all this, the British would defend the ruler from his enemies and adopt a policy of non-interference in the internal matters of the allied state.

One of the objectives behind Wellesley's strengthening

of the subsidiary alliance system was to keep the French from reviving and expanding their influence in India. Around this time, the fear of Napoleon's expedition towards the East was very real for the British who felt that the French could attack the western coast of India from their colony of Mauritius. Hence, the clause in the alliance treaty the Indian rulers to dismiss Europeans (other than the British) from their service and not employ any. By means of this system, the Company could station its forces at strategic locations and keep the French at bay. Besides, the subsidiary alliance would expand the Company's hold over the Indian states and gradually bring more and more territory into the Company's fold.

The Indian rulers lost their independence by buying security. They were not free of interference from the British Resident. They lost much of their revenue, paying for the British troops. Also, the alliance made the Indian rulers weak and irresponsible; the subjects were exploited and it was practically impossible to depose the oppressive rulers as they were protected by the British.

Evolution and Perfection

It was probably Dupleix, who first gave on hire (so to say) European troops to Indian rulers to fight their wars. Since then, almost all the governor generals from Clive onwards applied the system to various Indian states and brought it to near perfection.

The first Indian state to fall into this protection trap (which anticipated the subsidiary alliance system) was Awadh, which, in 1765, signed a treaty under which the Company pledged to defend the frontiers of Awadh on the condition of the Nawab defraying the expenses of such defence. It was in 1787 that the Company first insisted that the subsidiary state should not have foreign relations. This was included in the treaty with the Nawab of Carnatic which Cornwallis signed in February 1787. It was Wellesley's genius to make it a general rule to negotiate for the surrender of territory in full sovereignty for the maintenance of the subsidiary force.

Stages of Application of Subsidiary Alliance

There were four stages in the evolution of the subsidiary alliance. In the **first stage**, the Company offered to help a friendly Indian state with its troops to fight any war the state might be engaged in. The **second stage** consisted of making a common cause with the Indian state now made friendly and taking the field with its own soldiers and those of the state. Now came the **third stage** when the Indian ally was asked not for men but for money. In return, the Company promised that it would recruit, train, and maintain a fixed number of soldiers under British officers, and that the contingent would be available to the ruler for his personal protection as also for keeping out aggressors. In the **fourth** or **the last stage**, the money or the protection fee was fixed, usually at a high level; when the state failed to pay the money in time, it was asked to cede certain parts of its territories to the Company in lieu of payment.

The Company's entry into the affairs of the state had begun; now it would be for the British resident (installed in the state capital under the treaty) to initiate, sustain, and hasten the process of eventual annexation.

View

Wellesley converted the British Empire *in* India to the British Empire *of* India. From one of the political powers in India, the Company became the supreme power in India and claimed the whole country as its sole protectorate. From Wellesley's time onwards the defence of India was the Company's responsibility.

—Sidney J. Owen (Selection from Wellesley's Despatches)

States which Accepted Alliance

The Indian princes who accepted the subsidiary system were: the Nizam of Hyderabad (September 1798 and 1800), the ruler of Mysore (1799), the ruler of Tanjore (October 1799), the Nawab of Awadh (November 1801), the Peshwa (December 1801), the Bhonsle Raja of Berar (December 1803), the Scindia (February 1804), the Rajput states of Jodhpur, Jaipur, Macheri, Bundi, and the ruler of Bharatpur (1818). The Holkars were the last Maratha confederation to accept the Subsidiary Alliance in 1818.

Views

A 1950 Colonial Office paper disarmingly says that Britain 'as a seafaring and trading nation... had long been a "collector of islands and peninsulas"'. In a much-quoted remark, Sir John Seeley, the Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, said something similar in 1883: 'We seem, as it were, to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind. That didn't mean quite what it seemed to say: what Seeley meant was that there had not been a *coherent* policy behind Britain's imperial expansion. There had been an incoherent set of policies. The 1950 paper explained that the collection of islands and peninsulas was assembled to protect trade and the sea routes. The motive for Empire was selfish… the motivation consisted of desires which interlocked: desires for wealth, for strategic possessions from which to defend the wealth, and for prestige, the inevitable concomitant of wealth. In the process, numberless hundreds of thousands of native populations were slaughtered, … Almost always, the subject races, even the most sophisticated and educated amongst them, were regarded as and made to feel inferior to the ruling caste.

—**Walter Reid**, *Keeping the Jewel in the Crown*

In the hundred years after Plassey, the East India Company, with an army of 260,000 men at the start of the nineteenth century and the backing of the British government and Parliament (many of whose members were shareholders in the enterprise), extended its control over most of India. The Company conquered and absorbed a number of hitherto independent or autonomous states, imposed executive authority through a series of high-born Governors General appointed from London, regulated the country's trade, collected taxes and imposed its fiat on all aspects of Indian life.

Shashi Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness*

Doctrine of Lapse

In simple terms, the doctrine stated that the adopted son could be the heir to his foster father's private property, but not the state; it was for the paramount power (the British) to decide whether to bestow the state on the adopted son or to annex it. The doctrine was stated to be based on Hindu law and Indian customs, but Hindu law seemed to be somewhat inconclusive on this point, and the instances of

an Indian sovereign annexing the state of his vassal on account of 'lapse' (i.e., leaving no issue as heir) were rather rare. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had annexed a few of his feudatory principalities on account of 'lapse'. Likewise, the Company in 1820 acquired a few petty Cis-Sutlej states on the absence of heirs. Nonetheless, there was no clear-cut instance of an adopted son being deprived of an entire state or of such a state being regarded as a 'lapse'.

Though this policy is attributed to Lord Dalhousie (1848–56), he was not its originator. It was a coincidence that during his governor-generalship several important cases arose in which the 'Doctrine' could be applied. Dalhousie showed too much zeal in enforcing this policy which had been theoretically enunciated on some previous occasions. His

Annexation of Awadh

Awadh was the oldest of the surviving states brought under the Subsidiary Alliance, and the cruel impact of the system resulted in its continuous maladministration under profligate and extravagant nawabs for a long spell of 80 years.

The people suffered from the heavy taxes imposed by the Nawab as also the illegal exactions by his officials and the talukdars. The chronic bankruptcy of the treasury was partly due to the heavy charges realised by the British government for maintenance of the subsidiary troops. In addition, large contributions were realised by Lord Hastings, Lord Amherst, and Lord William Bentinck for purposes entirely unconnected with the affairs of Awadh. In 1819, the Nawab was given the title and status of a king.

Lord Dalhousie directed Sleeman, the Resident in Awadh, to make a tour throughout the state and ascertain the actual situation by personal inspection. The resident submitted a report describing the anarchical condition in the state. He was succeeded as resident in 1854 by Outram who submitted a report supporting that of his predecessor. Dalhousie hesitated to take the extreme step, i.e., annexation; he preferred permanent British administration, with the Nawab retaining his titles and rank. But the Court of Directors ordered annexation and abolition of the throne (1856). Wajid Ali Shah refused to sign a treaty giving away his rights, and was exiled to Calcutta. It was a political blunder for which the British had to pay a heavy price during the Revolt of 1857.

predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie, in turn, acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately.

Annexed Lapsed States

It was a matter of chance that during Lord Dalhousie's term many rulers of states died without a male issue and seven states were annexed under the Doctrine of Lapse. The most important of these were Satara (1848), Jhansi, and Nagpur (1854). The other small states included Jaitpur (Bundelkhand), Sambhalpur (Orissa), and Baghat (Himachal Pradesh).

Lord Dalhousie annexed Awadh in 1856 after deposing Nawab Wajid Ali Shah on grounds of misgovernment.

Thus, Dalhousie annexed eight states during his eight-year tenure (1848–56) as governor general. In these eight years, he annexed some quarter million square miles of the territory of India. His reign almost completed the process of expansion of British power in India, which began with the victory over Siraj-ud-Daulah at Plassey in 1757.

Relations of British India with Neighbouring Countries

The desire of the British imperialists to consolidate their administrative and political power in the region led them into conflict with countries neighbouring India.

Anglo-Bhutanese Relations

The occupation of Assam in 1826 brought the British into close contacts with the mountain state of Bhutan. Frequent raids by Bhutanese into adjoining territories in Assam and Bengal and the bad treatment meted out to Elgin's envoy in 1863–64 and the treaty imposed on him, by which the British were forced to surrender the passes leading to Assam, led to British annexation of these passes and the stopping of allowance paid to the Bhutanese. In 1865, the Bhutanese were forced to surrender the passes in return for an annual subsidy. It was the surrendered district which became a productive area with tea gardens.

Anglo-Nepalese Relations

The Gorkhas wrested control of Nepal from the successors of Ranjit Malla of Bhatgaon in 1760. They began to expand their dominion beyond the mountains. They found it easier to expand in the southern direction, as the north was well defended by the Chinese. In 1801, the English annexed Gorakhpur, which brought the Gorkhas' boundary and the Company's boundary together. The conflict started due to the Gorkhas' capture of Butwal and Sheoraj in the period of Lord Hastings (1813–23). The war ended in the **Treaty of Sagauli** in 1816, which was in favour of the British.

As per the treaty,

- Nepal accepted a British resident.
- Nepal ceded the districts of Garhwal and Kumaon, and abandoned claims to Terai.
- Nepal also withdrew from Sikkim.

This agreement brought many advantages to the British:

- the British empire now reached the Himalayas;
- it got better facilities for trade with Central Asia;
- it acquired sites for hill stations, such as Shimla, Mussoorie, and Nainital; and
- the Gorkhas joined the British Indian Army in large numbers.

Anglo-Burmese Relations

In the beginning of the 19th century, Burma was a free country and wanted to expand westward. The expansionist urges of the British, fuelled by the lure of the forest resources of Burma, market for British manufactures in Burma and the need to check French ambitions in Burma and the rest of South-East Asia, resulted in three Anglo-Burmese Wars, and in the end, the annexation of Burma into British India in 1885.

First Burma War (1824–26)

The first war with Burma was fought when the Burmese expansion westwards and occupation of Arakan and Manipur, and the threat to Assam and the Brahmaputra Valley led to continuous friction along the ill-defined border between Bengal and Burma, in the opening decades of the 19th

century. The British expeditionary forces occupied Rangoon in May 1824 and reached within 72 km of the capital at Ava. Peace was established in 1826 with the **Treaty of Yandabo,** which provided that the Government of Burma:

- pay one crore rupees as war compensation;
- cede its coastal provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim;
- abandon claims on Assam, Cachar, and Jaintia;
- recognise Manipur as an independent state;
- negotiate a commercial treaty with Britain; and
- accept a British resident at Ava while posting a Burmese envoy at Calcutta.

Second Burma War (1852)

The second war was the result of the British commercial need and the imperialist policy of Lord Dalhousie. The British merchants were keen to get hold of timber resources of upper Burma and also sought further inroads into the Burmese market. This time, the British occupied Pegu, the only remaining coastal province of Burma. An intense guerrilla resistance had to be overcome before complete British control of lower Burma could be established.

Third Burma War (1885)

After the death of Burmese King Bhindan, his son Thibaw succeeded to the throne. Thibaw, from the beginning itself, was hostile towards the British. The British merchants at Rangoon and lower Burma had been complaining about the stepmotherly treatment by Thibaw, who had also been negotiating commercial treaties with the rival powers of France, Germany, and Italy. The French also planned to lay a rail link from Mandalay to the French territory at a time when the British were in conflict with the French in Niger, Egypt, and Madagascar. A humiliating fine had been imposed on a British timber company by Thibaw. Dufferin ordered the invasion and final annexation of upper Burma in 1885.

[The British had to face a strong guerrilla uprising in the whole of Burma soon after, and a nationalist movement after the First World War. The Burmese nationalists joined hands with the Indian National Congress. To weaken this link, Burma was separated from India in 1935. The Burmese

nationalist movement further intensified under U Aung San during the Second World War, which finally led to the independence of Burma on January 4, 1948.]

Anglo-Tibetan Relations

Tibet was ruled by a theocracy of Buddhist monks (lamas) under nominal suzerainty of China. The British efforts to establish friendly and commercial relations with Tibet had not yielded any result in the past and a deadlock had been reached by the time of Curzon's arrival in India. The Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was ineffective and Russian influence at Lhasa was increasing. There were reports of Russian arms and ammunition coming into Tibet. Curzon felt alarmed and sent a small Gorkha contingent under Colonel Younghusband on a special mission to Tibet to oblige the Tibetans to come to an agreement. The Tibetans refused to negotiate and offered non-violent resistance. Younghusband pushed his way into Lhasa (August 1904) while the Dalai Lama fled.

Treaty of Lhasa (1904)

Younghusband dictated terms to the Tibetan officials which provided that:

- Tibet would pay an indemnity of 75 lakh rupees at the rate of one lakh rupees per annum;
- as a security for payment, the Indian Government would occupy the Chumbi Valley (territory between Bhutan and Sikkim) for 75 years;
- Tibet would respect the frontier of Sikkim;
- Trade marts would be opened at Yatung, Gyantse, Gartok; and
- Tibet would not grant any concession for railways, roads, telegraph, etc., to any foreign state, but give Great Britain some control over foreign affairs of Tibet.

Later, on the insistence of the Secretary of State and true to the pledge given to Russia, the treaty was revised reducing the indemnity from Rs 75 lakh to Rs 25 lakh and providing for evacuation of Chumbi valley after three years (the valley was actually evacuated only in January 1908).

Significance Only China gained in the end out of the whole affair because the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907

provided that the two great powers would not negotiate with Tibet, except through the mediation of the Chinese government. However, Curzon's policy counteracted all Russian schemes in Tibet.

Anglo-Afghan Relations

In the early 19th century, increased Russian influence in Persia replaced British influence and thwarted an English scheme for establishment of a new route by River Euphrates to India. Especially after the Treaty of Turkomanchai (1828), the English got alarmed about possible Russian plans regarding India. Soon, there was a search for a scientific frontier from the Indian side. Passes of the north-west seemed to hold the key to enter India. The need was felt for Afghanistan to be under control of a ruler who would be friendly to the British.

Forward Policy of Auckland

Auckland who came to India as the governor general in 1836, advocated a forward policy. This implied that the Company government in India itself had to take initiatives to protect the boundary of British India from a probable Russian attack. This objective was to be achieved either through treaties with the neighbouring countries or by annexing them completely. The Amir of Afghanistan, Dost Mohammed, wanted British friendship but made it conditional on the British helping him to recover Peshawar from the Sikhs—a condition which the British government in India rejected. Dost Mohammed now turned to Russia and Persia for help. This prompted the British government to go ahead with the forward policy, and a **Tripartite Treaty** (1838) was entered into by the British, the Sikhs, and Shah Shuja (who had been deposed from the Afghan throne in 1809 and had been living since then as a British pensioner at Ludhiana). The treaty provided that:

- Shah Shuja be enthroned with the armed help of the Sikhs, the Company remaining in the background, 'jingling the money-bag';
- Shah Shuja conduct foreign affairs with the advice of the Sikhs and the British;
- Shah Shuja give up his sovereign rights over Amirs of Sindh in return for a large sum of money;

• Shah Shuja recognise the Sikh ruler, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's claims over the Afghan territories on the right bank of the River Indus.

First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–42)

Soon after the tripartite treaty of 1838, there came about a drastic change in the political situation of the region because of the removal of the original irritants—Persia lifted its siege of Herat, and Russia recalled its envoy from Kabul. Nevertheless, the British decided to go ahead with their forward policy. This resulted in the First Afghan War (1839–42). The British intention was to establish a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression from the north-west.

An English army entered triumphantly into Kabul (August 1839) after a successful attack. Most of the tribes had already been won over by bribes. Dost Mohammed surrendered (1840), and Shah Shuja was made the Amir of Afghanistan. But Shah Shuja was unacceptable to the Afghans. As soon as the British withdrew, the Afghans rose in rebellion, killing the garrison commander in Kabul. The British were compelled to sign a treaty (1841) with the Afghan chiefs by which they agreed to evacuate Afghanistan and restore Dost Mohammed. But the English plan failed. Under a new expedition, the British re-occupied Kabul in September 1842, but having learned their lesson well, they arrived at a settlement with Dost Mohammed by which the British evacuated from Kabul and recognised him as the independent ruler of Afghanistan.

The First Afghan War cost India about 1.5 crore rupees and nearly 20,000 men.

John Lawrence and the Policy of Masterly Inactivity

John Lawrence (1864–69) started a policy of masterly inactivity, which was a reaction to the disasters of the First Afghan War and an outcome of practical common sense and an intimate knowledge of the frontier problem and of Afghan passion for independence. Even when Dost Mohammed died in 1863, there was no interference in the war of succession. Lawrence's policy rested on the fulfilment of two conditions:

View

Sir John Lawrence's foreign policy was a policy of self-reliance and self-restraint, of defence not defiance, of waiting and watching that he might be able to strike harder and in the right direction, if the time for aggressive action should ever come.

—R.B. Smith, *Biographer of John Lawrence*

(i) that the peace at the frontier was not disturbed, and (ii) that no candidate in civil war sought foreign help. And as Sher Ali established himself on the throne, Lawrence tried to cultivate friendship with him.

Lytton and the Policy of Proud Reserve

Lytton, a nominee of the Conservative government under Benjamin Disraeli (1874–80), became the Viceroy of India in 1876. He started a new foreign policy of 'proud reserve', which was aimed at having scientific frontiers and safeguarding 'spheres of influence'. According to Lytton, the relations with Afghanistan could no longer be left ambiguous.

Second Anglo-Afghan War (1870–80)

Lytton made an offer of a favourable treaty to Sher Ali, but the Amir wanted friendship with both his powerful neighbours, Russia and British India, while keeping both of them at an arm's length. Later, Sher Ali refused to keep a British envoy in Kabul while having earlier granted a similar concession to the Russians. Lytton was displeased, and when the Russians withdrew their envoy from Kabul, Lytton decided to invade Afghanistan. Sher Ali fled in face of the British invasion, and the Treaty of Gandamak (May 1879) was signed with Yakub Khan, the eldest son of Sher Ali.

Treaty of Gandamak (May 1879) The treaty signed after the Second-Anglo Afghan War provided that:

- the Amir conduct his foreign policy with the advice of the Government of India;
- a permanent British resident be stationed at Kabul; and
- the Government of India give Amir all support against foreign aggression, and an annual subsidy.

But soon, Yakub had to abdicate under popular pressure

and the British had to recapture Kabul and Kandhar. Abdur Rehman became the new Amir. Lytton chalked out a plan for the dismemberment of Afghanistan, but could not carry it out. Ripon abandoned this plan and decided on a policy of keeping Afghanistan as a buffer state.

[After the First World War and the Russian Revolution (1917), the Afghans demanded full independence. Habibullah (who succeeded Abdur Rahman in 1901) was killed in 1919 and the new ruler Amamullah declared open war on the British. Peace came in 1921 when Afghanistan recovered independence in foreign affairs.]

British India and the North-West Frontier

Successive Indian rulers tried to reach out to this region lying between the Indus and Afghanistan in their search for a scientific frontier. The conquest of Sindh (1843) and annexation of Punjab (1849) carried British boundaries beyond the Indus and brought them in contact with Baluch and Pathan tribes, who were mostly independent, but the Amir of Afghanistan claimed nominal suzerainty over them.

During 1891–92 the British occupation of Hunza and Nagar in Gilgit Valley, which were passes commanding communications with Chitral, alarmed Abdur Rahman (Amir of Afghanistan). A compromise was finally reached by drawing a boundary line known as **Durand Line** between Afghan and British territories. Amir received some districts, and his subsidy was increased. But the Durand Agreement (1893) failed to keep peace and soon there were tribal uprisings. To check these, a permanent British garrison was established at Chitral and troops posted to guard Malakand Pass, but tribal uprisings continued till 1898.

Curzon, the viceroy between 1899 and 1905, followed a policy of withdrawal and concentration. British troops withdrew from advanced posts, which were replaced by tribal levies, trained and commanded by British officers. He also encouraged the tribals to maintain peace. He created the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) directly under the

Government of India (earlier, it was under control of the lieutenant-governor of Punjab). Overall, Curzon's policies resulted in a peaceful north-west frontier. The peaceful conditions continued thereafter with occasional tribal uprisings. In January 1932, it was announced that the NWFP was to be constituted as a governor's province. Since 1947, the province belongs to Pakistan.

Summary

Factors Which Gave Success to British in India

Superior Arms
Military Discipline
Civil Discipline
Brilliant Leadership (which did not bother about adopting unscrupulous practices)
Financial Strength
Nationalist Pride

Conflict Between English and Nawabs of Bengal

- Battle of Plassey (June 23, 1757): Robert Clive's victory over Siraj-ud-Daulah laid the territorial foundation of British rule in India.
- Battle of Buxar (1764): Clive's victory over the combined armies of Nawab of Bengal, Nawab of Awadh, and the Mughal Emperor at Buxar laid the real foundation of the English power
- Treaty of Allahabad (1765): Granted the *Diwani* Rights of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to the English.
  (i) Treaty with Nawab of Awadh
  (ii) Treaty with Shah Alam II, Mughal Emperor
- Dual Government—1765–72

British Conquest of Mysore

- First Anglo-Mysore War (1767–69); Treaty of Madras
- Second Anglo-Mysore War (1779–1784); Treaty of Mangalore
- Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790–92); Treaty of Seringapatam
- Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799); Mysore is conquered by British forces

Anglo-Maratha Struggle for Supremacy

- First Anglo-Maratha War (1775–82); Treaty of Surat (1775), Treaty of Purandhar (1776), and Treaty of Salbai (1782)
- Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–05); Treaty of Bassein, 1802

- Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–19)
- Causes for the defeat of the Marathas
  - (i) Inept leadership
  - (ii) Defective nature of state
  - (iii) Loose political set-up
  - (iv) Inferior military system
  - (v) Ustable economic policy
  - (vi) Superior English diplomacy and espionage
  - (vii) Progressive English outlook

Conquest of Sindh (1843)

- Lord Ellenborough was the Governor General of India

Conquest of Punjab

- Treaty of Amritsar (1809), Ranjit Singh, and the British
- First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–46)
- Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848–49)

British Paramountcy in Action

- Ring-fence Policy of Warren Hastings

Subsidiary Alliance of Wellesley

- **Subsidised States:**
  Hyderabad (1798; 1800)
  Mysore (1799)
  Tanjore (October 1799)
  Awadh (November 1801)
  Peshwa (December 1801)
  Bhonsle of Berar (December 1803)
  Sindhia (February 1804)
  Jodhpur (1818)
  Jaipur (1818)
  Macheri (1818)
  Bundi (1818)
  Bharatpur (1818)

Doctrine of Lapse

- **Lapsed States under** Lord Dalhousie (1848-56)
  Satara (1848)
  Sambhalpur (1849)
  Baghat (1850)
  Udaipur (1854)
  Nagpur (1854)
  Jhansi (1854)
  Awadh (1856; on charge of mal-administration)

Relations of British India with Neighbouring Countries

- Anglo-Nepal Relations (Treaty of Sagauli, 1816)
- Anglo-Burma Relations
  First Anglo-Burma War, 1824–26
  Second Anglo-Burma War, 1852
  Third Anglo-Burma War, 1885
- Anglo-Tibetan Relations
  Treaty of Lhasa (1904)
- Anglo-Afghan Relations
  Forward Policy of Auckland
  First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842)
  John Lawrence's Policy of Masterly Inactivity
  Lytton and the Policy of Proud Reserve
  Second Anglo-Afghan War (1870–80)
  Treaty of Gandamak (May 1879)
- North-West Frontier
  Durand Agreement (1893)

UNIT 3

Rising Resentment against Company Rule

Chapters 6 and 7

CHAPTER 6

People's Resistance Against British Before 1857

Most of us think of the 1857 Revolt as the first major show of resentment against the British who were represented by the rule of the East India Company. However, there were many incidents before the 1857 revolt that indicated all was not well and that there was a building resentment against the alien rule. This resentment manifested itself in several bouts of resistance by different groups of people in different regions of India.

People's Resistance: Meaning

In the context of people's resistance against the British rule, the word 'people' encompasses several sections of the Indian society who were affected by the alien rule. The peasants, artisans, tribals, ruling classes (active or dispossessed), military personnel (those under the Company as well as the demobilised soldiers of ex-rulers), religious leaders (Hindu and Muslim), etc., fought for the protection of their interests, at times separately and at times together. The agitation in Benares in 1810 against a house tax imposed by the colonial government, the Surat riots in 1814 against the salt duty, the rising in Bareilly in 1816 against police tax and municipal taxes, are some examples of urban movements in which people from lower strata like artisans, petty shopkeepers, and the urban poor fought together with the prosperous urban gentry. The interests of these resistances differed in the sense that each section had different grievances, but converged on a common objective—to end the British rule.

According to Bipan Chandra, people's resistance took three broad forms: **civil rebellions**, **tribal uprisings,** and **peasant movements**. We have also considered **military revolts** as a form of people's resistance, which involved Indians employed in the Company's forces, to make the study of people's resistance more comprehensive.

Genesis of People's Resistance

In pre-colonial India, people's protests against the rulers and their officials were not uncommon—high land revenue demand by the State, corrupt practices, and hard attitude of the officials being some of the instigating factors. However, the establishment of colonial rule and its policies had a much more annihilative effect on the Indians as a whole. There was no one to hear their grievances or pay attention to their problems. The Company was merely interested in extracting revenue.

The colonial law and judiciary safeguarded the interest of the government and its collaborators—the landlords, the merchants, and the moneylenders. Thus, the people left with no options, chose to take up arms and defend themselves.

The conditions of the tribal people were not different from those of the people living in the mainland, but the encroachment by outsiders into their independent tribal polity made them more aggrieved and violent.

Causative Factors for People's Uprisings

The major factors responsible for the people's resentment and uprisings against the Company rule are as follows:

- Colonial land revenue settlements, heavy burden of new taxes, eviction of peasants from their lands, and encroachments on tribal lands.
- Exploitation in rural society coupled with the growth of intermediary revenue collectors, tenants, and money-lenders.
- Expansion of revenue administration over tribal lands, leading to the loss of tribal people's hold over agricultural and forest land.
- Promotion of British manufactured goods, heavy duties on Indian industries, especially export duties, leading to devastation of Indian handloom and handicraft industries.
- Destruction of indigenous industry leading to migration of workers from industry to agriculture, increasing the pressure on land/agriculture.

Civil Uprisings

The word 'civil' encompasses everything which is not related to defence/military, but here we have included those uprisings which were generally led by deposed native rulers or their descendants, former zamindars, landlords, *poligars* (—in South India, holders of territory or *palayam*, consisting of a few villages granted to them by the rulers—mainly the Nayakas—in return for military service and tribute), ex-retainers and officials of the conquered kingdoms, or sometimes by religious leaders. The mass support generally came from rack-rented peasants, unemployed artisans, and demobilised soldiers, although at the centre of these uprisings were erstwhile power-wielding classes.

Major Causes of Civil Uprisings

- Under the Company rule, there were rapid changes in the economy, administration, and land revenue system that went against the people.

● Several zamindars and *poligars,* who had lost control over their land and its revenues due to the colonial rule, had personal scores to settle with the new rulers.

● The ego of traditional zamindars and *poligars* was hurt due to being sidelined in rank by government officials and a new class comprising of merchants and money-lenders.

● The ruin of Indian handicraft industries due to colonial policies impoverished millions of artisans whose misery was further compounded by the disappearance of their traditional patrons and buyers—princes, chieftains, and *zamindars.*

● The priestly classes instigated hatred and rebellion against alien rule, because the religious preachers, priests, pundits, maulvis, etc., had been dependent on the traditional landed and bureaucratic elite. The fall of zamindars and feudal lords directly affected the priestly class.

● The foreign character of the British rulers, who always remained alien to this land, and their contemptuous treatment of the native people hurt the pride of the latter.

General Characteristics of Civil Uprisings

These uprisings in most cases represented common conditions, though separated in time and place.

The semi-feudal leaders of civil uprisings were backward looking and traditional in outlook. Their basic objective was to restore earlier forms of rule and social relations.

These uprisings were the result of local causes and grievances and were also localised in their consequences.

Important Civil Uprisings

Sanyasi Revolt (1763–1800)

The disastrous famine of 1770 and the harsh economic order of the British compelled a group of sanyasis in Eastern India to fight the British yoke. Originally peasants, even some evicted from land, these sanyasis were joined by a large number of dispossessed small zamindars, disbanded soldiers, and rural poor. They raided Company factories and the treasuries, and fought the Company's forces. It was only after a prolonged action that Warren Hastings could subdue the sanyasis. Equal participation of Hindus and Muslims characterised the uprisings, sometimes referred to as the

Fakir Rebellion. Majnum Shah (or Majnu Shah), Chirag Ali, Musa Shah, Bhawani Pathak, and Debi Chaudhurani were important leaders. Debi Chaudhurani's participation recognises the women's role in early resistances against the British. *Anandamath,* a semi-historical novel by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, is based on the Sanyasi Revolt. Bankim Chandra also wrote a novel, *Devi Chaudhurani,* as he saw the importance of women too taking up the struggle against an alien rule that posed a threat to traditional Indian values.

Revolt in Midnapore and Dhalbhum (1766–74)

The English took hold of Midnapore in 1760 and at that time there were about 3,000 zamindars and talukdars having cordial relations with their ryots. But this harmonious scenario changed after the introduction of new land revenue system by the English in 1772. According to the British governor Vansittart, the zamindars of Midnapore sided with the ryots in case of conflict between the ryots and the English revenue-collecting officials. The zamindars of Dhalbhum, Manbhum, Raipur, Panchet, Jhatibuni, Karnagarh, and Bagri, living in the vast tract of Jungle Mahals of west and north-west Midnapore—were ultimately dispossessed of their zamindaries by 1800s. The important leaders of the uprisings were Damodar Singh and Jagannath Dhal.

Revolt of Moamarias (1769–99)

The revolt of the Moamarias in 1769 was a potent challenge to the authority of Ahom kings of Assam. The Moamarias were low-caste peasants who followed the teachings of Aniruddhadeva (1553–1624), and their rise was similar to that of other low-caste groups in North India. Their revolts weakened the Ahoms and opened the doors for others to attack the region, for instance, in 1792, the King of Darrang (Krishnanarayan), assisted by his band of *burkandazes* (the demobilised soldiers of the Muslim armies and zamindars) revolted. To crush these revolts, the Ahom ruler had to request for British help. The Moamarias made Bhatiapar their headquarters. Rangpur and Jorhat were the most affected region. Although, the Ahom kingdom survived the rebellion, the weakened kingdom fell to a Burmese invasion and finally came under British rule.

Civil Uprisings in Gorakhpur, Basti, and Bahraich (1781)

Warren Hastings, in order to meet the war expenses against the Marathas and Mysore, made a plan to earn money by involving English officers as *izaradars* (revenue farmers) in Awadh. He involved Major Alexander Hannay, who was well acquainted with the region, as an *izaradar* in 1778. Hannay secured the izara of Gorakhpur and Bahraich to the amount of 22 lakh rupees for one year. In fact, it was a secret experiment by the Company to see for itself just how much surplus money was accessible in practice.

However, Hannay's oppression and excessive demand of revenue made the region, which had been in a flourishing state under the Nawab, panic-striken. The zamindars and cultivators rose against the unbearable exactions in 1781, and, within weeks of the initial uprising, all of Hannay's subordinates were either killed or besieged by zamindari guerilla forces. Although the rebellion was suppressed, Hannay was dismissed and his *izara* forcibly removed.

Revolt of Raja of Vizianagaram (1794)

In 1758, a treaty was made between the English and Ananda Gajapatiraju, the ruler of Vizianagaram, to jointly oust the French from the Northern Circars. In this mission they were successful, but the English, as was usual in their case in India, went back on their word to honour the terms of the treaty. Anand Raju died before he could seriously tackle the English. The East India Company went on to demand a tribute of three lakh rupees from Vizayaramaraju, the Raja of Vizianagaram, and asked him to disband his troops. This angered the raja as there were no dues to be paid to the Company. The raja supported by his subjects rose up in revolt. The English captured the raja in 1793 and ordered him to go into exile with a pension. The raja refused. The raja died in a battle at Padmanabham (in modern Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh) in 1794. Vizianagaram came under the Company's rule. Later, the Company offered the estate to the deceased raja's son and reduced the demand for presents.

Revolt of Dhundia in Bednur (1799–1800)

After the conquest of Mysore in 1799, the English had to confront many native leaders. Dhundia Wagh, a local Maratha

leader, who was converted to Islam by Tipu Sultan and put into jail due to his misadventures, got released with the fall of Seringapatam. Very soon, Dhundia organised a force, which consisted of anti-British elements, and carved out a small territory for himself. A defeat by the English in August 1799 forced him to take refuge in Maratha region from where he instigated the disappointed princes to fight against the English and he himself took on the leadership. In September 1800, he was killed while fighting against the British forces under Wellesley. Though Dhundia failed, he became a venerated leader of the masses.

Resistance of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja (1797; 1800–05)

Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja, popularly known as *Kerala Simham* (Lion of Kerala) or 'Pyche raja', was the de facto head of Kottayam (Cotiote) in Malabar region. Apart from resisting Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, Kerala Varma fought against the British between 1793 and 1805.

The Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790–92) extended English paramountcy over Kottayam in violation of an earlier agreement of 1790 which had recognised the independence of Kottayam. The English appointed Vira Varma, the uncle of Pazhassi Raja, as the Raja of Kottayam. The new raja, to meet the revenue target fixed by the Company, levied exorbitant rates of tax on the peasants. This led to a mass resistance by the peasants under the leadership of Pazhassi Raja in 1793. Pazhassi Raja fought bravely using guerilla warfare, and, in 1797, a peace treaty was made. But a conflict over a dispute on Wayanad in 1800 started an insurgent warfare. Pazhassi Raja organised a large force of Nairs which was supplemented by Mappilas and Pathans, the latter being demobilised soldiers of Tipu who had become unemployed after Tipu's death. In November 1805, the *Kerala Simham* died in a gunfight at Mavila Todu near present-day Kerala-Karnataka border.

Civil Rebellion in Awadh (1799)

Wazir Ali Khan, the fourth Nawab of Awadh, with the help of the British, had ascended the throne in September 1797. But, very soon, his relations with the British became sour

and he got replaced by his uncle, Saadat Ali Khan II. Wazir Ali Khan was granted a pension in Benares. However, in January 1799, he killed a British resident, George Frederick Cherry, who had invited him to lunch. Wazir Ali's guards killed two other Europeans and even attacked the Magistrate of Benares. The whole incident became famous as the **Massacre of Benares**. Wazir Ali was able to assemble an army of several thousand men, which was defeated by General Erskine. Wazir Ali fled to Butwal and was granted asylum by the ruler of Jaipur. Arthur Wellesley requested the Raja of Jaipur to extradite Wazir Ali. Wazir Ali was extradited on the condition that he would neither be hanged nor be put in fetters. After surrender in December 1799, he was placed in confinement at Fort William, Calcutta.

Uprisings in Ganjam and Gumsur (1800, 1835–37)

In the Northern Circars, Ganjam and its adjoining regions rose in revolt against the British rule. Strikara Bhanj, a zamindar of Gumsur in Ganjam district, refused to pay revenues in 1797. In 1800, he openly rebelled and defied the public authorities. Snodgrass, an oppressive and corrupt collector, was replaced to suppress the insurrection. Strikara was joined by Jlani Deo of Vizianagar (Poddakimedi) and Jagannath Deo of Pratapgiri (Chinakimedi). In 1804, Jagannath Deo was captured and sent to Masulipatnam. But the English had to assign certain districts to Strikara Bhanj. In 1807–08, Dhananjaya Bhanj, son of Strikara, forced his father to leave the estate. Dhananjaya rebelled against the English but was forced to surrender in June 1815.

Strikara, who had returned to Ganjam, was reappointed as the zamindar in a compromise with the government. He managed the estate between 1819 and 1830 but, failing to liquidate the arrears, retired in favour of his son, Dhananjay. However, unable to pay the enormous arrears, Dhananjay Bhanj rose in rebellion for the second time when the British forces occupied Gumsur and Kolaida in November 1835. The revolt greatly reduced the government's authority, but Dhananjay died in December 1835 and his followers continued the resistance. The government appointed Russell, with full discretionary powers, to deal with the situation. The struggle

lasted till February 1837, when Doora Bisayi, a formidable leader, was arrested. The zamindari of Gumsur was forfeited.

Uprisings in Palamau (1800–02)

The political situation of Palamau was complicated by the crises of agrarian landlordism and feudal system. In 1800, Bhukhan Singh, a Chero chief, rose in rebellion. Colonel Jones camped for two years in Palamau and Sarguja to suppress the rebellion. Bhukhan Singh died in 1802, and, subsequently, the insurrection calmed down.

Poligars' Revolt (1795–1805)

The poligars (or palayakkarargal) of South India gave a stiff resistance to the British between 1795 and 1805. The main centres of these strong uprisings were Tinneveli (or Thirunelveli), Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Sivagiri, Madurai, and North Arcot. The problem started in 1781, when the Nawab of Arcot gave the management and control of Tinneveli and the Carnatic Provinces to the East India Company. This arrangement caused resentment among the poligars who had, for long, considered themselves as independent sovereign authorities within their respective territories. The first revolt of the poligars against the Company was basically over taxation, but had a larger political dimension in that the English considered and treated the poligars as enemies. **Kattabomman Nayakan**, the poligar of Panjalankurichi, led the insurrection between 1795 and 1799. After a fierce battle in which the Company forces were defeated by Veerapandiya Kattabomman, a price was put on the latter's head. This led to greater rebellion by the poligars. With reinforcements, the Company forces were finally able to defeat Kattabomman. Kattabomman fled into the Pudukottai forests. Once again a betrayal—this time by Ettappan, the Raja of Pudukottai, who entered into an agreement with the British—led to the capture of Kattabomman. Kattabomman was hanged in a conspicuous place. A close associate, Subramania Pillai was also hanged and Soundara Pandian, another rebel, brutally killed. The *palayam* of Panjalankurichi and the estates of five other poligars who had joined the rebellion were confiscated and the prominent poligars executed or sent to prison.

The second phase, which was more violent than the

previous one, started in February 1801 when the poligars imprisoned in the fort of Palamcotta were able to escape. The rebels took control of many forts and even captured Tuticorin. The British forces were soon reinforced from Malabar. The fugitives led by Oomathurai, brother of Kattabomman, who fled to Sivaganga in Ramnad joined the rebellion of the 'Marudus' led by Marathu Pandian which was suppressed in October 1801. The fort of Panjalankurichi was razed to the ground and the name of the place was expunged from all the documents of the district. Meanwhile, the nawab surrendered the civil and military administration of all the territories and dependencies of the Carnatic exclusively to the Company in perpetuity.

Between 1803 and 1805, the poligars of North Arcot rose in rebellion, when they were deprived of their right to collect the *kaval* fees. (*Kaval* or 'watch' was an ancient institution of Tamil Nadu. It was a hereditary village police office with specified rights and responsibilities.) The region was in a lawless condition, particularly in the palayams of Chittur and Chandragiri. The poligar of Yedaragunta, who proved most daring and desperate among the insurgent chiefs, was joined by the dispossessed poligar of Charagallu. By February 1805, the rebels were suppressed. Several chiefs were ordered to reside in Madras, while some others were granted an allowance of 18 per cent upon revenues of their estates.

The poligar rebellion spread over a vast area of South India. The proclamations by the rebels, says A. Shunmugaiah, indicate that they believed in a mass movement against the alien rule, seeking independence of them.

Uprisings in Haryana Region (1803-1810)

The region of the present-day Haryana, with other possessions of Scindia, was taken over by the British East India Company by the treaty of Surji-Arjungaon in 1803. But the people of this region opposed the new set up. There was strong opposition to Company rule from the Sikh chiefs of Ambala, Karnal, and Thanesar. In the western Haryana region, opposition to the British was organised by the Muslim Bhatti Rajputs under the leadership of Zabita Khan of Sirsa and Rania and Khan Bahadur Khan of Fatehabad against the British. After

a number of failed efforts to subdue the uprising, a large contingent under Col. Adams is said to have been sent by the British in November 2009 to attack Fatehabad, Sirsa, and Rania. The British were victorious in all the battles during this expedition. The people of the region comprising Rohtak, Bhiwani, and the eastern part of Hisar were not ready to accept the authority of the rulers chosen by the Company. They continued with their rebellion against the British. Lord Minto, the Governor General, advised military action against the rebels. The British Resident at Delhi, Archibald Seton, sent a big force under the charge of Gardiner, Assistant to the Resident at Delhi in March 1810 to subdue the rebelling people, mainly Jats and Ranghars. The people of Bhiwani managed to check the advance of the British for a short while, but the British with their heavy artillery breached the walls of the town and soon captured Bhiwani after a bloody battle. The fort of Hansi was converted into a military cantonment.

Diwan Velu Thampi's Revolt (1808–09)

The East India Company's harsh conditions imposed on the state of Travancore, after both of them agreed to a subsidiary alliance arrangement under Wellesley in 1805, caused deep resentment in the region. The ruler was not able to pay the subsidy and fell in arrears. The British resident of Travancore was meddling in the internal affairs of the state. The high-handed attitude of the Company compelled Prime Minister (or Dalawa) Velu Thampi to rise against the Company, assisted by the Nair troops. Velu Thampi addressed a gathering in Kundara, openly calling for taking up arms against the British to oust them from the native soil. This was later known as the **Kundara Proclamation**. There was large-scale rebellion against the British as a result. A large military operation had to be undertaken to restore peace. The Maharaja of Travancore had not wholly supported the rebellion and defected to the side of the Company. Velu Thampi killed himself to avoid capture. The rebellion petered out.

Disturbances in Bundelkhand (1808–12)

The vast province of Bundelkhand, conquered by the British during the Second Anglo-Maratha Wars (1803–05), was put within the Presidency of Bengal. The Bundela chiefs offered resistance to the new government as long as they could fight

from their forts, numbering nearly 150. The first major resistance came from Lakshaman Dawa, the killadar (fort commander) of Ajaygarh Fort. Lakshman was permitted to retain the fort as a temporary arrangement for two years ending in 1808, but he wanted to continue his hold after the expiry of the term. He surrendered in February 1809 and was taken to Calcutta. The next resistance came from Killadar of Kalanjar, Darya Singh, which was suppressed in January 1812. But the most serious threat came from a famous military adventurer named Gopal Singh, who had a dispute with his uncle who was supported by the British. For four years, Gopal Singh eluded all vigilance and military tactics of British forces. To put a stop to these disturbances, the British had to adopt a policy of binding down the hereditary chieftains of Bundelkhand by a series of contractual obligations—*Ikarnamahs.*

Parlakimedi Outbreak (1813–34)

Parlakimedi, situated in the western border of Ganjam district (now in Odisha), witnessed resistance from the zamindars and rajas. When the Company acquired Ganjam, Narayan Deo was the raja of Parlakimedi, whose resistance forced the British to dispatch an army under Colonel Peach. Peach defeated Narayan Deo in 1768 and made Gajapathi Deo (son of Narayan) a zamindar. But Narayan Deo, supported by his son and brothers, revolted again. As the resistance failed to calm down, the Presidency of Madras appointed George Russell as commissioner of the region in 1832. Russell, provided with full-fledged powers to suppress the revolt, pacified the region by 1834.

Kutch or Cutch Rebellion (1816–32)

There was a treaty between the British and Maharaja Bharamal II of Kutch in 1816, by which power was vested in the throne. There was, however, a power struggle between the maharaja and a group of chieftains.

The British interfered in the internal feuds of the Kutch and, in 1819, Raja Bharmal II raised Arab and African troops with the firm intention of removing the British from his territory. The chieftains ranged on his side. The British defeated and deposed the Kutch ruler Rao Bharamal in favour

of his infant son. A British resident governed the areas as the *de facto* ruler with the help of a regency council. The administrative innovations made by the regency council, coupled with excessive land assessment caused deep resentment. In the meanwhile, some of the chieftains continued their rebellion against alien rule. The news of the British reverses in the Burma War emboldened the chiefs to rise in revolt and demand the restoration of Bharamal II. After extensive military operations failed to control the situation, the Company's authorities were compelled to follow a conciliatory policy.

Rising at Bareilly (1816)

The immediate cause of upsurge was the imposition of the police tax which aroused the burning indignation of the citizens. The issue became religious when Mufti Muhammad Aiwaz, a venerated old man, gave a petition to the magistrate of the town in March 1816.

The situation aggravated further when the police, while collecting tax, injured a woman. This event led to a bloody scuffle between the followers of the Mufti and the police. Within two days of the event, several armed Muslims from Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur, and Rampur rose in rebellion for the defence of the faith and the Mufti. In April 1816, the insurgents murdered the son of Leycester (judge of provincial court of Bareilly). The uprising could only be suppressed with heavy deployment of military forces in which more than 300 rebels were killed and even more wounded and imprisoned. The upsurge seems to have been the product more of discontent than of actual grievance—the elements of discontent lying in the very nature of the alien administration.

Upsurge in Hathras (1817)

Dayaram, a talukdar of several villages in the district of Aligarh, had a strong base in the fort of Hathras. The fort, considered to be among the strongest in India—a 'second Bharatpur'—had walls of great height, and thickness, defended by a deep ditch and artillery mounted at the top. The English had concluded the settlement of Hathras estate with Dayaram as a farmer. But due to progressively increasing high revenues, Dayaram constantly failed to pay arrears and even

committed many acts of hostility by giving harbour to government fugitives. So, the Company with a large army attacked Hathras in February 1817. Dayaram fought bravely for more than 15 days and escaped unharmed. But, ultimately, he was obliged to come back on the condition of submission and settled down with a pension. Another noted rebel Bhagwant Singh, Raja of Mursan, frightened to dismantle his fort, submitted to the government.

Paika Rebellion (1817)

The Paiks of Odisha were the traditional landed militia ('foot soldiers' literally) and enjoyed rent-free land tenures for their military service and policing functions on a hereditary basis. The English Company's conquest of Odisha in 1803, and the dethronement of the Raja of Khurda had greatly reduced the power and prestige of the Paiks. Further, the extortionist land revenue policy of the Company caused resentment among zamindars and peasants alike. Common masses were affected by the rise in prices of salt due to taxes imposed on it, abolition of cowrie currency, and the requirement of payment of taxes in silver, etc.

Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar had been the military chief of the forces of the Raja of Khurda. In 1814, Jagabandhu's ancestral estate of Killa Rorang was taken over by the Company, reducing him to penury. The spark was lighted by the arrival of a body of Khonds from Gumsur into the Khurda territory in March 1817. With active support of Mukunda Deva, the last Raja of Khurda, and other zamindars of the region, Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar led a sundry army of Paikas forcing the East India Company forces to retreat for a time. The rebellion came to be known as the Paika Bidroh (rebellion). The initial success of the rebels set the whole province covering Odisha in arms against the British government for some time. Jagabandhu, declared an outlaw, along with other rebels, was sheltered by the Raja of Nayagarh. Although Dinabandhu Santra and his group surrendered in November 1818, Jagabandhu evaded British vigilance. In spite of rewards offered, none of the people of the province betrayed their leaders. Though Khurda was back under Company control by mid-1817, the Paika rebels

resorted to guerilla tactics. The rebellion was brutally repressed by 1818. Priests at the Puri temple who had sheltered Jagabandhu were caught and hanged. Paikas on the whole suffered greatly. In 1825, Jagabandhu surrendered under negotiated terms. (Some sources say he was captured and died in captivity in 1829.)

The Paika Rebellion succeeded in getting large remissions of arrears, reductions in assessments, suspension of the sale of the estates of defaulters at discretion, a new settlement on fixed tenures, and other adjuncts of a liberal governance.

Waghera Rising (1818–20)

Resentment against the alien rule, coupled with the exactions of the Gaekwad of Baroda supported by the British government, compelled the Waghera chiefs of Okha Mandal to take up arms. The Wagheras carried out inroads into British territory during 1818–19. A peace treaty was signed in November 1820.

Ahom Revolt (1828)

The British had pledged to withdraw from Assam after the First Burma War (1824–26). But, after the war, instead of withdrawing, the British attempted to incorporate the Ahoms' territories in the Company's dominion. This sparked off a rebellion in 1828 under the leadership of Gomdhar Konwar, an Ahom prince, alongwith compatriots, such as Dhanjay Borgohain, and Jairam Khargharia Phukan. Assembling near Jorhat, the rebels formally made Gomdhar Konwar the king. Finally, the Company decided to follow a conciliatory policy and handed over Upper Assam to Maharaja Purandar Singh Narendra and part of the kingdom was restored to the Assamese king.

Surat Salt Agitations (1840s)

A strong anti-British sentiment resulted in attacks by the local Surat population on the Europeans in 1844 over the issue of the government's step to raise the salt duty from 50 paise to one rupee. Faced with a popular movement, the government withdrew the additional salt levy. Again in 1848, the government was forced to withdraw its measure to introduce Bengal Standard Weights and Measures in face of

people's determined bid to resort to boycott and passive resistance.

Kolhapur and Savantvadi Revolts

The Gadkaris were a hereditary military class which was garrisoned in the Maratha forts. These garrisons were disbanded during administrative reorganisation in Kolhapur state after 1844. Facing the spectre of unemployment, the Gadkaris rose in revolt and occupied the Samangarh and Bhudargarh forts. Similarly, the simmering discontent caused a revolt in Savantvadi areas. The people here had already revolted against the British in 1830, 1836, and 1838, the last because the British had deposed their ruler. The British authorities introduced many laws to bring the region under control.

Wahabi Movement

The Wahabi Movement was essentially an Islamic revivalist movement founded by Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareilly who was inspired by the teachings of Abdul Wahab (1703–87) of Saudi Arabia and Shah Waliullah of Delhi. Syed Ahmed condemned the Western influence on Islam and advocated a return to pure Islam and society as it was in the Arabia of the Prophet's time.

Syed Ahmed was acclaimed as the desired leader (Imam). A countrywide organisation with an elaborate secret code for its working under spiritual vice-regents (Khalifas) was set up, and Sithana in the north-western tribal belt was chosen as a base for operations. In India, its important centre was at Patna though it had its missions in Hyderabad, Madras, Bengal, United Provinces, and Bombay. Since Dar al-Harb (territory of war or chaos) was to be converted into Dar al-Islam (the land of Islam), a *jihad* was declared against the Sikh kingdom of Punjab. After the defeat of the Sikh ruler and incorporation of Punjab into the East India Company's dominion in 1849, the English dominion in India became the sole target of the Wahabis' attacks.

The Wahabis played an important role in spreading anti-British sentiments. A series of military operations by the British in the 1860s on the Wahabi base in Sithana and various court cases of sedition on the Wahabis weakened the Wahabi resistance, although sporadic encounters with the authorities continued into the 1880s and 1890s.

Kuka Movement

The Kuka Movement was founded in 1840 by Bhagat Jawahar Mal (also called Sian Saheb) in western Punjab. A major leader of the movement after him was Baba Ram Singh. (He founded the Namdhari Sikh sect.) After the British took Punjab, the movement got transformed from a religious purification campaign to a political campaign. Its basic tenets were abolition of caste and similar discriminations among Sikhs, discouraging the consumption of meat and alcohol and drugs, permission for intermarriages, widow remarriage, and encouraging women to step out of seclusion. On the political side, the Kukas wanted to remove the British and restore Sikh rule over Punjab; they advocated wearing hand-woven clothes and boycott of English laws and education and products. So, the concepts of Swadeshi and non-cooperation were propagated by the Kukas, much before they became part of the Indian national movement in the early 20th century. As the movement gained in popularity, the British took several steps to crush it in the period between 1863 and 1872.

In 1872, Ram Singh was deported to Rangoon.

Peasant Movements with Religious Overtones

Peasant uprisings were protests against evictions, increase in rents of land, and the moneylenders' greedy ways; and their aim was occupancy rights for peasants among other things. They were revolts and rebellions of the peasants themselves though led by local leaders in many cases. The peasant movements in India till the outbreak of the Revolt of 1857 (and in its immediate aftermath) are given below.

Narkelberia Uprising

Mir Nithar Ali (1782–1831) or Titu Mir inspired the Muslim tenants in West Bengal to rise against landlords, mainly Hindu, who imposed a beard-tax on the Faraizis and British indigo planters. Often considered the first armed peasant uprising against the British, this revolt soon took on a religious hue. The revolt later merged into the Wahabi Movement.

The Pagal Panthis

The Pagal Panthi, a semi-religious group mainly constituting the Hajong and Garo tribes of Mymensingh district (earlier in Bengal), was founded by Karam Shah. But the tribal peasants organised themselves under Karam Shah's son, Tipu, to fight the oppression of the zamindars. From 1825 to 1835, the Pagal Panthis refused to pay rent above a certain limit and attacked the houses of zamindars. The government introduced an equitable arrangement to protect these peasants, but the movement was violently suppressed.

Faraizi Revolt

The Faraizis were the followers of a Muslim sect founded by Haji Shariatullah of Faridpur in Eastern Bengal. They advocated radical religious, social, and political changes. Shariatullah and his son Muhsinuddin Ahmad, popularly known as Dudu Miyan (1819–62) organised their followers with an aim to expel the English intruders from Bengal. The sect also supported the cause of the tenants against the zamindars. The Faraizi disturbances continued from 1838 to 1857. Most of the Faraizis joined the Wahabi ranks.

Moplah Uprisings

Hike in revenue demand and reduction of field size, coupled with the oppression of officials, resulted in widespread peasant unrest among the Moplahs of Malabar. Twenty-two rebellions took place between 1836 and 1854. None, however, proved successful.

(The second Moplah uprising occurred after the Moplahs came to be organised by the Congress and the Khilafat supporters during the Non-Cooperation Movement. But Hindu-Muslim differences distanced the Congress and the Moplahs from each other. By 1921, the Moplahs had been subdued.)

Peasants' Role in the 1857 Revolt

Peasant participation was active only in some areas affected by the 1857 rebellion, mainly those in western Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, the peasants united with the local feudal leaders in many places to fight against foreign rule. After the revolt, the plight of the peasants worsened with the British Government's decision to gain the support of the landed

classes while ignoring the peasants. Occupancy peasants' interests suffered. In Avadh, for instance, land was restored to the taluqdars and they were given revenue and other powers as well, and the peasants could not avail of the provisions of the 1859 Bengal Rent Act. As a punishment for their participation in the 1857 revolt, the peasants had to pay an additional cess in some regions.

Tribal Revolts

Tribal movements under British rule were the most frequent, militant, and violent of all movements.

Different Causes for Mainland and North-Eastern Tribal Revolts

The tribal movements can be analysed better if categorised into mainland tribal revolts, and frontier tribal revolts concentrated mainly in the north-eastern part of India.

The mainland tribal rebellions were sparked off by a number of factors, an important one concerned with the tribal lands or forests.

The land settlements of the British affected the joint ownership tradition among the tribals and disrupted their social fabric.

As agriculture was extended in a settled form by the Company government, the tribals lost their land, and there was an influx of non-tribals to these areas.

Shifting cultivation in forests was curbed and this added to the tribals' problems. The government further extended its control over the forest areas by setting up reserved forests and restricting timber use and grazing. This was the result of the increasing demand from the Company for timber—for shipping and the railways.

Exploitation by the police, traders, and moneylenders (most of them 'outsiders') aggravated the tribals' sufferings.

Some general laws were also abhorred for their intrusive nature as the tribals had their own customs and traditions.

With the expansion of colonialism, Christian missionaries came to these regions and their efforts interfered with the traditional customs of the tribals. The missionaries,

perceived as representatives of the alien rule, were resented by the tribals.

The movements of the tribes of the north-eastern frontier were different from the non-frontier tribal revolts in some aspects.

For one thing, the tribes which shared tribal and cultural links with countries across the border did not concern themselves much with the nationalist struggle. Their revolts were often in favour of political autonomy within the Indian Union or complete independence.

Secondly, these movements were not forest-based or agrarian revolts as these tribals were generally in control of land and forest area. The British entered the north-eastern areas much later than the non-frontier tribal areas.

Thirdly, the frontier tribal revolts under the British continued for a longer time than the non-frontier tribal movements. De-sanskritisation movements also spread among the frontier tribals. The Meiteis organised a movement during Churchand Maharaja's rule (between 1891 and 1941) to denounce the malpractices of the neo-Vaishnavite Brahmins. Sanskritisation movements were almost totally absent in the north-east frontier region in the colonial period.

Characteristics of Tribal Revolts

There were some common characteristics of the tribal uprisings even though they were separated from one another in time and space.

- Tribal identity or ethnic ties lay behind the solidarity shown by these groups. Not all 'outsiders' were, however, seen as enemies: the poor who lived by their manual labour or profession and had a socially/economically supportive role in the village were left alone; the violence was directed towards the moneylenders and traders who were seen as extensions of the colonial government.
- A common cause was the resentment against the imposition of laws by the 'foreign government' that was seen as an effort at destroying the tribals' traditional socio-economic framework.
- Erosion of the tribal rights over land and forest because of the rules imposed by the British was at the root of many tribal movements. As land came to be seen as private

property and market forces came to dominate, there was large-scale alienation of land from the tribes as the non-tribe people slowly took over the land; this was especially so after the building of roads and railways linked tribal areas.

● Many uprisings were led by messiah-like figures who encouraged their people to revolt and who held out the promise that they could end their suffering brought about by the 'outsiders'.

● The tribal uprisings were doomed from the beginning, given the outdated arms they fought with as against the modern weapons and techniques used by their opponents.

Important Tribal Movements of the Mainland

Some of the important tribal movements are discussed below. It may be noted that most tribal movements, if we leave out the frontier tribal areas, were concentrated in central India, the west-central region, and the south.

The tribals of Chotanagpur and Santhal Pargana in the region that is now known as Jharkhand have a long history of resistance against the British administration and its non-tribal collaborators, such as the jagirdars and zamindars.

The Pahariyas

The hill folk who lived around the Rajmahal hills were known as the Pahariyas. They subsisted on forest produce and practised shifting cultivation. These people considered the entire region as their land and they were hostile to the intrusion of outsiders. The Paharias had always maintained their independence before the British came because of their geographical isolation. As their means of subsistence was not adequate, especially in years of scarcity, the Paharias often raided the plains occupied by settled agriculturists. These raids also symbolised a way of asserting power over the settled communities. The zamindars on the plains generally paid a regular tribute to the Pahariyas to buy peace even as traders paid the hill chiefs to be permitted to use the passes controlled by them. However, this rather brittle peace negotiation disintegrated in the last decades of the eighteenth

century when settled agriculture was expanded in eastern India with the British encouraging forest clearance. With the extension of settled agriculture, the area under forests and pastures was reduced, increasing the conflict between hill folk and settled cultivators. The Pahariyas now raided settled villages more often. In the 1770s, the British resorted to a brutal attack on the Pahariyas, aimed at hunting them down and killing them. The Pahariyas rebellion of 1778 led by Raja Jagganath is notable. In the 1780s, the British initiated a policy of pacification; Paharia chiefs were given an annual allowance in return for ensuring that their men conducted themselves properly. Not all Pahariyas were ready to accept this policy. Some of them withdrew deep into the mountains, hiding away from hostile forces, and continuing the war against the *diku* or 'outsiders'.

The Revolt led by Tilka Manjhi

The British faced much opposition and rebellion in Santhal Pargana under the leadership of Tilka Majhi (or Manjhi), a Santhal whose real name is said to have been Jabra Paharia. Tilka was against the British policy of divide and rule. Tilka Manjhi is reputed to have moved in the hills around Sultanganj, coming down to attack the boats of the East India Company moving along the Ganga and loot the British treasury. He was also reputed to have shared the loot with the poor. The guerrilla warfare that he organised had many Santhal women also participating in it. There were many encounters in the jungles of the Tarai region between Tilka Manjhi and his followers and the British soldiers. In 1778, Tilka is said to have taken the Ramgarh Camp from the British after forming a joint front with the Paharia Sardars. In 1784, Tilka led his followers to attack Bhagalpur; Tilka is said to have shot the British magistrate of Rajmahal, Augustus Cleveland. The British made a concerted attack on Manjhi and his followers, finally capturing Manjhi and hanging him in 1785. Manjhi is considered to be the first Adivasi leader to take up arms against the British.

The main reason for the revolt led by Tilka was the

policy of exploitation, extortion, and harassment by revenue collectors, police officers, and the agents of the landlords. Moreover, the drought of 1770 led to starvation in the region and consequent protests, a situation to which the British responded with more oppression.

Jungle Mahal Revolt or the Chuar Uprising

Jungle–or Jungal–Mahals is the name given to an indefinite administrative unit lying between the Chota Nagpur and the plains of Bengal. Later this area came to be identified as made up of some parganas in Birbhum, Bankura, and Midnapore. (Because of the continued disturbances of the Bhumij, it was split amongst the neighbouring districts in 1833.)

According to J.C. Jha, the Chuars were the Bhumij tribals belonging originally to the Mundari main stock. After moving away from the Chotanagpur plateau, they settled in large numbers in Midnapur, Bankura, and Purulia districts of Bengal.

These people were basically farmers and hunters; some of them worked under the local zamindars. The Chuars were prominent in Manbhum and Barabhum, especially in the hills between Barabhum and Ghatsila. They held their lands under a kind of feudal tenure, but were not strongly attached to the soil, being always ready to change from farming to hunting, at the bidding of their jungle chiefs or zamindars. These jungle zamindars used to hire paiks (guards who policed the village) from among the Chuars. The head paiks were known as the sardars.

The Chuar uprisings occurred in phases, each one with its own characteristics, leaders, and epicentre.

The first Chuar rebellion broke out as a reaction to the increase of the revenue of the jungle zamindars. The revenue was difficult to raise as the jungle territory yielded little. Moreover, in 1767, the British resident of Midnapur was instructed to demolish their mud forts, something that offended the zamindars.

In 1768, Jagannath Singh, the zamindar of Ghatsila, (or

the king of Dhalbhum) went up in arms, along with thousands of Chuar followers. The Company government capitulated. In 1771, the Chuar sardars, Shyam Ganjan of Dhadka, Subla Singh of Kaliapal, and Dubraj rose in rebellion. This time, however, the rebellion was suppressed.

The most significant uprising was under Durjan (or Durjol) Singh in 1798. The revenue and administrative policies of the East India Company (the Permanent Settlement being one of them) as well as the police regulations imposed in rural Bengal made the system of hiring local paiks redundant as they came to be replaced by professional police. The aggrieved paiks and ordinary Chuars joined hands with the jungle zamindars in the Chuar rebellion of 1798. Durjan Singh was the zamindar of Raipur from which he was dispossessed owing to the operations of Bengal Regulations. In May 1798, his followers, a body of 1,500 Chuars, indulged in violent activities in Raipur to halt the auction of the estate of Raipur. The revolt was brutally suppressed by the British in 1799. Other leaders of the Chuars were Madhab Singh, the brother of the raja of Barabhum; Raja Mohan Singh, zamindar of Juriah; and Lachman Singh of Dulma.

All the people in the uprisings were somehow associated with the land: zamindars, paiks, and ordinary Chuars. One could say there was a clash of ways of life. The rebels had so far been living in an agrarian society, in a closed community. The intrusion by colonial forces into their lands exposed them to a new situation which upset their way of life. Also, they were not prepared to accept the outsiders (or non-Adivasis).

(The term 'Chuar' is considered derogatory by some historians who call this the **Revolt of the Jungle Mahal**, instead.)

Tamar Revolt

The tribals of Tamar (in Chotanagpur region) rose in revolt in 1798 under Bholanath Sahay. (In some sources, he is named Bholanath Singh.) The uprising was in reaction to the faulty and alien systems imposed by the British. The Munda

tribals and their chiefs joined forces with Bholanath. The revolt expressed anger against the *diku.* The uprising was firmly suppressed by an expedition led by Lt. Cooper. There were several more revolts by the tribals of Tamar.

Kol Mutiny (1831)

The Kols, alongwith other tribes, are inhabitants of Chhotanagpur. This covered Ranchi, Singhbhum, Hazaribagh, Palamau, and the western parts of Manbhum. The trouble in 1831 started with large-scale transfers of land from Kol headmen to outsiders like Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim farmers and moneylenders who were oppressive and demanded heavy taxes. Besides, the British judicial and revenue policies badly affected the traditional social conditions of the Kols. The Kols resented this, and, in 1831, under the leadership of Buddho Bhagat, the Kol rebels killed or burnt about a thousand outsiders. Only after large-scale military operations could order be restored.

Ho and Munda Uprisings (1820–37)

The Raja of Parahat organised his Ho tribals to revolt against the occupation of Singhbhum (now in Jharkhand). The revolt continued till 1827 when the Ho tribals were forced to submit. However, later in 1831, they again organised a rebellion, joined by the Mundas of Chotanagpur, to protest against the newly introduced farming revenue policy and the entry of Bengalis into their region. Though the revolt was extinguished in 1832, the Ho operations continued till 1837. Nor were the Mundas to be quiet for long.

The Santhal Rebellions (1833; 1855–56)

It needs to be noted that the Santhals moved into the Rajmahal area in the late 1770s and early 1780s from the region of Cuttack, Dhalbhum, Manbhum, Hazaribagh, and Midnapore. They showed a willingness to give up a nomadic life and lead a settled life. They were ready to clear the forests, plough the land, and grow crops. This suited the British interests; the Company wanted more revenue from land and more crops for export. The British, therefore, persuaded the Santhals to settle in the foothills of Rajmahal. But a feud between the

Some Tribal Movements after 1857

Though this chapter is basically about the uprisings before the 1857 Revolt, it cannot be forgotten that some tribal revolts continued to take place after 1857. Some of these are discussed below.

Bokta Rising, Sardari Larai, or Mukti Larai Movement Chotanagpur was the scene of this movement between 1858 and 1895. It was aimed at regaining the tribals' age old right over land by pushing out the landlords. In the earlier phases of the revolt, the tribal tenants rose against the landlords because of the increased rent, eviction from land, and harassment by the landlords. Later, in the 1890s, the Sardar movement turned against all Europeans as they were suspected to be colluding with the landlords. British rule was perceived to be at the root of the problems faced by the tribals, therefore it had to end. When constitutional methods got little result, the tribals took to violence, using their traditional weapons such as bows and arrows. But the struggle lacked organisation and a good leader.

Birsa Munda Revolt In the 1890s, Birsa Munda emerged at the head of a movement of the Munda tribes of SInghbhum and Ranchi districts of Chotanagpur region. The *Ulgulan* ('Great Tumult'), as this movement was called, and which was aimed at getting independence establishing a Munda Raj, went on in phases right into the twentieth century. With the coming of the British, the traditional ways of the tribals both with regard to their social customs and with regard to land were drastically affected as the British policies introduced the zamindari system with the new classes of landlords and tenants. The tribals were now forced to pay rent to the landlords and failure to do so resulted in their eviction from land. Paying rent meant increasing dependence on usurious moneylenders and ultimately debt. Resenting the harassment by the landlords, who were encroaching the tribal land and often pushed them into *begar* (forced labour), besides using brute force, the Munda tribals rose in revolt under Birsa Munda. The objective was to attain religious and political independence. The arrest and conviction of Birsa to two years of imprisonment by the British made the rebels more determined to go ahead with the movement which now took to violence. The revolt broke out in December 1899 and was directed against the *dikus* who included Christian missionaries as well as the much-hated landlords, contractors, police, and government officials. The British response was ruthless suppression. Birsa was arrested in 1900 and died of illness. Many rebels who were arrested were imprisoned and sentenced to death. The movement was, thus, weakened.

Following the Birsa Movement, the authorities felt that the interests of the tribals needed to be safeguarded. The government decided to abolish the compulsory *begar* system and passed the Tenancy Act of 1903 under which the Mundas' Khuntkatti system was recognised. The Chotanagpur Tenancy Act was passed in 1908. Birsa assumed legendary fame, and his movement was an inspiration for the social, religious, and political movements of tribals in the future.

Tana Bhagat Movement A young man, Jatra Oraon of Ranchi, proclaimed in April 1914 that he had been divinely ordained to become a king and his followers in his kingdom would be the Tana Bhagats. Tana Bhagats were called upon to discard earthly possessions such as agricultural implements and reject practices such as spirit worship and sacrifice. They sought to reorder the Oraon society. The Tana Bhagat Movement in the official history of the state of Jharkhand is represented as having been initiated by Jatra Oraon in 1914, and later led by Sibu Oraon in 1919. It was part of the agrarian discontent in Jharkhand against the imposition of *begar* and the illegal increase in rent by the zamindars and intermediary tenure-holders with whom the colonial state collaborated. They opposed moneylenders as well as missionaries. The Tana Bhagats conducted a satyagraha even before Gandhi's satyagraha movement. They differed from the movements led by Sido and Kanhu Murmu or Birsa Munda in that they were primarily religious and nonviolent. In 1921, during the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Tana Bhagats were drawn into the organisational fold of the Congress.

Devi Movement The Devi movement was initially a social movement among the tribals of South Gujarat in 1922-23. It was initiated by the assumption that Devi Salabai was commanding the tribals to abstain from eating flesh and drinking liquor and to wash and be clean. By December 1922, the movement spread over the region inhabited by the tribals as well as Surat city. This movement soon targeted those classes which exploited the tribals, such as landlords and moneylenders, and those who were in the liquor trade. Towards the end of 1922, this movement became a part of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Santhals and the Paharias continued for a long time. (It has been called a battle between the hoe and the plough: the hoe symbolising the Paharias who used the tool in shifting cultivation and the plough standing for the Santhals who used it for settled agriculture.) The British worked out a compromise between the two groups by forming the Damin-

i-koh in 1832-33. (Damin-i-koh is a Persian term meaning the skirts – or outside edges – of the hills.) A portion of land at the foothills was declared to be that of the Santhals; they were to live and practise agriculture with the plough within this area, and become settled peasants. The Pahariyas were practically forced to retreat into the higher hill tracts.

Over time, the Santhals found that they were gradually losing the land they had worked on and brought under cultivation. The Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 proved to be disastrous for the agriculturists. The taxes levied by the Company government on their land was heavy and money had to be borrowed to pay off debts. But the *diku* moneylenders charged very high rates of interest and, when debts remained unpaid, took possession of the land. Slowly, zamindars were taking over the Damin tracts. By the 1850s, the Santhals felt the need to rebel against the zamindars and the moneylenders. The rebellion soon turned into a movement against the British colonial state. The Santhals called the rebellion '*hul*', meaning a movement for liberation. Under Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu, two brothers, the Santhals proclaimed an end to Company rule, and declared the area between Bhagalpur and Rajmahal as autonomous. It is said that emissaries with *sal* branches as a form of secret communication were sent by the Murmu brothers to Santhal lands to gather support. Phulo and Jhano Murmu, the sisters of Sidhu and Kanhu, participated in the rebellion and are said to have entered the enemy camp under cover and killed several soldiers before they themselves died. The British suppressed the rebellion with a heavy hand by 1856, burning down villages or destroying them with the help of elephants, and killing thousands of Santhals. Sidhu and Kanhu were killed.

It was after the Santhal Revolt of 1855-56 that the Santhal Pargana was created out of the districts of Bhagalpur and Birbhum. The pargana was to have special laws within it.

Khond Uprisings (1837–56)

From 1837 to 1856, the Khonds of the hilly tracts extending from Odisha to the Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts

of Andhra Pradesh revolted against Company rule. Chakra Bisoi, a young raja, led the Khonds, who were joined by the Ghumsar, Kalahandi, and other tribals to oppose the suppression of human sacrifice, new taxes, and the entry of zamindars into their areas. With Chakra Bisoi's disappearance, the uprising came to an end.

[A later Khond rebellion in 1914 in the Orissa region was triggered by the hope that foreign rule would end and they could gain an autonomous government.]

Koya Revolts

The Koyas of the eastern Godavari track (modern Andhra), joined by Khonda Sara chiefs, rebelled in 1803, 1840, 1845, 1858, 1861, and 1862. They rose once again in 1879–80 under Tomma Sora. Their complaints were oppression by police and moneylenders, new regulations, and denial of their customary rights over forest areas. After the death of Tomma Sora, another rebellion was organised in 1886 by Raja Anantayyar.

Bhil Revolts

The Bhils who lived in the Western Ghats controlled the mountain passes between the north and the Deccan. They revolted against Company rule in 1817–19, as they had to face famine, economic distress, and misgovernment. The British used both force and conciliatory efforts to control the uprising. However, the Bhils revolted again in 1825, 1831, and in 1846. Later, a reformer, Govind Guru, helped the Bhils of south Rajasthan (Banswara, Sunth states) to organise themselves to fight for a Bhil Raj by 1913.

Koli Risings

The Kolis living in the neighbourhood of Bhils rose up in rebellion against the Company's rule in 1829, 1839, and again during 1844–48. They resented the imposition of Company's rule which brought with it large-scale unemployment for them and the dismantling of their forts.

Ramosi Risings

The Ramosis, the hill tribes of the Western Ghats, had not reconciled to British rule and the British pattern of administration. They resented the policy of annexation. After

Tribal Movements: Period, Region, Causes at a Glance

1. Pahariyas' Rebellion by the martial Pahariyas (1778; Raj Mahal Hills); against the British expansion on their lands.
2. Chuar Uprisings by the Chuar aboriginal tribesmen (1776); against rise in demands and economic privation by the British.
3. Kol Uprisings by the Kols of Chottanagpur led by Buddho Bhagat (1831); against expansion of British rule on their lands and transfer of their lands to outsiders; the revolt was suppressed.
4. Ho and Munda Uprisings
   (a) by Ho tribals by led of Raja Parahat (1827; Singhbhum and Chottanagpur); against occupation of Singhbhum by British.
   (b) by Ho tribals and the Mundas (1831); against the newly introduced farming revenue policy.
   (c) by the Mundas led by Birsa Munda (1899–1900; south of Ranchi); Birsa was captured and imprisoned.
   (d) the *Ulgulan* uprising, supported by Birsa Munda (1860–1920); against introduction of feudal, zamindari tenures, and exploitation by moneylenders and forest contractors.
5. Santhal Rebellion by the Santhals led by Sido and Kanhu (1855–56; Bihar); against the practices of zamindars and moneylenders; the rebellion later turned anti-British and was suppressed.
6. Kondh uprisings led by Chakra Bisnoi (1837–56 and later in 1914; hilly region extending from Tamil Nadu to Bengal; in Orissa in 1914); against interference in tribal customs and imposition of new taxes.
7. Naikada Movement (1860s; Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat); against British and caste Hindus.
8. Kharwar Rebellion by the Kharwars (1870s; Bihar); against revenue settlement activities.
9. Khonda Dora Campaign by Khonda Doras led by Korra Mallaya (1900; Dabur region in Vishakapatnam).
10. Bhil Revolts (1817–19 and 1913; region of Western Ghats); against Company Rule (in 1817–19) and to form Bhil Raj.
11. Bhuyan and Juang Rebellions by the Bhuyans, Juangs and Kals; first uprising was led by Ratna Nayak; second uprising was led by Dharni Dhar Nayak (1867–68; 1891–93; Kheonjhar, Orissa); against the installation of a British protege on the throne after the death of their *raja* in 1867.
12. Koya Revolts by the Koyas and the Khonda Sara Chiefs
    – led by Tomma Sora in 1879–80
    – led by Raja Anantayyar in 1886 (eastern Godavari region Andhra Pradesh); against oppression by police, moneylenders; new regulations and denial of their rights over forest areas.

13. Bastar Revolt (1910; Jagdalpur); against new feudal and forest levies.
14. Tana Bhagat Movements among the Mundas and Oraon tribes led by Jatra Bhagat, Balram Bhagat who preached that God's benevolent delegate would arrive to free the tribals (1914–15; Chottanagpur); against interference of outsiders; began as Sanskritisation movement.
15. Rampa Revolts led by Alluri Sitarama Raju of the Koyas (1916, 1922–24; Rampa region in Andhra Pradesh); against British interference; capture and execution of Raju in 1924.
16. Jharkhand Uprising by tribals of Chottanagpur region (1920 onwards; parts of Bihar, Orissa, and West Bengal); Adivasi Mahasabha was formed in 1937 which was replaced by Regional Jharkhand Party in 1949.
17. Forest Satyagrahas (a) by Chenchu tribals (1920s; Guntur district in Andhra), (b) by Karwars of Palamau (1930s; Bihar); against increasing British control over forests.
18. Gond Uprising (1940s) to bring together the believers of Gond-dharma.

the annexation of the Maratha territories by the British, the Ramosis, who had been employed by the Maratha administration, lost their means of livelihood. They rose under Chittur Singh in 1822 and plundered the country around Satara. Again, there were eruptions in 1825–26 under Umaji Naik of Poona and his supporter Bapu Trimbakji Sawant, and the disturbances continued till 1829. The disturbance occurred again in 1839 over deposition and banishment of Raja Pratap Singh of Satara, and disturbances erupted in 1840–41 also. Finally, a superior British force restored order in the area. Generally, the British followed a pacifist policy towards the Ramosis, and even recruited some of them into the hill police.

Tribal Movements of the North-East

Some famous tribal movements of the north-east frontier region have been given below.

Khasi Uprising

After having occupied the hilly region between Garo and Jaintia Hills, the East India Company wanted to build a road linking the Brahmaputra Valley with Sylhet. For this, a large number of outsiders including Englishmen, Bengalis, and the

North-East Frontier Tribal Movements: Year, Region, Major Causes

Movements Before 1857

1. Ahoms' Revolt (1828–33; Assam); against the non-fulfilment of the pledges of the Company after the Burmese War; the uprising was suppressed by the Company by dividing the kingdom.
2. Khasis' Revolt (1830s; hilly region between Jaintia and Garo Hills); led by the Nunklow ruler, Tirath Singh; against the occupation of the hilly region.
3. Singphos' Rebellion (1830s; Assam); led to murder of British political agent of Assam by Singphos in 1839; was ultimately suppressed.

Movements After 1857

1. Kukis' Revolt (1917–19; Manipur); against British policies of recruiting labour during the first World War.
2. Revolts in Tripura; against hike in house tax rates and against settlement of outsiders in the region
   (a) led by Parikshit Jamatia (1863)
   (b) the Reangs' revolt led by Ratnamani (1942–43)
   (c) led by Bharti Singh (1920s)
3. Zeliangsong Movement (1920s; Manipur); led by the Zemi, Liangmei and Rongmei tribes; against the failure of British to protect them during the Kuki violence in 1917–19.
4. Naga movement (1905-31; Manipur); led by Jadonang; against British rule and for setting up of a Naga *raj*.
5. Heraka Cult (1930s; Manipur); led by Gaidinliu; the movement was suppressed but Kabui Naga Association was formed in 1946.
6. **Other Smaller Movements** were the revolt of the Syntengs of Jaintia Hills in 1860–62; the Phulaguri peasants' rebellion in 1861, the revolt of the Saflas in 1872–73; the uprising of the Kacha Nagas of Cachhar in 1882; and a women's war in Manipur in 1904.

labourers from the plains were brought to these regions. The Khasis, Garos, Khamptis, and the Singphos organised themselves under Tirath Singh to drive away the strangers from the plains. The uprising developed into a popular revolt against the British rule in the area. By 1833, the superior English military force had suppressed the revolt.

Singphos Rebellion

The rebellion of the Singphos in Assam in early 1830 was immediately quelled, but they continued to organise revolts. An uprising in 1839 saw the death of the British political agent. Chief Nirang Phidu led an uprising in 1843, which involved an attack on the British garrison and the death of many soldiers.

Some of the smaller movements were those of the Mishmis (in 1836); the Khampti rebellion in Assam between 1839 and 1842; and the Lushais' revolt in 1842 and 1844, when they attacked villages in Manipur.

Sepoy Mutinies

A number of sporadic military uprisings took place before the Great Revolt of 1857 in different parts of the country.

Causes

There was rising discontent of the sepoys against the British rule due to the following reasons:

(i) discrimination in payment and promotions;
(ii) mistreatment of the sepoys by the British officials;
(iii) refusal of the government to pay foreign service allowance while fighting in remote regions;
(iv) religious objections of the high-caste Hindu sepoys to Lord Canning's General Service Enlistment Act (1856) ordering all recruits to be ready for service both within and outside India.

Further, the sepoys shared all the discontent and grievances—social, religious, and economic—that afflicted the civilian population.

Over the years, the upper caste sepoys had found their religious beliefs in conflict with their service conditions. For example, in 1806, the replacement of the turban by a leather cockade caused a mutiny at Vellore. Similarly, in 1844, there was a mutinous outbreak of the Bengal army sepoys for being sent to far away Sind, and, in 1824, the sepoys at Barrackpore rose in revolt when they were asked to go to Burma because crossing the sea would mean loss of caste.

Important Mutinies

The most important mutinies which broke out during the pre-1857 period are the following:

(i) The mutiny of the sepoys in Bengal in 1764
(ii) The Vellore mutiny of 1806 when the sepoys protested against interference in their social and religious practices and raised a banner of revolt unfurling the flag of the ruler of Mysore
(iii) The mutiny of the sepoys of the 47th Native Infantry Unit in 1824
(iv) The revolt of the Grenadier Company in Assam in 1825
(v) The mutiny of an Indian regiment at Sholapur in 1838
(vi) The mutinies of the 34th Native Infantry (N.I.), the 22nd N.I., the 66th N.I., and the 37th N.I. in 1844, 1849, 1850, and 1852 respectively

However, all these mutinies did not spread beyond their locality and were ruthlessly crushed by the British Indian government, often inflicting terrible violence, executing leaders, and disbanding the regiments. But the legacy of these revolts proved to be of immense significance later.

Weaknesses of People's Uprisings

- These uprisings drew a large number of participants but were, in fact, localised and occurred at different times in different regions.
- They mostly arose out of local grievances.
- The leadership was semi-feudal in character, backward-looking, traditional in outlook, and their resistance did not offer alternatives to the existing social set-up.
- If many of these revolts seemed similar to one another in wanting to oust the alien rule, it was not because of some 'national' impulse or common effort, but because they were protesting against conditions that were common to them.
- These rebellions were centuries-old in form and ideological / cultural content.

● Those who were not so uncooperative or obstinate were pacified through concessions by the authorities.

● The methods and arms used by the fighters in these uprisings were practically obsolete compared to the weapons and strategy—as well as deception and chicanery—employed by their opponents.

Summary

- **Factors Responsible for People's Resistance**
  Colonial land revenue settlements; heavy burden of new taxes and eviction of peasants from their land
  Growth of intermediary revenue collectors, tenants, and moneylenders
  Expansion of revenue administration over tribal lands
  Destruction of indigenous industry and promotion of British manufactured goods
  End of patronage to priestly and scholarly classes
  Foreign character of the British rule
- **Forms of People's Uprisings**
  Civil Uprisings
  Peasant Movements
  Tribal Revolts
  Military Revolts
- **Civil Uprisings Before 1857**
  Sanyasi Revolt (1763–1800)—Bihar and Bengal; Manju Shah, Musa Shah, Bhawani Pathak, and Debi Chaudhurani were some important leaders.
  Rebellion in Midnapore and Dhalbhum (1766–67)—Bengal; Damodar Singh, Jagannath Dhal, etc.
  Revolt of Moamarias (1769–99)—Assam and parts of present Bangladesh; Krishnanarayan was important leader.
  Civil Uprisings in Gorakhpur, Basti and Bahraich (1781)—Uttar Pradesh.
  Revolt of Raja of Vizianagaram—Northeren Circars; Vizieram Rauze (Chinna Vijayaramaraju) was supported by his subjects.
  Revolt in Bednur (1797–1800)—Karnataka; Dhundia Wagh.
  Revolt of Kerala Varma Pazhassi Raja (1797–1805)—Kerala; Kerala Varma.
  Civil Rebellion of Awadh (1799)—Eastern Uttar Pradesh; Wazir Ali Khan (Vizier Ali).

Uprising in Ganjam and Gumsur (1800, 1935–37)—Eastern Orissa; Strikara Bhanj, Dhananjaya Bhanj and Doora Bisayi.

Uprisings in Palamau (1800–02)—Chhotanagpur of Jharkhand; Bhukhan Singh was the leader of the revolt.

Poligars's Revolt (1795–1805)—Tinnevelly, Ramnathapuram, Sivagiri, Madurai and North Arcot of Tamil Nadu; Kattabomman Nayakan was an important leader.

Revolt of Diwan Velu Thampi (1808–09)—Travancore; led by Diwan of State, Velu Thampi.

Disturbances in Bundelkhand (1808–12)—Regions of Bundelkhand in present Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh; Lakshaman Dawa, the Killadar of Ajaygarh Fort, Darya Singh, the Killadar of Kalanjar, and Gopal Singh, a military adventurer were the important insurgents.

Parlakimedi Outbreak (1813–34)—Orissa; Narayan Deo and Gajapathi Deo.

Kutch Rebellion (1819)—Gujarat; Rao Bharamal.

Rising at Bareilly (1816)—Uttar Pradesh; Mufti Muhammad Aiwaz, a religious leader; a resistance against municipal tax turned into a religious *jehad*.

Upsurge in Hathras (1817)—Aligarh and Agra in Uttar Pradesh; Dayaram and Bhagwant Singh were the important insurgents.

Paika Rebellion (1817)—Orissa; Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar, Mukunda Deva, and Dinabandhu Santra were important leaders.

Waghera Rising (1818–20)—Baroda region of Gujarat; led by Waghera chiefs of Okha Mandal.

Ahom Revolt (1828)—Assam; led by Gomdhar Konwar and Maharaja Purandhar Singh. Narendra Gadadhar Singh and Kumar Rupchand were other leaders.

Surat Salt Agitations (1844)—Gujarat; attacks on the Europeans by the locals of Surat; over the issue of increase in salt duty.

Gadkari Revolt (1844)—Kolhapur of Maharashtra; Gadakaris, a hereditary military class, revolted in the wake of unemployment and agrarians grievances.

Revolt of Savantavadi (1844–59)—North Konkan Coast; Phond Savant, Subana Nikam, Daji Lakshman, and Har Savant Dingnekar were important insurrectionists.

Wahabi Movement (1830–61)—Bihar, Bengal, North West Frontier Province, Punjab, etc., an Islamist revivalist movement started by Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareilly.

Kuka Movement (1840–72)—Punjab; A religious movement started by Bhagat Jawahar Mal transformed into political one. Ram Singh, a noted leader, deported to Rangoon.

- **Peasant Movements**
  Narkelberia Uprising (1831)—24 Parganas (Bengal); Titu Mir inspired the Muslim tenants in West Bengal against Hindu landlords.
  Pagal Panthis (1825–35)—Mymensingh district (Bengal); Karam Shah and his son Tipu rose against *zamindars*.
  Faraizi Revolt (1838–57)—Faridpur in Eastern Bengal; Shariat-Allah, son of Dadu Mian, was the founder of the religious sect (Faraizi).
  Moplah Uprisings (1836–1854)—Malabar region of Kerala; against hike in revenue demand and reduction in field size.
- **Tribal Revolts**
  Pahariyas' Rebellion (1778)—Raj Mahal Hills
  Chuar Uprisings (1766 to 1772, 1795–1816)—Midnapore district of Bengal; important leaders—Sham Ganjan, Durjan Singh and Madhab Singh.
  Kol Mutiny (1831)—Ranchi, Singhbhum, Hazaribagh, Palamau and Manbhum; Buddho Bhagat was an important leader.
  Ho and Munda Uprisings (1820–22, 1831–37, 1899–1900)—Chhotanagpur region; Birsa Munda in 1899–1900 led the rebellion.
  Santhal Rebellion (1855–56)—Rajmahal Hill (Bihar); Sidhu and Kanhu were important leaders.
  Khond Uprisings (1837–1856)—Hilly tracts extending from Tamil Nadu to Bengal; Chakra Bisoi, an important leader.
  Koya Revolts (1803, 1840–62, 1879–80)—Eastern Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh; Tomma Sora and Raja Anantayyar were important leaders.
  Bhil Revolts (1817–19, 1913)—Khandesh, Dhar, Malwa, Western Ghats and southern Rajasthan.
  Koli Risings (1829, 1839 and 1844–48)—Western Ghats.
  Ramosi Risings (1822–29, 1839–41)—Western Ghats; Chittur Singh was an important rebel leader.
  Khasi Uprising (1829–33)—Hilly region between Garo and Jaintia Hills, Sylhet; Khasis, Garos, Khamptis and Singhphos organised themselves under Tirath Singh.
  Singhphos' Rebellion (1830–31, 1843)—Assam-Burma Border; Nirang Phidu led an uprising in 1843.
- **Sepoy Mutinies**
  Vellore Mutiny (1806)
  Mutiny of 47th Native Infantry Unit (1824)
  Revolt of Grenadier Company (1825), Assam
  Mutiny in Sholapur (1833)
  Mutiny of 34th Native Infantry (1844)
  Mutiny of 22nd Native Infantry (1849)
  Mutiny of 66th Native Infantry (1850)
  Mutiny of 37th Native Infantry (1852)

CHAPTER 7

The Revolt of 1857

In 1757, after the Battle of Plassey, the British laid the first step towards getting power in northern India. And in 1857 took place the major 'Revolt', which was a product of the character and policies of colonial rule after 1757, and after which noteworthy changes took place in the British policy of ruling over India.

Simmering Discontent

The cumulative effect of British expansionist policies, economic exploitation, and administrative innovations over the years had adversely affected the positions of all—rulers of Indian states, sepoys, zamindars, peasants, traders, artisans, pundits, maulvis, etc. The simmering discontent burst in the form of a violent storm in 1857, which shook the British empire in India to its very foundations.

However, the period between 1757 and 1857 was not all peaceful and trouble-free; it saw a series of sporadic popular outbursts in the form of religio-political violence, tribal movements, peasant uprisings and agrarian riots, and civil rebellions. Enhanced revenue demands—even in famine years—caused anger. Many a times, movements against local moneylenders turned into rebellion against the Company rule as the moneylenders had the support of the police. British interference in native religious/traditional customs also caused

resentment and resulted in rebellions. Almost from the very early days of the East India Company's rule, rebellions and uprisings occurred for various causes in different regions. Some of the movements continued even after the 1857 Revolt. Major revolts took place in the south, east, west, and the north-eastern regions which were suppressed with brutality by the Company.

[The previous chapter discussed some of these uprisings.]

The 1857 Revolt: the Major Causes

The causes of the revolt of 1857, like those of earlier uprisings, emerged from all aspects—socio-cultural, economic, and political—of daily existence of Indian population cutting through all sections and classes. These causes are discussed below.

Economic Causes

The colonial policies of the East India Company destroyed the traditional economic fabric of the Indian society. The peasantry were never really to recover from the disabilities imposed by the new and a highly unpopular revenue settlement. Impoverished by heavy taxation, the peasants resorted to loans from moneylenders/traders at usurious rates, the latter often evicting the former from their land on non-payment of debt dues. These moneylenders and traders emerged as the new landlords, while the scourge of landless peasantry and rural indebtedness has continued to plague Indian society to this day. The older system of zamindari was forced to disintegrate.

British rule also meant misery to the artisans and handicrafts people. The annexation of Indian states by the Company cut off their major source of patronage—the native rulers and the nobles, who could not now afford to be patrons of the crafts workers. Added to this, British policy discouraged Indian handicrafts and promoted British goods. The highly skilled Indian craftsmen were forced to look for alternate sources of employment that hardly existed, as the destruction of Indian handicrafts was not accompanied by the development of modern industries.

View

It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning-wheel. England began with depriving the Indian cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindustan and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons.

—Karl Marx, in 1853

The Indian trade and mercantile class was deliberately crippled by the British who imposed high tariff duties on Indian-made goods. At the same time, the import of British goods into India attracted low tariffs, thus encouraging their entry into India. By mid-19th century, exports of cotton and silk textiles from India practically came to an end. Free trade—one way, that is—and refusal to impose protective duties against machine-made goods from Britain simply killed Indian manufacture.

Zamindars, the traditional landed aristocracy, often saw their land rights forfeited with frequent use of a *quo warranto* by the administration. This resulted in a loss of status for them in the villages. In Awadh, the storm centre of the revolt, 21,000 taluqdars had their estates confiscated and suddenly found themselves without a source of income, "unable to work, ashamed to beg, condemned to penury". These dispossessed taluqdars seized the opportunity presented by the sepoy revolt to oppose the British and try to regain what they had lost.

The ruin of Indian industry increased the pressure on agriculture and land, which could not support all the people; the lopsided development resulted in pauperisation of the country in general.

Political Causes

The East India Company's greedy policy of aggrandisement accompanied by broken pledges and promises resulted in contempt for the Company and loss of political prestige, besides causing suspicion in the minds of almost all the ruling princes in India, through such policies as of 'Effective Control', 'Subsidiary Alliance', and 'Doctrine of Lapse'. The right of succession was denied to Hindu princes. The Mughals were humbled when, on Prince Faqiruddin's death in 1856, whose succession had been recognised conditionally by Lord Dalhousie, Lord Canning announced that the next prince on

succession would have to renounce the regal title and the ancestral Mughal palaces, in addition to the renunciations agreed upon by Prince Faqiruddin.

The collapse of rulers—the erstwhile aristocracy—also adversely affected those sections of the Indian society which derived their sustenance from cultural and religious pursuits.

Administrative Causes

Rampant corruption in the Company's administration, especially among the police, petty officials, and lower law courts, was a major cause of discontent. Indeed, it is the view of many historians that the rampant corruption we see now in India is a legacy of the Company rule. Also, the character of the British rule imparted a foreign and alien look to it in the eyes of Indians: a kind of absentee sovereignty.

Socio-Religious Causes

Racial overtones and a superiority complex characterised the British administrative attitude towards the native Indian population. The activities of Christian missionaries who followed the British flag in India were looked upon with suspicion by Indians. The attempts at socio-religious reform such as abolition of sati, support to widow-marriage, and women's education were seen by a large section of the population as interference in the social and religious domains of the Indian society by outsiders. These fears were compounded by the government's decision to tax mosque and temple lands and making laws such as the Religious Disabilities Act, 1856, which modified Hindu customs, for instance, declaring that a change of religion did not debar a son from inheriting the property of his 'heathen' father.

Influence of Outside Events

The revolt of 1857 coincided with certain outside events in which the British suffered serious losses—the First Afghan War (1838–42), Punjab Wars (1845–49), and the Crimean Wars (1854–56). These had obvious psychological repercussions. The British were seen to be not so strong and it was felt that they could be defeated.

Discontent Among Sepoys

The conditions of service in the Company's Army and cantonments increasingly came into conflict with the religious

beliefs and prejudices of the sepoys. Restrictions on wearing caste and sectarian marks and secret rumours of proselytising activities of the chaplains (often maintained on the Company's expenses which meant at Indian expense) were interpreted by Indian sepoys, who were generally conservative by nature, as interference in their religious affairs.

To the religious Hindu of the time, crossing the seas meant loss of caste. In 1856, Lord Canning's government passed the General Service Enlistment Act, which decreed that all future recruits to the Bengal Army would have to give an undertaking to serve anywhere their services might be required by the government. This caused resentment.

The Indian sepoy was equally unhappy with his emoluments compared to his British counterpart. A more immediate cause of the sepoys' dissatisfaction was the order that they would not be given the foreign service allowance (*bhatta*) when serving in Sindh or in Punjab. The annexation of Awadh, home of many of the sepoys, further inflamed their feelings.

The Indian sepoy was made to feel a subordinate at every step and was discriminated against racially and in matters of promotion and privileges. The discontent of the sepoys was not limited to military matters; it reflected the general disenchantment with and the opposition to British rule. The sepoy, in fact, was a 'peasant in uniform' whose consciousness was not divorced from that of the rural population. "The Army voiced grievances other than its own; and the movement spread beyond the Army", observes S. Gopal.

Finally, there had been a long history of revolts in the British Indian Army—in Bengal (1764), Vellore (1806), Barrackpore (1825), and during the Afghan Wars (1838–42) to mention just a few.

Beginning and Spread of the Revolt

The Spark

The reports about the mixing of bone dust in *atta* (flour) and the introduction of the Enfield rifle enhanced the sepoys'

growing disaffection with the government. The greased wrapping paper of the cartridge of the new rifle had to be bitten off before loading and the grease was reportedly made of beef and pig fat. The cow was sacred to the Hindus, while the pig was taboo for the Muslims. The Army administration did nothing to allay these fears, and the sepoys felt their religion was in grave danger.

The greased cartridges did not create a new cause of discontent in the Army, but supplied the occasion for the simmering discontent to come out in the open.

Starts at Meerut

The revolt began at Meerut, 58 km from Delhi, on May 10, 1857 and then, gathering force rapidly, soon embraced a vast area from the Punjab in the north and the Narmada in the south to Bihar in the east and Rajputana in the west.

Even before the Meerut incident, there were rumblings of resentment in various cantonments. The 19th Native Infantry at Berhampore (West Bengal), which refused to use the newly introduced Enfield rifle and broke out in mutiny in February 1857, was disbanded in March 1857. A young sepoy of the 34th Native Infantry, **Mangal Pande**, went a step further and fired at the sergeant major of his unit at Barrackpore. He was overpowered and executed on April 8 while his regiment was disbanded in May. The 7th Awadh Regiment which defied its officers on May 3 met with a similar fate.

And then came the explosion at Meerut. On April 24, 90 men of the 3rd Native Cavalry refused to accept the greased cartridges. On May 9, 85 of them were dismissed, sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, and put in fetters. This sparked off a general mutiny among the Indian soldiers stationed at Meerut. The very next day, on May 10, they released their imprisoned comrades, killed their officers, and unfurled the banner of revolt. They set off for Delhi after sunset.

Choice of Bahadur Shah as Symbolic Head

In Delhi, the local infantry joined them, killed their own European officers, including Simon Fraser, the political

agent, and seized the city. Lieutenant Willoughby, the officer-in-charge of the magazine at Delhi, offered some resistance, but was overcome. The aged and powerless Bahadur Shah Zafar was proclaimed the Emperor of India.

Delhi was soon to become the centre of the Great Revolt and Bahadur Shah, its symbol. This spontaneous raising of the last Mughal king to the leadership of the country was a recognition of the fact that the long reign of the Mughal dynasty had become the traditional symbol of India's political unity. With this single act, the sepoys had transformed a mutiny of soldiers into a revolutionary war, while all Indian chiefs who took part in the revolt hastened to proclaim their loyalty to the Mughal emperor. It also signified that the rebels were politically motivated. Though religion was a factor, the broad outlook of the rebels was not influenced by religious identity but by the perception of the British as the common enemy.

Bahadur Shah, after initial vacillation, wrote letters to all the chiefs and rulers of India, urging them to organise a confederacy of Indian states to fight and replace the British regime. The entire Bengal Army soon rose in revolt, which spread quickly. Awadh, Rohilkhand, the Doab, Bundelkhand, central India, large parts of Bihar and East Punjab shook off British authority.

Civilians Join

The revolt of the sepoys was accompanied by a rebellion of the civil population, particularly in the north-western provinces and Awadh. Their accumulated grievances found immediate expression and they rose *en masse* to give vent to their opposition to British rule. It is the widespread participation in the revolt by the peasantry, the artisans, shopkeepers, day labourers, zamindars, religious mendicants, priests, and civil servants which gave it real strength as well as the character of a popular revolt. Here the peasants and petty zamindars gave free expression to their grievances by attacking the moneylenders and zamindars who had displaced them from the land. They took advantage of the revolt to destroy the moneylenders' account books and debt records. They also attacked the British-established law courts, revenue offices (*tehsils*), revenue records, and police stations.

According to one estimate, of the total number of about 1,50,000 men who died fighting the English in Awadh, over 1,00,000 were civilians.

Within a month of the capture of Delhi by the rebels, the revolt spread to different parts of the country.

Storm Centres and Leaders of the Revolt

At Delhi, the nominal and symbolic leadership belonged to the Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah, but the real command lay with a court of soldiers headed by **General Bakht Khan** who had led the revolt of Bareilly troops and brought them to Delhi. The court consisted of ten members, six from the army and four from the civilian departments. The court conducted the affairs of the state in the name of the emperor. Emperor **Bahadur Shah** was perhaps the weakest link in the chain of leadership of the revolt. His weak personality, old age, and lack of leadership qualities created political weakness at the nerve centre of the revolt and did incalculable damage to it.

At Kanpur, the natural choice was **Nana Saheb**, the adopted son of the last peshwa, Baji Rao II. He was refused the family title and banished from Poona, and was living near Kanpur. Nana Saheb expelled the English from Kanpur, proclaimed himself the peshwa, acknowledged Bahadur Shah as the Emperor of India, and declared himself to be his governor. Sir Hugh Wheeler, commanding the station, surrendered on June 27, 1857 and was killed on the same day.

Begum Hazrat Mahal took over the reigns at Lucknow where the rebellion broke out on June 4, 1857 and popular sympathy was overwhelmingly in favour of the deposed nawab. Her son, Birjis Qadir, was proclaimed the nawab and a regular administration was organised with important offices shared equally by Muslims and Hindus. Henry Lawrence, the British resident, the European inhabitants, and a few hundred loyal sepoys took shelter in the residency. The residency was besieged by the Indian rebels, and Sir Henry was killed during the siege. The command of the besieged garrison devolved on Brigadier Inglis who held out against heavy odds. The early attempts of Sir Henry Havelock and Sir James Outram to

recover Lucknow met with no success. Finally, Sir Colin Campbell, the new commander-in-chief, evacuated the Europeans with the help of Gorkha regiments. In March 1858, the city was finally recovered by the British, but guerrilla activity continued till September of the same year.

At Bareilly, **Khan Bahadur**, a descendant of the former ruler of Rohilkhand, was placed in command. Not enthusiastic about the pension being granted by the British, he organised an army of 40,000 soldiers and offered stiff resistance to the British.

In Bihar, the revolt was led by **Kunwar Singh**, the zamindar of Jagdishpur. An old man in his 70s, he nursed a grudge against the British who had deprived him of his estates. He unhesitatingly joined the sepoys when they reached Arrah from Dinapore (Danapur).

Maulvi Ahmadullah of Faizabad was another outstanding leader of the revolt. He was a native of Madras and had moved to Faizabad in the north where he fought a stiff battle against the British troops. He emerged as one of the revolt's acknowledged leaders once it broke out in Awadh in May 1857.

The most outstanding leader of the revolt was **Rani Laxmibai**, who assumed the leadership of the sepoys at Jhansi. Lord Dalhousie, the governor general, had refused to allow her adopted son to succeed to the throne after her husband Raja Gangadhar Rao died, and had annexed the state by the application of the infamous 'Doctrine of Lapse'. Driven out of Jhansi by British forces, she gave the battle cry—*"main apni Jhansi nahin doongi"* (I shall not give away my Jhansi). She was joined by **Tantia Tope**, a close associate of Nana Saheb, after the loss of Kanpur. The Rani of Jhansi and Tantia Tope marched towards Gwalior where they were hailed by the Indian soldiers. The Scindia, the local ruler, however, decided to side with the English and took

View

Here lay the woman who was the only man among the rebels.
—**Hugh Rose**
(a tribute to the Rani of Jhansi from the man who defeated her)

shelter at Agra. Nana Saheb was proclaimed the Peshwa and plans were chalked out for a march into the south. Gwalior was recaptured by the English in June 1858.

The sacrifices made by the common masses were immense and innumerable. The name of **Shah Mal**, a local villager in Pargana Baraut (Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh), is most notable. He organised the headmen and peasants of 84 villages (referred as chaurasi desh), marching at night from village to village, urging people to rebel against the British hegemony. The people attacked government buildings, destroyed the bridges over the rivers, and dug up metalled roads—partially to stop government forces from coming into the area, and partly because bridges and roads were viewed as symbols of the British rule. Shah Mal sent supplies to the mutineers in Delhi and prevented all official communication between British headquarters and Meerut. He made his headquarters at the bungalow of an irrigation department on the banks of the Yamuna and supervised and controlled his operations from there. In fact, the bungalow was turned into a 'hall of justice', resolving disputes and dispensing judgements. He also organised an effective network of intelligence for a short duration, the people of the area felt that the British rule was over, and their own rule had come. Unfortunately, in July 1857, Shah Mal was killed by an English officer, Dunlap. It is alleged that Shah Mal's body was cut into pieces and his head displayed on July 21, 1857 to terrify the public. For more than a year, however, the rebels carried on their struggle against heavy odds.

Suppression of the Revolt

The revolt was finally suppressed. The British captured Delhi on September 20, 1857 after prolonged and bitter fighting. John Nicholson, the leader of the siege, was badly wounded and later succumbed to his injuries. Bahadur Shah was taken prisoner. The royal princes were captured and butchered on the spot, publicly shot at point-blank range by Lieutenant Hudson himself. The emperor was exiled to Rangoon where he died in 1862. Thus, the great House of Mughals was finally and completely extinguished. Terrible vengeance was wreaked

on the inhabitants of Delhi. With the fall of Delhi, the focal point of the revolt disappeared.

One by one, all the great leaders of the revolt fell. Military operations for the recapture of Kanpur were closely associated with the recovery of Lucknow. Sir Colin Campbell occupied Kanpur on December 6, 1857. Nana Saheb, defeated at Kanpur, escaped to Nepal in early 1859, never to be heard of again. His close associate Tantia Tope escaped into the jungles of central India, but was captured while asleep in April 1859 and put to death. The Rani of Jhansi had died on the battlefield earlier in June 1858. Jhansi was recaptured by Sir Hugh Rose. By 1859, Kunwar Singh, Bakht Khan, Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly, Rao Sahib (brother of Nana Saheb) and Maulvi Ahmadullah were all dead, while the Begum of Awadh was compelled to hide in Nepal. At Benaras, a rebellion had been organised which was mercilessly suppressed by Colonel Neill, who put to death all suspected rebels and even disorderly sepoys.

By the end of 1859, British authority over India was fully re-established. The British government had to pour immense supplies of men, money, and arms into the country, though the Indians had to later repay the entire cost through their own suppression.

Why the Revolt Failed

All-India participation was absent

Limited territorial spread was one factor; there was no all-India veneer about the revolt. The eastern, southern, and western parts of India remained more or less unaffected. This was probably because the earlier uprisings in those regions had been brutally suppressed by the Company.

All classes did not join

Certain classes and groups did not join and, in fact, worked against the revolt.

Big zamindars acted as ‘break-waters to storm’; even Awadh taluqdars backed off once promises of land restitution were spelt out. Moneylenders and merchants suffered the wrath of the mutineers badly and, anyway, saw their class interests better protected under British patronage.

Educated Indians viewed this revolt as backward-looking, supportive of the feudal order, and as a reaction of traditional conservative forces to modernity; these people had high hopes that the British would usher in an era of modernisation.

Most Indian rulers refused to join and often gave active help to the British. Rulers who did not participate included the Scindia of Gwalior; the Holkar of Indore; the rulers of Patiala, Sindh, and other Sikh chieftains; and the Maharaja of Kashmir. Indeed, by one estimate, not more than one-fourth of the total area and not more than one-tenth of the total population was affected.

Poor Arms and Equipment

The Indian soldiers were poorly equipped materially, fighting generally with swords and spears and very few guns and muskets. On the other hand, the European soldiers were equipped with the latest weapons of war like the Enfield rifle. The electric telegraph kept the commander-in-chief informed about the movements and strategy of the rebels.

Uncoordinated and Poorly Organised

The revolt was poorly organised with no coordination or central leadership. The principal rebel leaders—Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh, Laxmibai—were no match to their British opponents in generalship. On the other hand, the East India Company was fortunate in having the services of men of exceptional abilities in the Lawrence brothers, John Nicholson, James Outram, Henry Havelock, etc.

No Unified Ideology

The mutineers lacked a clear understanding of colonial rule; nor did they have a forward-looking programme, a coherent ideology, a political perspective, or a societal alternative. The rebels represented diverse elements with differing grievances and concepts of current politics.

The lack of unity among Indians was perhaps unavoidable at this stage of Indian history. Modern nationalism was as yet unknown in India. In fact, the revolt of 1857 played an important role in bringing the Indian people together and imparting to them the consciousness of belonging to one country.

Hindu-Muslim Unity Factor

During the entire revolt, there was complete cooperation between Hindus and Muslims at all levels—people, soldiers, leaders. All rebels acknowledged Bahadur Shah Zafar, a Muslim, as the emperor, and the first impulse of the Hindu sepoys at Meerut was to march to Delhi, the Mughal imperial capital. According to Maulana Azad, "Two facts stand out clearly in the midst of the tangled story of the Rising of 1857. The first is the remarkable sense of unity among the Hindus and the Muslims of India in this period. The other is the deep loyalty which the people felt for the Mughal Crown." Rebels and sepoys, both Hindu and Muslim, respected each other's sentiments. Immediate banning of cow slaughter was ordered once the revolt was successful in a particular area. Both Hindus and Muslims were well represented in leadership, for instance Nana Saheb had Azimullah, a Muslim and an expert in political propaganda, as an aide, while Laxmibai had the solid support of Afghan soldiers.

Thus, the events of 1857 demonstrated that the people and politics of India were not basically communal or sectarian before 1858.

Nature of the Revolt

Views differ on the nature of the 1857 revolt. It was a mere 'Sepoy Mutiny' to some British historians—"a wholly unpatriotic and selfish Sepoy Mutiny with no native leadership and no popular support", said Sir John Seeley. However, that is not a complete picture of the event as it involved many sections of the civilian population and not just the sepoys. The discontent of the sepoys was just one cause of the disturbance.

Dr K. Datta considers the revolt of 1857 to have been "in the main a military outbreak, which was taken advantage of by certain discontented princes and landlords, whose interests had been affected by the new political order". The last mentioned factor gave it an aura of a popular uprising in certain areas. It was "never all-Indian in character, but was localised, restricted, and poorly organised". Further, says

Datta, the movement was marked by absence of cohesion and unity of purpose among the various sections of the rebels.

It was at the beginning of the 20th century that the 1857 revolt came to be interpreted as a "planned war of national independence", by V.D. Savarkar in his book, *The Indian War of Independence, 1857*. Savarkar called the revolt the first war of Indian independence. He said it was inspired by the lofty ideal of self-rule by Indians through a nationalist upsurge. Dr S.N. Sen in his *Eighteen Fifty- Seven* considers the revolt as having begun as a fight for religion but ending as a war of independence.

Dr R.C. Majumdar, however, considers it as neither the first, nor national, nor a war of independence as large parts of the country remained unaffected and many sections of the people took no part in the upsurge.

According to some Marxist historians, the 1857 revolt was "the struggle of the soldier-peasant democratic combine against foreign as well as feudal bondage". However, this view can be questioned in the light of the fact that the leaders of the revolt themselves came from a feudal background.

Jawaharlal Nehru considered the revolt of 1857 as essentially a feudal uprising though there were some nationalistic elements in it (*Discovery of India*). M.N. Roy felt the revolt was a last-ditch stand of feudalism against commercial capitalism. R.P. Dutt also saw the significance of the revolt of the peasantry against foreign domination even as he acknowledged it to be a defence of the old feudal order.

The revolt of 1857 is not easy to categorise. While one can easily dismiss some views such as those of L.E.R. Rees, who considered it to be a war of fanatic religionists against Christians, or T.R. Holmes, who saw in it a conflict between civilisation and barbarism, one cannot quite go so far as to accept it as a war for independence. It had seeds of nationalism and anti-imperialism, but the concept of common nationality and nationhood was not inherent to the revolt of 1857.

It is doubtful if the separate communities that participated in the revolt did so because they felt a common nationhood. Furthermore, what of the southern section which

Views

1857 stands firmly in a historical continuum. Not of course it was the direct product of social forces blowing off the political crust but rather fortuitous conjuncture that laid these forces bane. Like 1848 in Europe—despite obvious disparities—it was on uprising sans issue that could catch a society moving into the early stages of modernisation.

Eric Stokes

First War of Independence it certainly was, as in the whole canvas of the recorded history of India it would be difficult to find a parallel to this gigantic anti-foreign combine of all classes of people and of many provinces of India. There was never a war in India lasting continuously for more than a year and simultaneously in all the regions which had for its objective the abasement and ejectment of the alien ruling power.

S.B. Chaudhuri

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the so-called First National War of Independence of 1857 is neither First, nor National, nor War of Independence.

R.C. Majumdar

It has to be admitted that the war against the British was not inspired by any sentiment of nationalism, for in 1857 India was not yet politically a nation. It is a fact that the Hindus and Muslims cooperated, but the leaders and the followers of the two communities were moved by personal loyalties rather than loyalty to a common motherland.

Tara Chand

was not a part of the revolt? Each of the leaders had a personal cause for revolting; each had a personal interest to protect. However, as Dr Sen points out, national revolutions are mostly the work of a minority, with or without the active support of the masses. From that point of view, the 1857 rebellion can claim a national character.

One may say that the revolt of 1857 was the first great struggle of Indians to throw off British rule. Even this view has been questioned by some historians who feel that some of the earlier uprisings had been equally serious efforts at throwing off the foreign yoke, but have not got the same kind of attention. However, S.B. Chaudhuri observes, the revolt was "the first combined attempt of many classes of people to challenge a foreign power. This is a real, if remote, approach to the freedom movement of India of a later age".

Views

The passions of the mutineers were centred on their grievances, not on larger ideals.

Percival Spear

The Mutiny became a Revolt and assumed a political character when the mutineers of Meerut placed themselves under the king of Delhi and a section of the landed aristocracy and civil population decided in his favour. What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence.

S.N. Sen

... had a single leader of ability arisen among them (the rebels), we must have been lost beyond redemption.

John Lawrence

The revolt of 1857 was a struggle of the soldier-peasant democratic combine against foreign imperialism as well as indigenous landlordism.

Marxist Interpretation

It was far more than a mutiny, ... yet much less than a first war of independence.

Stanley Wolpert

Consequences

The revolt of 1857 marks a turning point in the history of India. It led to far-reaching changes in the system of administration and the policies of the British government.

Even before the revolt could be suppressed fully, the British Parliament, on August 2, 1858, passed an act for the Better Government of India. The act declared Queen Victoria as the sovereign of British India and provided for the appointment of a Secretary of State for India (a member of the British cabinet). The direct responsibility for the administration of the country was assumed by the British Crown and Company rule was abolished.

The assumption of the Government of India by the sovereign of Great Britain was announced by Lord Canning at a durbar at Allahabad in the 'Queen's Proclamation' issued on November 1, 1858. (It was by this proclamation that the governor general acquired the additional title of 'Viceroy'.)

Many of the promises made in that proclamation appeared to be of a positive nature to the Indians.

As per the Queen's proclamation, the era of annexations and expansion had ended and the British promised to respect the dignity and rights of the native princes.

The Indian states were henceforth to recognise the paramountcy of the British Crown and were to be treated as parts of a single charge.

The people of India were promised freedom of religion without interference from British officials.

The proclamation also promised equal and impartial protection under law to all Indians, besides equal opportunities in government services irrespective of race or creed. It was also promised that old Indian rights, customs, and practices would be given due regard while framing and administering the law.

The army, which was at the forefront of the outbreak, was thoroughly reorganised and British military policy came to be dominated by the idea of "division and counterpoise". The British could no longer depend on Indian loyalty, so the number of Indian soldiers was drastically reduced even as the number of European soldiers was increased. The concept of divide and rule was adopted, with separate units being created on the basis of caste/community/region. Recruits were to be drawn from the 'martial' races of Punjab, Nepal, and north-western frontier who had proved loyal to the British during the revolt. Effort was made to keep the army away from civilian population.

The Army Amalgamation Scheme, 1861 moved the Company's European troops to the services of the Crown. Further, the European troops in India were constantly revamped by periodical visits to England, sometimes termed as the 'linked-battalion' scheme. All Indian artillery units, except a few mountain batteries, were made defunct. All higher posts in the army and the artillery departments were reserved for the Europeans. Till the first decade of the 20th century, no Indian was thought fit to deserve the king's commission and a new English recruit was considered superior to an Indian officer holding the viceroy's commission.

The earlier reformist zeal of a self-confident Victorian

liberalism evaporated as many liberals in Britain began to believe that Indians were beyond reform. This new approach—'conservative brand of liberalism', as it was called by Thomas Metcalf—had the solid support of the conservative and aristocratic classes of England who espoused the complete non-interference in the traditional structure of Indian society. Thus, the era of reforms came to an end.

The conservative reaction in England made the British Empire in India more autocratic; it began to deny the aspirations of the educated Indians for sharing power. In the long term, this new British attitude proved counter-productive for the Empire, as this caused frustrations in the educated Indian middle classes and gave rise to modern nationalism very soon.

The policy of divide and rule started in earnest after the Revolt of 1857. The British used one class/community

White Mutiny

In the wake of the transfer of power from the British East India Company to the British Crown, a section of European forces employed under the Company resented the move that required the three Presidency Armies to transfer their allegiance from the defunct Company to the Queen, as in the British Army. This resentment resulted in some unrest termed as White Mutiny.

Prior to 1861, there were two separate military forces in India, operating under the British rule. One was the Queen's army and the other comprised the units of the East India Company. The Company's troops received *batta,* extra allowances of pay to cover various expenditures related to operations in areas other than the home territories. With transfer of power, the *batta* was stopped. Lord Canning's legalistic interpretation of the laws surrounding the transfer also infuriated the affected White soldiers.

The White Mutiny was seen as a potential threat to the already precarious British position in India with a potential of inciting renewed rebellion among the 'still excited population in India'. The demands of the 'European Forces' included an enlistment bonus or a choice of release from their obligations. Finally, the demand for free and clear release with free passage home was accepted, and men opted to return home. It is also believed that open rebellion and physical violence on the part of 'European Forces' were such that there was little possibility of being accepted into the 'Queen's Army'.

View

In conceptual terms, the British who had started their rule as 'outsiders', became 'insiders' by vesting in their monarch the sovereignty of India.

Bernard Cohn (*in context of the Queen's Proclamation*)

against another unscrupulously. Thus, socially, there was irremediable deterioration. While British territorial conquest was at an end, a period of systematic economic loot by the British began. The Indian economy was fully exploited without fear.

In accordance with Queen's Proclamation of 1858, the Indian Civil Service Act of 1861 was passed, which was to give an impression that under the Queen all were equal, irrespective of race or creed. (In reality, the detailed rules framed for the conduct of the civil service examination had the effect of keeping the higher services a close preserve of the colonisers.)

Racial hatred and suspicion between the Indians and the English was probably the worst legacy of the revolt. The newspapers and journals in Britain picturised the Indians as subhuman creatures, who could be kept in check only by superior force. The proponents of imperialism in India dubbed the entire Indian population as unworthy of trust and subjected them to insults and contempt. The complete structure of the Indian government was remodelled and based on the notion of a master race—justifying the philosophy of the 'Whiteman's burden'. This widened the gulf between the rulers and the ruled, besides causing eruptions of political controversies, demonstrations, and acts of violence in the coming period.

Significance of the Revolt

For the British, the Revolt of 1857 proved useful in that it showed up the glaring shortcomings in the Company's administration and its army, which they rectified promptly. These defects would never have been revealed to the world if the Revolt had not happened.

For the Indians, the 1857 Revolt had a major influence

on the course of the struggle for freedom. It brought out in the open grievances of people and the sepoys, which were seen to be genuine. However, it was also obvious that the primitive arms which the Indians possessed were no match for the advanced weapons of the British. Furthermore, the senseless atrocities committed by both sides shocked the Indian intellectuals who were increasingly convinced that violence was to be eschewed in any struggle for freedom. The educated middle class, which was a growing section, did not believe in violence and preferred an orderly approach. But the Revolt of 1857 did establish local traditions of resistance to British rule which were to be of help in the course of the national struggle for freedom.

Summary

Revolt—a product of character and policies of colonial rule

Economic causes—heavy taxation under new revenue settlement, summary evictions, discriminatory tariff policy against Indian products, destruction of traditional handicrafts industry, and absence of concomitant industrialisation on modern lines that hit peasants, artisans, and small zamindars.

Political causes—greedy policy of aggrandisement, absentee sovereigntyship character of British rule, British interference in socio-religious affairs of the Indian public.

Military causes—discontent among sepoys for economic, psychological, and religious reasons, coupled with a long history of revolts.

- **Centres of Revolt and Leaders**

Delhi	-	General Bakht Khan
Kanpur	-	Nana Saheb
Lucknow	-	Begum Hazrat Mahal
Bareilly	-	Khan Bahadur
Bihar	-	Kunwar Singh
Faizabad	-	Maulvi Ahmadullah
Jhansi	-	Rani Laxmibai
Baghpat	-	Shah Mal

- **The British Resistance**

Delhi	-	Lieutenant Willoughby, John Nicholson, Lieutenant Hudson
Kanpur	-	Sir Hugh Wheeler, Sir Colin Campbell

Lucknow	-	Henry Lawrence, Brigadier Inglis, Henry Havelock, James Outram, Sir Colin Campbell
Jhansi	-	Sir Hugh Rose
Benaras	-	Colonel James Neill

- **Causes of Failure**
  - Limited territorial and social base
  - Crucial support of certain sections of Indian public to British authorities
  - Lack of resources as compared to those of the British
  - Lack of coordination and a central leadership
  - Lack of a coherent ideology and a political perspective
- **Nature**
  - R.C. Majumdar and S.N. Sen— "Not an organised 'national' revolt"
  - R.C. Majumdar— "Neither first, nor National War of Independence"
  - V.D. Savarkar—"War of independence"
  - Eric Stokes—"Elitist in character"
  - Lawrence and Seeley—"Mere sepoy mutiny"
  - T.R. Holmes—"A conflict between civilisation and barbarism"
  - James Outram—"A Mohammedan conspiracy making capital of Hindu grievances"
  - Percival Spear—Three phases of the revolt

  Conclusion: Not quite the first war of independence but sowed the seeds of nationalism and quest for freedom from alien rule.
- **Effect**

  Crown took over; Company rule abolished. Queen's Proclamation altered administration. Army reorganised. Racial hatred deepened.

  White Mutiny.

UNIT 4

Reform Movements

Chapters 8 and 9

CHAPTER 8

Socio-Religious Reform Movements: General Features

Factors Giving Rise to Desire for Reform

The dawn of the 19th century witnessed the birth of a new vision—a modern vision among some enlightened sections of the Indian society. This enlightened vision was to shape the course of events for decades to come and even beyond. This process of reawakening, sometimes, but not with full justification, defined as the 'Renaissance', did not always follow the intended line and gave rise to some undesirable by-products as well, which have become as much a part of

daily existence in the whole of the Indian subcontinent as have the fruits of these reform movements.

Impact of British Rule

The presence of a colonial government on Indian soil played a complex, yet decisive role in this crucial phase of modern Indian history. The impact of British rule on Indian society and culture was widely different from what India had known before. Most of the earlier invaders, who had come to India settled within its frontiers, were either absorbed by its superior culture or interacted positively with it and had become part of the land and its people. However, the British conquest was different. It came at a time when India, in contrast to an enlightened Europe of the 18th century affected in every aspect by science and scientific outlook, presented the picture of a stagnant civilisation and a static and decadent society.

Social Conditions Ripe for Reform

Religious and Social Ills

Indian society in the 19th century was caught in a vicious web created by religious superstitions and social obscurantism. Hinduism had become steeped in magic and superstition. The priests exercised an overwhelming and, indeed, unhealthy influence on the minds of the people. Idolatry and polytheism helped to reinforce their position, and their monopoly of scriptural knowledge imparted a deceptive character to all religious systems. There was nothing that religious ideology could not persuade people to do.

Depressing Position of Women

Social conditions were equally depressing. The most distressing was the position of women. Attempts to kill female infants at birth were not unusual. Child marriage was another bane of society. The practice of polygamy prevailed, and in Bengal, under Kulinism, even old men took very young girls as wives. Several women hardly had a married life worth the name, yet (at least among the higher castes) when their husbands died they were expected to commit sati, which Raja Rammohan Roy described as a "murder according to every

shastra". If they escaped this social coercion, they were condemned to a life of misery and humiliation.

The Caste Problem

Another debilitating factor was caste. This entailed a system of segregation, hierarchically ordained on the basis of ritual status. At the bottom of the ladder came the untouchables or scheduled castes, as they came to be called later. The untouchables suffered from numerous and severe disabilities and restrictions. The system splintered people into numerous groups. In modern times it became a major obstacle in the growth of a united national feeling and the spread of democracy. It may also be noted that caste consciousness, particularly with regard to marriage, prevailed also among Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs who also practised untouchability, though in a less virulent form. Under a rigid caste system, social mobility was checked, social divisions grew, and individual initiative was thwarted. Above all, the humiliation of untouchability—so much a part of the caste system—militated against human dignity.

Opposition to Western Culture

The establishment of colonial rule in India was followed by a systematic attempt to disseminate colonial culture and ideology as the dominant cultural current. Faced with the challenge of the intrusion of colonial culture and ideology, an attempt to reinvigorate traditional institutions and to realise the potential of traditional culture developed during the 19th century.

New Awareness among Enlightened Indians

The impact of modern Western culture and consciousness of defeat by a foreign power gave birth to a new awakening. There was an awareness that a vast country like India had been colonised by a handful of foreigners because of weaknesses within the Indian social structure and culture. For some time it seemed that India had lagged behind in the race of civilisation. This produced diverse reactions. Some English-educated Bengali youth developed a revulsion for Hindu religion and culture; they gave up old religious ideas and

traditions and deliberately adopted practices most offensive to Hindu sentiments, such as drinking wine and eating beef. The response, indeed, was varied, but the need to reform social and religious life was a commonly shared conviction.

During the last decades of the 19th century, the rising tide of nationalism and democracy also found expression in movements to reform and democratise the social institutions and religious outlook of the Indian people. Factors such as growth of nationalist sentiments, emergence of new economic forces, spread of education, impact of modern Western ideas and culture, and increased awareness of the world strengthened the resolve to reform.

The socio-cultural regeneration of the India of the 19th century was occasioned by the colonial presence, but not created by it.

Social and Ideological Bases of Reform

Middle-Class Base

The social base of the regeneration seen in the 19th century was the newly emerging middle class and the educated (both traditionally educated and the Western educated) intellectuals, but there was a significant contrast between the broadly middle-class ideals derived from a growing awareness of contemporary developments in the West, and a predominantly non-middle-class social base.

The 19th century intelligentsia searched for its model in the European 'middle class', which, as it learnt through Western education, had brought about the great transformation in the West from medieval to modern times through movements like the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and democratic revolution or reform. However, the intelligentsia of the 19th century India did not grow from trade or industry (which were firmly under the control of British agencies); their roots lay in government service or the professions of law, education, journalism, or medicine—

with which was often combined some connection with land in the form of the intermediate tenures.

The Intellectual Criteria

What gave these reform movements an ideological unity were rationalism, religious universalism, and humanism. Rationalism was brought to judge social relevance. Raja Rammohan Roy firmly believed in the principle of causality linking the whole phenomenal universe and demonstrability as the sole criterion of truth. Akshay Kumar Dutt, while declaring that "rationalism is our only preceptor", held that all natural and social phenomena could be analysed and understood by purely mechanical processes. They thus used a rational approach to study tradition; they evaluated the contemporary socio-religious practices from the standpoint of social utility and to replace faith with rationality. As a consequence, in the Brahmo Samaj, the infallibility of the *Vedas* was repudiated, while the Aligarh Movement emphasised reconciliation of Islamic teachings with the needs of the modern age. Syed Ahmed Khan went to the extent of emphasising that religious tenets were not immutable.

Many of the intellectuals set aside the authority of religion and evaluated truth in any religion by the criteria of logic, reason, or science. According to Swami Vivekananda, the same method of investigation which applies to sciences should be the basis on which religion must justify itself. Although some reformers tended to appeal to faith and ancient authority to support their appeal, on the whole, a rational and secular outlook was very much evident in putting forward an alternative to prevalent social practices. Akshay Kumar Dutt, for instance, brought medical opinion to support his views against child marriage. Reference to the past was to be used only as an aid and an instrument. Neither a revival of the past nor a total break with tradition was envisaged.

Though the reformers tried to reform their religions, there was a universalistic aspect to their religious perspective. Raja Rammohan Roy considered different religions as national embodiments of universal theism. He defended the basic and universal principles of all religions—such as the monotheism of the *Vedas* and the unitarianism of Christianity—while

attacking the polytheism of Hinduism and trinitarianism of Christianity. Syed Ahmed Khan said that all prophets had the same *'din'* (faith) and every country and nation had different prophets.

The social reformers used the universalist perspective to contend with the influence of religious identity on the social and political outlook of the people which was indeed strong.

A new humanitarian morality was embodied in the social reform movements, which included the notion that humanity can progress and has progressed, and that moral values are ultimately those values which favour human progress. The humanist aspect of the religious reform movements was to be seen in the emphasis on the individual's right to interpret religious scriptures in the light of human reason and human welfare and in a general attack on priestly domination of religious practices.

Religious reformation was an important but not the exclusive concern of these movements. Attention was focused on worldly existence and not on issues of salvation or other worldliness. Because of the strong religious element in social practices and the fact that religion was the dominant ideology of the times, it was not possible to undertake any social action without coming to grips with it.

These movements took into their ambit the entire cultural existence, the way of life. The evolution of an alternative cultural-ideological system and the regeneration of traditional institutions were two concerns of these movements. These concerns were manifest in the attempts to reconstruct traditional knowledge, the use and development of vernacular languages, creation of an alternative system of education, defence of religion, efforts to regenerate Indian art and literature, the emphasis on Indian dress and food, attempts to revitalise the Indian systems of medicine, and to research the pre-colonial technology for its potential.

Two Streams

The reform movements could broadly be classified into two categories—the reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, the Aligarh Movement, and the revivalist

movements like the Arya Samaj movement and the Deobandi movement. The reformist as well as the revivalist movement depended, to varying degrees, on an appeal to the lost purity of the religion they sought to reform. The only difference between one reform movement and the other lay in the degree to which it relied on tradition or on reason and conscience.

Direction of Social Reform

The humanistic ideals of social equality and the equal worth of all individuals which inspired the newly educated middle class influenced the field of social reform in a major way. The social reform movements were linked to the religious reforms primarily because nearly all social ills like untouchability and gender-based inequity derived legitimacy from religion in one way or the other. In later years, though, the social reform movement gradually dissociated itself from religion and adopted a secular approach. Moreover, earlier the reform movements had a rather narrow social base, being limited to the upper and middle classes and upper castes who tried to balance their modernised views and the existing social conditions. But later on, the social reform movements penetrated the lower strata of society to revolutionise and reconstruct the social sphere.

In the beginning, organisations such as the Social Conference, Servants of India Society, and the Christian missionaries were instrumental in social reform along with many enlightened individuals like Jyotiba Phule, Gopalhari Deshmukh, K.T. Telang, B.M. Malabari, D.K. Karve, Sri Narayana Guru, E.V. Ramaswami Naicker, and B.R. Ambedkar. In later years, especially with the onset of the 20th century, the national movement provided the leadership and organisation for social reform.

To reach the masses, the reformers used the Indian languages to propagate their views. They used a variety of media—novels, dramas, poetry, short stories, the press, and, in the 1930s and later on, the cinema—to spread their opinions.

Broadly, the social reform movements had a two-point agenda—fight for the betterment of status of women in

society and fight to remove disabilities arising out of untouchability.

Fight for Betterment of Position of Women

The reformers had to work against great odds. Women were generally accorded a low status and were considered to be inferior adjuncts to men, with no identity of their own. They enjoyed no scope of giving expression to their talents as they were suppressed by practices such as *purdah,* early marriage, ban on widow-marriage, sati, etc. Both Hindu and Muslim women were economically and socially dependent on male relatives, while education was generally denied to them. The Hindu women did not enjoy the right to inherit property or to terminate an undesirable marriage. Muslim women could inherit property but only half as much as men could, while in matters of divorce there was no equality between men and women. Polygamy was prevalent among Hindus as well as Muslims.

Their glorification as wives and mothers was the only way in which society recognised the contribution of women as members of society. The improvement of the status of women in the society was considered to be vital, and social reformers worked towards this since a radical change in the domestic sphere—where initial socialisation of the individual takes place and where a crucial role is played by women—was the need of the hour. It was clearly understood that this change would translate into reformed homes and reformed men, and that no country whose females were sunk in ignorance could ever make significant progress in civilisation.

The social reform movements, the freedom struggle, movements led by enlightened women themselves and, later, free India's Constitution have done much for the emancipation of women.

The reformers basically appealed to the doctrines of individualism and equality, and argued, to bolster their appeal, that true religion did not sanction an inferior status to women. They raised their voice against degrading customs such as polygamy, *purdah,* child marriage, restrictions on widow marriage, and worked relentlessly to establish educational

facilities for women, to persuade the government to enact favourable legislations for women and in general to propagate the uselessness of medieval, feudal attitudes which required to be given up.

Steps taken to Ameliorate Women's Position

Because of the indefatigable efforts of the reformers, a number of administrative measures were adopted by the government to improve the condition of women.

Abolition of Sati Influenced by the frontal attack launched by the enlightened Indian reformers led by Raja Rammohan Roy, the government under Governor-General William Bentinck declared the practice of *sati* illegal and punishable by criminal courts as culpable homicide. The regulation of 1829 (*Regulation XVII, A.D. 1829 of the Bengal Code*) was applicable in the first instance to Bengal Presidency alone, but was extended in slightly modified forms to Madras and Bombay Presidencies in 1830.

(Historians have observed that the practice of sati was sought to be banned in the regions under the control of the Portuguese, Dutch, and French in the early 16th century. In 1582, the Mughal emperor, Akbar is said to have issued orders that sati was not be coerced, and appointed inspectors to see that no widow was compelled to follow the custom.)

Preventing Female Infanticide The practice of murdering female infants immediately after their birth was a common practice among upper-class Bengalis and Rajputs who considered females to be an economic burden. The Bengal regulations of 1795 and 1804 declared infanticide illegal and equivalent to murder. An act passed in 1870 made it compulsory for parents to register the birth of all babies, and it provided for verification of female children for some years after birth, particularly in areas where the custom was resorted to in utmost secrecy.

Widow Remarriage The Brahmo Samaj had the issue of widow remarriage high on its agenda and did much to popularise it. But it was mainly due to the efforts of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820–91), the principal of Sanskrit College, Calcutta, that the Hindu Widows' Remarriage

Act, 1856, was passed; it legalised marriage of widows and declared issues from such marriages as legitimate. Vidyasagar cited Vedic texts to prove that the Hindu religion sanctioned widow remarriage.

Vishnu Shastri Pandit founded the Widow Remarriage Association in the 1850s. Another prominent worker in this field was Karsandas Mulji who started the *Satya Prakash* in Gujarati in 1852 to advocate widow remarriage. Similar efforts were made by Professor D.K. Karve in western India and by Veerasalingam Pantulu in Madras. Karve himself married a widow in 1893. He dedicated his life to the upliftment of Hindu widows and became the secretary of the Widow Remarriage Association. He opened a widows' home in Poona to give the high-caste widows an interest in life by providing them with facilities for vocational training. The right of widows to remarriage was also advocated by B.M. Malabari, Narmad (Narmadashankar Labhshankar Dave), Justice Govind Mahadeo Ranade, and K. Natarajan among others. Jyotiba Phule and his wife Savitribai were also vociferous advocates of widow remarriage and campaigned against widows being subjected to degrading practices.

Controlling Child Marriage The Native Marriage Act (or Civil Marriage Act), 1872 signified legislative action in prohibiting child marriage. It had a limited impact as the act was not applicable to Hindus, Muslims, and other recognised faiths. The relentless efforts of a Parsi reformer, B.M. Malabari, were rewarded by the enactment of the Age of Consent Act (1891), which forbade the marriage of girls below the age of 12. The case of Rukhmabai pushed the reformers to get the Age of Consent Act passed. Rukhmabai Raut, who went on to become India's first woman physician to practise medicine, was married to Dadaji Bhikaji at the age of 11. However, with the support of her step father, Sakharam Arjun, she did not join her husband for some time during which she continued with her education. When, after some 12 years of the marriage, Dadaji Bhikaji demanded that she join him as his wife, she refused. This led to the Dadaji Bhikaji vs Rukhmabai case of 1884. Dadaji petitioned the Bombay High Court for restitution of conjugal rights of a

husband. Rukhmabai questioned the validity of her marriage with Dadaji, as the marriage had taken place before she had "arrived at years of discretion" and, as such, she refused to be bound to it. Justice Robert Hill Pinhey dismissed Dadaji's petition, saying that Rukhmabai had been married off in "helpless infancy" and hence could not be forced to join her husband. However, an appeal was sought against the judgement after many criticised it as diminishing Hindu customs and, in 1887, Pinhey's decision was overturned by Chief Justice Sir Charles Sargent and Justice Farran. Rukhmabai was told to live with her husband. Rukhmabai declared that she would rather undergo any punishment meted out by the court rather than go to live with her husband. It is said that it was only with Queen Victoria's intervention that the sentence of imprisonment was set aside. It is also said that even the conservatives among the Indians as well as the British government did not want Rukhmabai to be punished for her stand. The Rukhmabai case became one of the most publicised court cases in India in the 19th century, and brought the issue of child marriage and the rights of the women to the forefront. A group of Indian reformers, such as Behramji Malabari and Ramabai Ranade, formed the Rukhmabai Defence Committee to bring the case to public attention. (After finishing her studies, Rukhmabai obtained a position as Chief Medical Officer in Surat. During her long and distinguished career in medicine, she continued writing against child marriage and women's seclusion or purdah system.)

The Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, popularly known as the Sarda Act, which came into force in 1930, further pushed up the marriage age to 18 and 14 for boys and girls, respectively. (Harbilas Sarda was an Indian academic and judge, who became Member of the Central Legislative Assembly from Ajmer-Merwara. He was a follower of Dayanand Saraswati and a member of the Arya Samaj.) In free India, the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978 raised the age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18 years and for boys from 18 to 21.

Education of Women The Christian missionaries were the first to set up the Calcutta Female Juvenile Society in 1819. The Bethune School, founded by J.E.D. Bethune, president of the Council of Education in Calcutta in 1849 was the first fruit of the powerful movement for women's education that arose in the 1840s and 1850s. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was associated with no less than 35 girls' schools in Bengal and is considered one of the pioneers of women's education.

Jagannath Shankarsheth 'Nana' and Bhau Daji were among the active promoters of girls' schools in Maharashtra. Jagannath 'Nana' Shankarsheth (the name is spelt variously – Jugonnath Sunkersett, Jagannath Shankarshet, or Jagannath Shankar Seth) was one of the founders of the School Society and Native School of Bombay. (The school changed names a number of times: it became the Bombay Native Institution in 1824; in 1840, it became the Board of Education; and in 1856 it became the Elphinstone Educational Institution.) When Dr Wilson belonging to the Scottish was unable to get accommodation for a girls' school, Nana provided accommodation for the school and even sent the female members of his family to the school in Girgaum. In 1856, the British government had announced some grant in aid to private institutions. Nana took advantage of this and started an English Marathi school in Girgaum. He contributed funds to the girl's school started by Student's Literary and Scientific Society. Bhau Daji Lad (Ram Krishna Lad) was another ardent promoter of education. As the first Indian president of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, he championed the cause of female education, and a girls' school was founded in his name. Perhaps the most notable pioneers in promoting the education of women was Jyotirao Phule (also called Jyotiba Phule) and his wife Savitribai. Phule held radical views for the times on the necessity of education for girls. His first gender-sensitive act was to encourage his wife Savitri to read and write. Later, impressed by the school for girls run by the American missionaries in Ahmednagar, he and his wife opened the first school for girls at Bhidewada, Pune in 1848. Not many were willing to teach in the school,

given the opposition to girls' education, so Phule and Savitribai shared the work of teaching. Savitribai could be said to have become the first female school teacher of modern India. She went on to become headmistress, and taught alongside her trainee Fatima Sheikh and Jyotirao's emancipated aunt, Sagunabai. The Phules went on to open several more schools in and around Pune. Phule also opened night schools for those working during the day and unable to attend regular schools. The school established by the Students' Literary and Scientific Society were assisted by European officials, but Phule's venture was without help from the authorities. It was an 'indigenous' effort and that too by a non-brahmin, in the face of huge opposition from the orthodox sections of society.

The Alexandra Society of Parsis opened in 1863 was aimed at educating Parsi girls. Incidentally, the first woman graduate of Bombay University was a Parsi woman, Cornelia Sorabji, in 1887. She later worked for equal opportunities for women in education.

It will be seen that it was largely the private enterprise of Indians themselves that encouraged women's education.

After Lord Dalhousie declared that female education must be given "frank and cordial support", Charles Wood's Despatch on Education (1854) laid great stress on the need for female education. In 1914, the Women's Medical Service did a lot of work in training nurses and midwives.

The Indian Women's University set up by Professor D.K. Karve in 1916 was one of the outstanding institutions imparting education to women. In the same year, Lady Hardinge Medical College was opened in Delhi.

Health facilities began to be provided to women with the opening of Dufferin hospitals in the 1880s.

Participation in the swadeshi and anti-partition and the Home Rule movements during the opening decades of the 20th century was a major liberating experience for the otherwise home-centred Indian women. After 1918, they faced *lathis* and bullets and were jailed during political processions, picketing, etc. They actively participated in trade union and kisan movements, or revolutionary movements.

They voted in, stood for, and got elected to various legislatures and local bodies. Sarojini Naidu went on to become the president of the Indian National Congress (1925) and later the governor of the United Provinces (1947–49).

After 1920, aware and self-confident women led a women's movement. Many organisations and institutions such as the All India Women's Conference (established in 1927) came up.

Women's Organisations In 1910, Sarla Devi Chaudhurani convened the first meeting of the *Bharat Stree Mahamandal* in Allahabad. Considered as the first major Indian women's organisation set up by a woman, its objectives included promotion of education for women, abolition of the *purdah* system, and improvement in the socio-economic and political status of woman all over India. Sarla Devi believed that the man working for women's upliftment lived 'under the shade of Manu'.

Ramabai Ranade founded the Ladies Social Conference (Bharat Mahila Parishad), under the parent organisation National Social Conference, in 1904 in Bombay.

Pandita Ramabai Saraswati founded the Arya Mahila Samaj to serve the cause of women. She pleaded for improvement in the educational syllabus of Indian women before the English Education Commission, which was referred to Queen Victoria. This resulted in medical education for women which started in Lady Dufferin College. Later, Ramabai Ranade established a branch of Arya Mahila Samaj in Bombay.

In 1925, the National Council of Women in India, a national branch of the International Council of Women, was formed. Mehribai Tata played a vital role in its formation and advancement. She opined that the *purdah* system, caste differences, and lack of education prevented women from working to solve societal problems. Other women who held important positions on the executive committee of the council included Cornelia Sarabji, India's first lady barrister; Tarabai Premchand, wife of a wealthy banker; Shaffi Tyabji, a member of one of Mumbai's leading Muslim families; and Maharani Sucharu Devi, daughter of Keshab Chandra Sen.

However, according to critics, the philanthropic style that was being followed by these women was that of upper-class English women.

The All India Women's Conference (AIWC), founded by Margaret Cousins in 1927, was perhaps the first women's organisation with an egalitarian approach. Its first conference was held at Ferguson College, Pune. Important founding members included Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwad, Rani Sahiba of Sangli, Sarojini Naidu, Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya, and Lady Dorab Tata. Its objectives were to work for a society based on principles of social justice, integrity, equal rights and opportunities; and to secure for every human being, the essentials of life, not determined by accident of birth or sex but by planned social distribution. For this purpose, the AIWC worked towards various legislative reforms before and after India's independence, some examples being Sarda Act (1929), Hindu Women's Right to Property Act (1937), Factory Act (1947), Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act (1954), Special Marriage Act (1954), Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act (1956), Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (1956), the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women Act (1958), Maternity Benefits Act (1961), Dowry Prohibition Act (1961), and Equal Remuneration Act (1958, 1976).

Struggle Against Caste-Based Exploitation

The later-Vedic conception of four-fold division of Hindu society got further subdivided into numerous sub-castes due to racial admixture, geographical expansion, and diversification of crafts which gave rise to new vocations.

The concept of Hindu *chaturvarnashrama* dictated that the caste of a person determined the status and relative purity of different sections of population. It was caste that determined who could get education or ownership of landed property, the kind of profession one should pursue, whom one could dine with or marry, etc. In general, caste decided a person's social loyalties even before birth. The dress, food, place of residence, sources of water for drinking and irrigation, entry into temples—all these were regulated by the caste factor.

The worst-hit by the discriminatory institution of caste were the 'untouchables' or the scheduled castes/dalits, as they

came to be called later. The disabilities imposed on them were humiliating, inhuman, and based on the principle of inequality by birth.

Factors that Helped to Mitigate Caste-based Discrimination

- **British rule, perhaps without intention, created certain conditions that undermined caste consciousness to an extent.** British rule in India unleashed certain forces, sometimes through direct administrative measures and sometimes indirectly by creating suitable conditions. Though these measures had negative effects in one way, they had a positive effect too. For instance, the creation of private property in land and free sale of land upset caste equations. A close interlink between caste and vocation could not survive as village autarchy crumbled. Besides, modern commerce and industry gave rise to several economic avenues, while growing urbanisation and modern means of transport added to the mobility of populations. The British administration introduced the concept of equality before law in a uniformly applied system of law which dealt a severe blow to social and legal inequalities, while the judicial functions of caste panchayats were taken away. The administrative services were made open to all castes and the new education system was on totally secular lines.

- **The social reform movements also strove to undermine caste-based exploitation.** From the mid-19th century onwards, numerous organisations and groups such as the Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, the Theosophists, the Social Conference, and individuals worked to spread education among the untouchables and remove restrictions imposed on them from entering temples or using ponds, tanks, etc. Although many of them defended the *chaturvarna* system, they criticised untouchability. The social reformers attacked the rigid hereditary basis of caste distinctions and the law of *karma* which formed the basis of the religio-philosophic defence of the undemocratic authoritarian caste institution. They called on people to work for betterment in the real world in which they lived, rather than strive for salvation after death.

For instance, the Arya Samaj while crusading against the disintegration of Hindu society into myriad sub-castes, aimed at reconstructing it on the original four-fold division and upholding the right of even the lowest castes to study the scriptures.

● **The national movement took inspiration from the principles of liberty and equality against the forces which tended to divide the society.** The national leaders and organisations opposed caste privileges, fought for equal civic rights and free development of the individual. The caste divisions were diluted, although in a limited manner, because of mass participation in demonstrations, meetings and satyagraha struggles. The Congress governments in various provinces after 1937 did some useful work for the upliftment of the depressed classes; for instance, free education for Harijans ('untouchables') was introduced in some provinces. The rulers of states like Travancore, Indore, and Devas took the initiative in opening all state temples by proclamation.

Gandhi always had in mind the objective of eradicating untouchability by root and branch. His ideas were based on the grounds of humanism and reason. He argued that the *Shastras* did not sanction untouchability and, even if they did, they should be ignored since truth cannot be confined within the covers of a book. In 1932, he founded the All India Harijan Sangh.

● **With increasing opportunities of education and general awakening, there were stirrings among the lower castes themselves.** This awakening gradually developed into a powerful movement in defence of their rights and against upper-caste oppression. In Maharashtra, Jyotiba Phule, born in a low-caste *Mali* family, led a movement against the brahminical domination of Hindu society. He accorded the highest priority to education of lower castes, especially girls for whom he opened several schools.

Gopal Baba Walangkar, also known as Gopal Krishna, is considered to be a pioneer in the movement to uplift the untouchable people from the socio-economic oppression that they had been subject to for ages. He worked against caste discrimination in Raigad district. He expanded on Phule's

theory of the Aryan invasion, that the indigenous inhabitants of India were actually the untouchable people, and that caste was created by the invading Aryans to subjugate and control the indigenous people. He founded the Anarya Dosh-Parihar Mandali (Society for the Removal of Evils Among the Non-Aryans). Walangkar became the first Dalit to launch a newspaper, the *Vital Vidhvasak* (Destroyer of Brahmanical or Ceremonial Pollution). Walangkar strove to remove the mark of untouchability by trying to bring caste Hindus to a consciousness of their inhuman behaviour.

Another pioneer in the Dalit uplift movement was Kisan Faguji Bansod. He was a proponent of upliftment of Dalits within the fold of Hinduism. He opened his press which published journals aimed at awakening the Dalits, such as Walangkar's *Vital Vidhwansak.*

Babasaheb Ambedkar, who had experienced the worst form of casteist discrimination during his childhood, fought against upper-caste tyranny throughout his life. In the 1920s, Ambedkar started a fortnightly newspaper, *Mooknayak* (Leader of the Voiceless) in 1920. He stated in the *Mooknayak* that a nationalist consciousness could not develop if social divisions were ignored. The newspaper presented the sufferings of the untouchables in the context of the caste system. He also formed the Bahushkrit Hitakarani Sabha in 1924 with the motto of "educate, agitate and organise", the focus being on mobilising the masses. It marked the beginning of a new socio-economic and political movement striving to bring about equality for the oppressed classes. Another newspaper he started with the aim of defending the rights of the depressed classes was *Bahishkrit Bharat* (1927). Ambedkar organised the All India Scheduled Castes Federation in 1942, while several other leaders of the depressed classes had founded the All India Depressed Classes Association in the 1920s. Ambedkar condemned the hierarchical and insular caste system as a whole, and advocated the annihilation of the institution of caste for the real progress of the nation. The struggle of the depressed classes led to the provision of special representation for these classes in the Government of India Act, 1935.

Others in the 1900s, such as the Maharaja of Kolhapur, encouraged the non-brahmin movement which spread to the southern states in the first decade of the 20th century and was joined by the Kammas, Reddis, Vellalas (the powerful intermediate castes), and the Muslims.

During the 1920s in South India, the non-brahmins organised the Self-Respect Movement led by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker. There were numerous other movements demanding that the ban on the entry of lower castes into temples be lifted. Sri Narayana Guru in Kerala led a lifelong struggle against upper-caste domination. He coined the slogan "one religion, one caste, one God for mankind", which his disciple Sahadaran Ayyapan changed into "no religion, no caste, no God for mankind".

Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar led the Mahad Satyagraha in March 1927 to challenge the regressive customs of the caste Hindus. He stressed the necessity of removing ideas of 'high' and 'low' and inculcating self-elevation through self-help, self-respect, and self-knowledge. He led a procession of some 2,500 'untouchables' through the town of Mahad to the Chawdar tank, a public source of water tank from which the untouchables were not allowed to draw water. Dr Ambedkar took water from the tank and drank it. There were huge protests by caste Hindus. Later, in December 1927, Ambedkar and his colleagues burnt the 'Manusmriti' at the same place as a gesture of getting rid of inequalities.

Dr Ambedkar established the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha in 1924 to highlight the difficulties and grievances of the dalits before the government. Its motto was: 'Educate, Agitate and Organise'.

● **The Constitution of free India has made equality and non-discrimination on the basis of caste imperative.** The struggle against caste discrimination could not be successful during the British rule. The foreign government had its limitations—it could not afford to invite hostile reaction from the orthodox sections by taking up any radical measures. Also, no social uplift was possible without economic and political upliftment. All this could be realised only under the government of a free India. The Constitution of free India

abolishes untouchability and declares the endorsement of any disability arising out of untouchability as unlawful. It also forbids any restriction on access to wells, tanks, bathing *ghats,* hotels, cinemas, clubs, etc. In one of the Directive Principles, the Constitution has laid down that "the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice—social, economic and political—shall inform all the institutions of the national life".

Views

Nationalist power to stir up discontent would be immensely increased if every cultivator could read.

—Bombay Governor
[in a private letter to the Viceroy (1911)]

The rising middle classes were politically inclined and were not so much in search of a religion; but they wanted some cultural roots to cling on to...that would reduce the sense of frustration and humiliation that foreign conquest and rule had produced.

—Jawaharlal Nehru

The dead and the buried are dead, buried and burnt once for all and the dead past cannot, therefore, be revived except by a reformation of the old materials into new organised forms.

—Mahadeo Govind Ranade

Unfortunately, no brahmin scholar has so far come forward to play the part of a Voltaire who had the intellectual honesty to rise against the doctrines of the Catholic church in which he was brought up...A Voltaire among the brahmins would be a positive danger to the maintenance of a civilisation which is contrived to maintain brahminic supremacy.

—B.R. Ambedkar

Untouchability question is one of life and death for Hinduism. If untouchability lives, Hinduism perishes, and even India perishes; but if untouchability is eradicated from the Hindu heart, root and branch, then Hinduism has a definite message for the world.

—M.K. Gandhi

I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave. **—M.K. Gandhi**

Summary

- **Factors which gave Rise to Reform Movements**
  Presence of colonial government on Indian soil.
  Various ills plaguing Indian society—obscurantism, superstition, polytheism, idolatry, degraded position of women, exploitative caste hierarchy.
  Spread of education and increased awareness of the world.
  Impact of modern Western culture and consciousness of defeat by a foreign power.
  Rising tide of nationalism and democracy during the late 19th century.
- **Social Base**
  Emerging middle class and Western-educated intellectuals.
- **Ideological Base**
  Rationalism, religious universalism, humanism, secularism.
- **Social Reform Components**
  Betterment of Position of Women Degraded position due to
  - *Purdah* system
  - Early marriage
  - Lack of education
  - Unequal rights in marriage, divorce, inheritance
  - Polygamy
  - Female infanticide
  - Restrictions on widow remarriage
  - Sati

  Major Contributors to Reforms
  Social reform movements, freedom struggle, movements led by enlightened women, free India's Constitution.

  Legislative Measures for Women
  Bengal Regulation (1829) banning sati
  Bengal Regulations (1795, 1804)—declaring infanticide illegal.
  Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856.
  Age of Consent Act, 1891
  Sarda Act, 1930
  Special Marriage Act, 1954
  Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
  Hindu Succession Act, 1956
  Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act
  Maternity Benefits Act, 1961
  Equal Remuneration Act, 1976
  Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 1978
  Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act in Women and Girls, 1956 (amended in 1986)
  Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (amended in 1986)

- **Struggle Against Caste-based Exploitation**

Factors Undermining Caste Rigidities

Forces unleashed by colonial administration
Social reform movements
National movement
Gandhi's campaign against untouchability
Stirrings among lower castes due to better education and employment
Free India's Constitution

CHAPTER 9

A General Survey of Socio-Cultural Reform Movements and their Leaders

Socio-Cultural Reform Movements and their Leaders

Raja Rammohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj

Raja Rammohan Roy (1772–1833), often called the the father of Indian Renaissance and the maker of Modern India, was a man of versatile genius.

Rammohan Roy believed in the modern scientific approach and principles of human dignity and social equality. He put his faith in monotheism. He wrote *Gift to Monotheists* (1809) and translated into Bengali the *Vedas* and the five *Upanishads* to prove his conviction that ancient Hindu texts support monotheism.

In 1814, he set up the **Atmiya Sabha** (or Society of Friends) in Calcutta to propagate the monotheistic ideals of the Vedanta and to campaign against idolatry, caste rigidities, meaningless rituals, and other social ills. Strongly influenced by rationalist ideas, he declared that *Vedanta* is based on

reason and that, if reason demanded it, even a departure from the scriptures is justified.

He said the principles of rationalism applied to other sects also, particularly to the elements of blind faith in them. In his *Precepts of Jesus* (1820), he tried to separate the moral and philosophical message of the New Testament, which he praised, from its miracle stories. He earned the wrath of missionaries over his advocacy to incorporate the message of Christ into Hinduism.

He stood for a creative and intellectual process of selecting the best from different cultures, over which, again, he faced orthodox reaction.

Raja Rammohan Roy founded the **Brahmo Sabha** in August 1828; it was later renamed **Brahmo Samaj**. Through the Sabha he wanted to institutionalise his ideas and mission. The Samaj was committed to "the worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable, Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe". Prayers, meditation, and readings of the *Upanishads* were to be the forms of worship, and no graven image, statue or sculpture, carving, painting, picture, portrait, etc., were to be allowed in the Samaj buildings, thus underlining the Samaj's opposition to idolatry and meaningless rituals. The long-term agenda of the Brahmo Samaj—to purify Hinduism and to preach monotheism—was based on the twin pillars of reason and the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*. The Samaj also tried to incorporate teachings of other religions and kept its emphasis on human dignity, opposition to idolatry, and criticism of social evils such as *sati*.

Rammohan Roy did not want to establish a new religion. He only wanted to purify Hinduism of the evil practices which had crept into it. Roy's progressive ideas met with strong opposition from orthodox elements like Raja Radhakant Deb who organised the Dharma Sabha to counter Brahmo

View

Raja Rammohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj form the starting point for all the various reform movements—whether in Hindu religion, society or politics—which have agitated modern India.

—H.C.E. Zacharias

Samaj propaganda. Roy's death in 1833 was a setback for the Samaj's mission.

The features of Brahmo Samaj may be summed up in this way.

- It denounced polytheism and idol worship;
- It discarded faith in divine *avataras* (incarnations)*;*
- It denied that any scripture could enjoy the status of ultimate authority transcending human reason and conscience.
- It took no definite stand on the doctrine of *karma* and transmigration of soul and left it to individual Brahmos to believe either way.
- It criticised the caste system.

His ideas and activities were also aimed at political uplift of the masses through social reform and, to that extent, can be said to have had nationalist undertones.

Raja Rammohan Roy's Efforts at Social Reform

Rammohan was a determined crusader against the inhuman practice of *sati*. He started his anti-sati struggle in 1818, and he cited sacred texts to prove his contention that no religion sanctioned the burning alive of widows, besides appealing to humanity, reason, and compassion. He also visited the cremation grounds, organised vigilance groups, and filed counter petitions to the government during his struggle against *sati*. His efforts were rewarded by the Government Regulation in 1829, which declared the practice of *sati* a crime.

As a campaigner for women's rights, Roy condemned the general subjugation of women and opposed prevailing misconceptions which formed the basis of according an inferior social status to women. Roy attacked polygamy and the degraded state of widows and demanded the right of inheritance and property for women.

Rammohan Roy did much to disseminate the benefits of modern education to his countrymen. He supported David Hare's efforts to found the Hindu College in 1817, while Roy's English school taught mechanics and Voltaire's philosophy. In 1825, he established a Vedanta college where courses in both Indian learning and Western social and

Views

I regret to say that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interests.... it is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort.

—Raja Rammohan Roy

physical sciences were offered. He also helped enrich the Bengali language by compiling a Bengali grammar book and evolving a modern elegant prose style.

Rammohan was a gifted linguist. He knew more than a dozen languages including Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, English, French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. A knowledge of different languages helped him broadbase his range of study.

As a bold supporter of freedom of the Press and as a pioneer in Indian journalism, Roy brought out journals in Bengali, Hindi, English, Persian to educate and inform the public and represent their grievances before the government.

As a political activist, Roy condemned oppressive practices of Bengali zamindars and demanded fixation of maximum rents. He also demanded abolition of taxes on tax-free lands. He called for a reduction of export duties on Indian goods abroad and abolition of the East India Company's trading rights. He demanded the Indianisation of superior services and separation of the executive from the judiciary. He demanded judicial equality between Indians and Europeans and that trial be held by jury.

Rammohan was an internationalist with a vision beyond his times. He stood for cooperation of thought and activity and brotherhood among nations. His understanding of the universal character of the principles of liberty, equality and justice indicated that he well understood the significance of the modern age. He supported the revolutions of Naples and Spanish America and condemned the oppression of Ireland by absentee English landlordism and threatened emigration from the empire if the reform bill was not passed.

Roy had David Hare, Alexander Duff, Debendranath Tagore, P.K. Tagore, Chandrashekhar Deb, and Tarachand Chakraborty as his associates.

Debendranath Tagore and Brahmo Samaj

Maharishi Debendranath Tagore (1817–1905), father of Rabindranath Tagore and a product of the best in traditional Indian learning and Western thought, gave a new life to Brahmo Samaj and a definite form and shape to the theist movement, when he joined the Samaj in 1842. Earlier, Tagore headed the **Tattvabodhini Sabha** (founded in 1839) which, along with its organ *Tattvabodhini Patrika* in Bengali, was devoted to the systematic study of India's past with a rational outlook and to the propagation of Rammohan's ideas. A new vitality and strength of membership came to be associated with the Brahmo Samaj due to the informal association of the two sabhas. Gradually, the Brahmo Samaj came to include prominent followers of Rammohan, the Derozians and independent thinkers such as Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Ashwini Kumar Datta. Tagore worked on two fronts: within Hinduism, the Brahmo Samaj was a reformist movement; outside, it resolutely opposed the Christian missionaries for their criticism of Hinduism and their attempts at conversion. The revitalised Samaj supported widow remarriage, women's education, abolition of polygamy, improvement in ryots' conditions, and temperance.

Keshab Chandra Sen and the Brahmo Samaj

The Brahmo Samaj experienced another phase of energy, when Keshab Chandra Sen (1838–84) was made the *acharya* by Debendranath Tagore soon after the former joined the Samaj in 1858. Keshab (also spelt Keshub) was instrumental in popularising the movement, and branches of the Samaj were opened outside Bengal—in the United Provinces, Punjab, Bombay, Madras, and other towns. Unfortunately, Debendranath did not like some of Sen's ideas which he found too radical, such as cosmopolitanisation of the Samaj's meetings by inclusion of teachings from all religions and his strong views against the caste system, even open support to

Views

Whoever worships the True God daily must learn to recognise all his fellow countrymen as brethren.

—Keshab Chandra Sen

inter-caste marriages. Keshab Chandra Sen was dismissed from the office of *acharya* in 1865.

Keshab and his followers founded the Brahmo Samaj of India in 1866, while Debendranath Tagore's Samaj came to be known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj.

In 1878, Keshab's inexplicable act of getting his 13-year-old daughter married to the minor Hindu Maharaja of Cooch-Behar with all the orthodox Hindu rituals caused another split in Keshab's Brahmo Samaj of India. Earlier, Keshab had begun to be considered as an incarnation by some of his followers, much to the dislike of his progressive followers. Further, Keshab had begun to be accused of authoritarianism.

After 1878, the disgusted followers of Keshab set up a new organisation, the **Sadharan Brahmo Samaj**. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj was started by Ananda Mohan Bose, Sib Chandra Deb, and Umeshchandra Dutta. It reiterated the Brahmo doctrines of faith in a Supreme being, one God, the belief that no scripture or man is infallible, belief in the dictates of reason, truth, and morality.

A number of Brahmo centres were opened in Madras province. In Punjab, the Dayal Singh Trust sought to implant Brahmo ideas by the opening of Dayal Singh College at Lahore in 1910.

Significance of the Brahmo Samaj

In matters of social reform, the Samaj attacked many dogmas and superstitions. It condemned the prevailing Hindu prejudice against going abroad. It worked for a respectable status for women in society—condemned *sati*, worked for abolition of the *purdah* system, discouraged child marriage and polygamy, crusaded for widow remarriage and for provisions of educational facilities. It also attacked casteism and untouchability though in these matters it attained only limited success.

The influence of the Brahmo Samaj, however, did not go much beyond Calcutta and, at most, Bengal. It did not have a lasting impact.

Prarthana Samaj

In 1867, Keshab Chandra Sen helped Atmaram Pandurang found the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay. Earlier, the Brahmo

ideas spread in Maharashtra. A precursor of the Prarthana Samaj was the Paramahansa Sabha, something like a secret society to spread liberal ideas and encourage the breakdown of caste and communal barriers. Mahadeo Govind Ranade (1842–1901), joined the samaj in 1870, and much of the popularity of and work done by the society was due to his efforts. His efforts made the samaj gain an all-India character. Other leaders of the samaj were R.G. Bhandarkar (1837–1925) and N.G. Chandavarkar (1855–1923). The emphasis was on monotheism, but on the whole, the samaj was more concerned with social reforms than with religion. The Prarthana Sabha was very attached to the bhakti cult of Maharashtra. The samaj relied on education and persuasion and not on confrontation with Hindu orthodoxy. There was a four-point social agenda also: (i) disapproval of caste system; (ii) women's education; (iii) widow remarriage; and (iv) raising the age of marriage for both males and females. Dhondo Keshav Karve and Vishnu Shastri were champions of social reform with Ranade. Along with Karve, Ranade founded the Widow Remarriage Movement as well as Widows' Home Association with the aim of providing education and training to widows so that they could support themselves.

Young Bengal Movement and Henry Vivian Derozio

During the late 1820s and early 1830s, there emerged a radical, intellectual trend among the youth in Bengal, which came to be known as the 'Young Bengal Movement'. A young Anglo-Indian, Henry Vivian Derozio (1809–31), who taught at the Hindu College from 1826 to 1831, was the leader and inspirer of this progressive trend. Drawing inspiration from the great French Revolution, Derozio inspired his pupils to think freely and rationally, question all authority, love liberty, equality and freedom, and oppose decadent customs and traditions. The Derozians also supported women's rights and education. Also, Derozio was perhaps the first nationalist poet of modern India.

The Derozians, however, failed to have a long-term impact. Derozio was removed from the Hindu College in 1831 because of his radicalism. The main reason for their

limited success was the prevailing social conditions at that time, which were not ripe for the adoption of radical ideas. Further, there was no support from any other social group or class. The Derozians lacked any real link with the masses; for instance, they failed to take up the peasants' cause. In fact, their radicalism was bookish in character. But, despite their limitations, the Derozians carried forward Rammohan Roy's tradition of public education on social, economic, and political questions. For instance, they demanded induction of Indians in higher grades of services, protection of ryots from oppressive zamindars, better treatment to Indian labour abroad in British colonies, revision of the Company's charter, freedom of press, and trial by jury.

Later, Surendranath Banerjea was to describe the Derozians as "the pioneers of the modern civilisation of Bengal, the conscript fathers of our race whose virtues will excite veneration and whose failings will be treated with gentlest consideration".

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

The great scholar and reformer, Vidyasagar's ideas were a happy blend of Indian and Western thought. He believed in high moral values, was a deep humanist, and was generous to the poor. In 1850, he became the principal of Sanskrit College. He was determined to break the priestly monopoly of scriptural knowledge, and for this he opened the Sanskrit College to non-brahmins. He introduced Western thought in Sanskrit College to break the self-imposed isolation of Sanskritic learning. As an academician, he evolved a new methodology to teach Sanskrit. He also devised a new Bengali primer and evolved a new prose style.

Vidyasagar started a movement in support of widow remarriage which resulted in legalisation of widow remarriage. He was also a crusader against child marriage and polygamy. He did much for the cause of women's education. As government inspector of schools, he helped organise 35 girls' schools many of which he ran at his own expense. As secretary of Bethune School (established in 1849), he was one of the pioneers of higher education for women in India.

The Bethune School, founded in Calcutta, was the result of the powerful movement for women's education that arose in the 1840s and 1850s. The movement had to face great difficulties. The young students were shouted at and abused and, sometimes, even their parents subjected to social boycott. Many believed that girls who had received Western education would make slaves of their husbands.

Balshastri Jambhekar

Balshastri Jambhekar (1812–46) was a pioneer of social reform through journalism in Bombay; he attacked brahminical orthodoxy and tried to reform popular Hinduism. He started the newspaper *Darpan* in 1832. Known as the father of Marathi journalism, Jambhekar used the *Darpan* to awaken the people to awareness of social reforms, such as widow remarriage, and to instil in the masses a scientific approach to life. In 1840, he started *Digdarshan,* which published articles on scientific subjects as well as history.

Jambhekar founded the Bombay Native General Library and started the Native Improvement Society of which an offshoot was the Students Literary and Scientific Library. He was the first professor of Hindi at the Elphinston College, besides being a director of the Colaba Observatory.

Paramahansa Mandali

Founded in 1849 in Maharashtra, the founders of the Paramahansa Mandali—Dadoba Pandurang, Mehtaji Durgaram and others—began as a secret society that worked to reform Hindu religion and society in general. The ideology of the society was closely linked to that of the Manav Dharma Sabha. Besides believing that one god should be worshipped, the society also said real religion is based on love and moral conduct. Freedom of thought was encouraged as was rationality. The founders of the mandali were primarily interested in breaking caste rules. At their meetings, food cooked by lower caste people was taken by the members. These mandalis also advocated widow remarriage and women's education. Branches of Paramahansa Mandali existed in Poona, Satara, and other towns of Maharashtra.

Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule

Jyotirao or Jyotiba Phule (1827–90), born in Satara, Maharashtra, belonged to the *mali* (gardener) community and organised a powerful movement against upper caste domination and brahminical supremacy. Phule founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society) in 1873, with the leadership of the samaj coming from the backward classes, *malis, telis, kunbis, saris,* and *dhangars.* The main aims of the movement were (i) social service, and (ii) spread of education among women and lower caste people.

Phule wanted social transformation, not just social reform. He was of the view that until the oppressed classes or the masses were educated, there would be no mass awakening, and social revolution would not be possible. Jyotiba wanted a society free of exploitation. Many believe that Phule introduced the Marathi word 'dalit' (meaning crushed) to describe those outside the varna system.

He propagated what came to be called the Satyashodhak marriage ceremony – simple and inexpensive, besides making the services of the brahmin priest redundant.

Phule's works, *Sarvajanik Satyadharma* and *Gulamgiri,* became sources of inspiration for the common masses. Phule used the symbol of Rajah Bali as opposed to the brahmins' symbol of Rama. Phule aimed at the complete abolition of the caste system and socio-economic inequalities; he was against Sanskritic Hinduism. This movement gave a sense of identity to the depressed communities as a class against those brahmins who used religion and the blind faith of the masses to exploit the masses for personal monetary gain.

Jyotiba Phule was given the title of Mahatma in 1888 by another Maharashtrian social reformer, Vithalrao Krishnaji Vandekar.

Jyotiba was not allowed to continue schooling because of his caste. However, with help and encouragement from the Persian scholar Ghaffar Baig Munshi and a British official, Lizit Sahab, Jyotiba was admitted in a Scottish missionary school. The society of the day was against education of girls as well. Yet, he along with his wife,

Savitribai, were instrumental in opening a school for girls in Pune. The school syllabus included mathematics, science, and social studies.

Savitribai, also of the *mali* community, was born in 1831 at Naigaon in Maharashtra's Satara district and was married to Jyotiba Phule when a child of nine. Jyotiba, a firm believer in education for all, including women, taught his wife at home. Later, she took a teacher's training course. She faced abuse and humiliation from the people along the way when she walked to the school to teach, but she braved it to persist with her vocation. Savitribai also began to teach women and children from the downtrodden castes including Mang and Mahar. She and her husband established two educational trusts, namely the Native Female School, Pune, and the Society for Promoting the Education of Mahars, Mangs, and others.

Savitribai went on from girls' education to question many social evils and work towards eradicating them. She started the Mahila Seva Mandal to raise awareness about women's rights. She and her husband rigorously campaigned against the dehumanisation of widows and advocated widow remarriage. Savitribai is said to have organised a successful barbers' strike to denounce the inhumane practice of shaving widows' heads. With her husband, she set up a home called Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha (home to prevent infanticide) in 1863, where unwed mothers and widows who became pregnant under unfortunate circumstances could have safe deliveries instead of resorting to killing the infants or themselves. Savitribai is said to have organised a successful barbers' strike to denounce the inhumane practice of shaving widows' heads. She and her husband set an example against the evil of untouchability by opening their own water storage to everyone.

After Jyotiba's death, Savitribai took over the Satya Shodhak Samaj, presiding over the meetings, guiding the workers, and working for plague victims. She died in 1897, getting infected by the plague while caring for a patient.

Savitribai wrote poetry, and two of her collections are *Kavyaphule* and *Bavankashi Subodh Ratnakar*.

(In August 2014, the name of the University of Pune was changed to Savitribai Phule Pune University in honour of Savitribai Phule.)

Gopal Baba Walangkar

Gopal Baba Walangkar, also known as Gopal Krishna, (circa 1840–1900) was a pioneer in the cause of uplifting the Dalits from the socio-economic oppression that they suffered. Indeed, Walangkar is generally considered by Ambedkar to be the pioneer of the Dalit movement. Born into a Mahar family near Mahad in what is now Raigad district of Maharashtra, Gopal Krishna served in the army till he retired in 1886. He was deeply influenced by Jyotiba Phule.

Walangkar subscribed to Phule's idea of the Aryan invasion theory, and said that the untouchable people of India were the indigenous inhabitants and that the brahmins came from the invading Aryans. He contended that the concept of caste was contrived by the Aryan invaders to subjugate and control the Anaryans (who were the indigenous people). He formed a group of Mahar astrologers so as to give a sense of empowerment to the Mahars and reduce the importance of the brahmins as the service of setting the time for ceremonies was the only one that brahmins had been willing to perform for the Mahars.

Walangkar founded the Anarya Dosh-Parihar Mandali (Society for the Removal of Evils Among the Non-Aryans). It was through this society that a petition was sought to be raised against the policy of the government to discontinue the recruitment of Mahars in the army.

In 1888, Walangkar began publishing the monthly journal *Vital Vidhvansak* (Destroyer of Brahmanical or Ceremonial Pollution). In 1889, he followed with a pamphlet, *Vital Viduvansan* (Annihilation of Ceremonial Pollution), which spoke against the position of untouchables in society. He has been called "the first intellectual rebel from the Dalit community to have launched a scathing criticism of the caste

system and the position of Dalits in it." His approach was not so much a direct opposition to the elites of society; it was rather an appeal aimed at making them change their attitude. He also wrote *Hindu Dharma Darpan* published in 1894. He contributed to Marathi language journals such as *Sudharak* and *Deenbandhu* to arouse awareness and inspire the depressed classes.

The attitude of the upper castes is manifest in the opposition they showed when Walangkar was appointed to the local taluk board of Mahad in 1895.

Kisan Faguji Bansod

Kisan Faguji Bansod (1879–1946) was born in a Mahar family at Mohapa village near Nagpur in Maharashtra. He wanted the Dalits boys and girls to be educated. He established the Chokhamela girls' school at Nagpur. Setting up his own press in 1910, Bansod published the journals *Nirashrit Hind Nagarik*, *Vital Vidhvansak*, and *Majur Patrika*. He was one of the secretaries of the All India Depressed Classes Conference in 1920.

Bansod was influenced by the Bhakti cult and the work of the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj. Though he also subscribed to the theory of the enslavement of the Dalits because of the Aryan invasion, he advocated reforms within Hinduism for the upliftment of the Dalits.

Vitthal Ramji Shinde

Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde (1873–1944) was born in a Marathi family in Karnataka. He was influenced in his spiritual journey by the works of Tukaram, Eknath, and Ramdas. Brought up in a liberal intellectual atmosphere, he was also influenced by Hari Narayan Apte, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, G.B. Kotkar among other thinkers. He joined the Prarthana Samaj and worked towards the removal of untouchability in India. He established a night school for the children of untouchables in Pune in 1905. He established the Depressed Classes Mission in Bombay in 1906. The mission was aimed at trying to get rid of untouchability; to provide

educational facilities for the untouchables; and try to solve the problems of the untouchables.

Shinde gave evidence before the Southborough Franchise Committee in 1919, and expressed the need for giving special representation to the untouchable class. He resigned as the executive of the Depressed Classes Mission when some of the members wanted the mission's affairs to be managed by their own people. He, however, continued to work for the depressed classes. He was in favour of a united front from the depressed classes and the caste Hindus as he feared the British rulers would otherwise exploit the divisions in Indian society for their own advantage.

He expressed his opposition to the caste system, idol worship, and inequities forced on women and the depressed classes even as he was against meaningless rituals, the dominance of hereditary priesthood, and the very need for a priest to mediate between a devotee and God.

He took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement and was imprisoned in the Yerawda Central Jail.

Shinde was the author of *Bharatiya Asprushyatecha Prashna*.

Gopalhari Deshmukh 'Lokahitawadi'

Gopalhari Deshmukh (1823–92) was a social reformer and rationalist from Maharashtra. He held the post of a judge under British raj, but wrote for a weekly *Prabhakar* under the pen name of *Lokahitawadi* on social reform issues. He advocated a reorganisation of Indian society on rational principles and modern, humanistic, secular values. He attacked Hindu orthodoxy and supported social and religious equality. He wrote against the evils of the caste system. He said, "If religion does not sanction social reform, then change religion." He started a weekly, *Hitechhu,* and also played a leading role in founding the periodicals, *Gyan Prakash, Indu Prakash,* and *Lokahitawadi.*

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar (1856–95) was an educationist and social reformer from Maharashtra. A strong advocate of the power of human reason, he criticised the blind dependence on tradition and false glorification of the past. He was a co-

founder of the New English School, the Deccan Education Society and Fergusson College. He was a principal of Fergusson College. He was also the first editor of *Kesari,* the journal started by Lokmanya Tilak. Later, he started his own periodical, *Sudharak,* which spoke against untouchability and the caste system.

The Servants of India Society

Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866–1915), a liberal leader of the Indian National Congress, founded the Servants of India Society in 1905 with the help of M.G. Ranade. The aim of the society was to train national missionaries for the service of India; to promote, by all constitutional means, the true interests of the Indian people; and to prepare a cadre of selfless workers who were to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit. In 1911, the *Hitavada* began to be published to project the views of the society. The society chose to remain aloof from political activities and organisations like the Indian National Congress.

After Gokhale's death (1915), Srinivasa Shastri took over as president. The society still continues to function, though with a shrunken base, at many places in India. It works in the field of education, providing ashram type of schools for tribal girls and *balwadis* at many places.

Social Service League

A follower of Gokhale, Narayan Malhar Joshi founded the Social Service League in Bombay with an aim to secure for the masses better and reasonable conditions of life and work. They organised many schools, libraries, reading rooms, day nurseries, and cooperative societies. Their activities also included police court agents' work, legal aid and advice to the poor and illiterate, excursions for slum dwellers, facilities for gymnasia and theatrical performances, sanitary work, medical relief, and boys' clubs and scout corps. Joshi also founded the All India Trade Union Congress (1920).

The Ramakrishna Movement and Swami Vivekananda

The didactic nationalism of the Brahmo Samaj appealed more to the intellectual elite in Bengal, while the average Bengali

found more emotional satisfaction in the cult of *bhakti* and *yoga*. The teachings of **Ramakrishna Paramahamsa** (1836–86), a poor priest at the Kali temple in Dakshineshwar, on the outskirts of Calcutta (who was known in childhood as Gadadhar Chattopadhyay) found many followers. Ramakrishna experienced spiritual trances (ecstasy) from a very early age. He is considered to have attained the highest spiritual experience available to Hindus. He did not write books, but his conversations with people formed the basis of what were considered his teachings. He spoke simply, in the form of parables and metaphors, drawn from the observation of ordinary life and nature. But what he said was of universal relevance. Two objectives of the Ramakrishna movement were—(i) to bring into existence a band of monks dedicated to a life of renunciation and practical spirituality, from among whom teachers and workers would be sent out to spread the universal message of Vedanta as illustrated in the life of Ramakrishna, and (ii) in conjunction with lay disciples to carry on preaching, philanthropic and charitable works, looking upon all men, women and children, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour, as veritable manifestations of the Divine. Paramahamsa himself laid the foundations of the Ramakrishna Math with his young monastic disciples as a nucleus to fulfil the first objective. The second objective was taken up by Swami Vivekananda after Ramakrishna's death when he founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897. The headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission are at Belur near Calcutta. The two are twin organisations, though legally and financially separate

Paramahamsa sought salvation through traditional ways of renunciation, meditation, and *bhakti* amidst increasing westernisation and modernisation. He recognised the fundamental oneness of all religions and emphasised that Krishna, Hari, Ram, Christ, Allah are different names for the same God, and that there are many ways to God and salvation: "As many faiths, so many paths." Paramahamsa's spirituality and compassion for the suffering humanity inspired those who listened to him. He used to say, "Service of man is the service of God."

Incidentally, Ramakrishna was married to Saradmani Mukherjee, later known as Sarada Devi. Ramakrishna considered Sarada as the embodiment of the Divine Mother. It was as 'holy mother' that the disciples also knew her as. She played an important role in the work of the math and encouraging the young disciples in their mission.

Swami Vivekananda

Narendranath Datta (1862–1902), who later came to be known as **Swami Vivekananda,** spread Ramakrishna's message and tried to reconcile it to the needs of contemporary Indian society. He emerged as the preacher of neo-Hinduism. Certain spiritual experiences of Ramakrishna, the teachings of the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* and the examples of the Buddha and Jesus are the basis of Vivekananda's message to the world about human values. He subscribed to the Vedanta, which he considered a fully rational system with a superior approach. His mission was to bridge the gulf between *paramartha* (service) and *vyavahara* (behaviour), and between spirituality and day-to-day life.

Vivekananda believed in the fundamental oneness of God and said, "For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam, is the only hope."

Emphasising social action, he declared that knowledge without action is useless. He lamented the isolationist tendencies and the touch-me-not attitude of Hindus in religious matters. He frowned at religion's tacit approval of the oppression of the poor by the rich. He believed that it was an insult to God and humanity to teach religion to a starving man. He pointed out that the masses needed two kinds of knowledge—secular knowledge about how to work for their economic uplift and the spiritual knowledge to have faith in themselves and strengthen their moral sense. He called upon his countrymen to imbibe a spirit of liberty, equality, and free thinking.

At the **Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893**, Swami Vivekananda made a great impression on people by his learned interpretations. The keynote of his opening address was the need for a healthy balance between spiritualism

Views

No other religion preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism and no other religion on earth treads upon the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism.

—Swami Vivekananda

A country where millions have nothing to eat and where few thousand holy men and brahmins suck the blood of the poor and do nothing at all for them, is not a country but a living hell. Is this religion or a dance of death?

—Swami Vivekananda

Forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. **—Swami Vivekananda**

and materialism. Envisaging a new culture for the whole world, he called for a blend of the materialism of the West and the spiritualism of the East into a new harmony to produce happiness for mankind. Vivekananda gave several lectures on Vedanta in the USA and in London before returning to India in 1897.

In India he delivered a series of lectures, the focus of which were to infuse into the new generation a sense of pride in India's past, a new faith in India's culture, and a rare sense of confidence in India's future; to bring about a unification of Hinduism by pointing out the common foundation of its sects; to make the educated people see the misery of the downtrodden and work for their uplift by the application of practical Vedanta principles. His emphasis was not only on personal salvation but also on social good and reform.

In 1897, he founded the Ramakrishna Mission. Vivekananda was a great humanist and used the Ramakrishna Mission for humanitarian relief and social work. The Mission stands for religious and social reform. Vivekananda advocated the doctrine of service—the service of all beings. The service of *jiva* (living objects) is the worship of *Siva.* Life itself is religion. By service, the Divine exists within man. Vivekananda was for using technology and modern science in the service of mankind.

Ever since its inception, the Mission has been running

View

So far as Bengal is concerned Vivekananda may be regarded as the spiritual father of the modern nationalist movement.

—Subash Chandra Bose

a number of schools, hospitals, dispensaries. It offers help to the afflicted in times of natural calamities like earthquakes, famines, floods, and epidemics. The Mission has developed into a worldwide organisation. It is a deeply religious body, but it is not a proselytising body. It does not consider itself to be a sect of Hinduism. In fact, this is one of the strong reasons for the success of the Mission. Unlike the Arya Samaj, the Mission recognises the utility and value of image worship in developing spiritual fervour and worship of the eternal omnipotent God, although it emphasises on the essential spirit and not the symbols or rituals. It believes that the philosophy of Vedanta will make a Christian a better Christian, and a Hindu a better Hindu.

It was in 1898 that Swami Vivekananda acquired a large piece of land at Belur where the Ramakrishna Math was finally shifted and registered as such. The monastic order is open to all men without discrimination on the basis of caste or creed.

Dayananda Saraswati and Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj Movement, revivalist in form though not in content, was the result of a reaction to Western influences. Its founder, Dayananda Saraswati or Mulshankar (1824–83) was born in the old Morvi state in Gujarat in a brahmin family. He wandered as an ascetic for 15 years (1845–60) in search of truth. The first Arya Samaj unit was formally set up by him at Bombay in 1875, and later the headquarters of the Samaj were established at Lahore.

Dayananda's views were published in his famous work, *Satyarth Prakash* (The True Exposition). His vision of India included a classless and casteless society, a united India (religiously, socially, and nationally), and an India free from foreign rule, with Aryan religion being the common religion of all. He took inspiration from the Vedas and considered

them to be 'India's Rock of Ages', the infallible and the true original seed of Hinduism. He gave the slogan "Back to the *Vedas*".

Dayananda's slogan of 'Back to the *Vedas*' was a call for a revival of Vedic learning and Vedic purity of religion and not a revival of Vedic times. He accepted modernity and displayed a patriotic attitude to national problems.

Dayananda had received education on Vedanta from a blind teacher named Swami Virajananda in Mathura. Along with his emphasis on Vedic authority, he stressed the significance of individual interpretation of the scriptures and said that every person has the right of access to God. He criticised later Hindu scriptures such as the *Puranas* and the ignorant priests for perverting Hinduism.

Dayananda strongly criticised the escapist Hindu belief in *maya* (illusion) as the running theme of all physical existence and the aim of human life as a struggle to attain *moksha* (salvation) through escape from this evil world to seek union with God. Instead, he advocated that God, soul, and matter (*prakriti*) were distinct and eternal entities and every individual had to work out his own salvation in the light of the eternal principles governing human conduct. Thus, he attacked the prevalent popular belief that every individual contributed and got back from the society according the principles of *niyati* (destiny). Dayananda believed in the theory of *karma* and reincarnation. But he also said the good deeds should be primarily for the good of others and not for self.

Dayananda launched a frontal attack on Hindu orthodoxy, caste rigidities, untouchability, idolatry, polytheism, belief in magic, charms and animal sacrifices, taboo on sea voyages, feeding the dead through *shraddhas,* etc.

Dayananda subscribed to the Vedic notion of *chaturvarna* system in which a person was identified as a brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya, or shudra not by birth but according to the occupation and merit of the person.

The Arya Samaj fixed the minimum marriageable age at 25 years for boys and 16 years for girls. Swami Dayananda once lamented the Hindu race as "the children of children".

The ten guiding principles of the Arya Samaj are—(i) God is the primary source of all true knowledge; (ii) God, as all-truth, all-knowledge, almighty, immortal, creator of Universe, is alone worthy of worship; (iii) the Vedas are the books of true knowledge; (iv) an Arya should always be ready to accept truth and abandon untruth; (v) *dharma*, that is, due consideration of right and wrong, should be the guiding principle of all actions; (vi) the principal aim of the Samaj is to promote world's well-being in the material, spiritual and social sense; (vii) everybody should be treated with love and justice; (viii) ignorance is to be dispelled and knowledge increased; (ix) one's own progress should depend on uplift of all others; (x) social well-being of mankind is to be placed above an individual's well-being.

The Arya Samaj's social ideals comprise, among others, the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Man, equality of the sexes, absolute justice and fair play between man and man and nation and nation. Intercaste marriages and widow remarriages were also encouraged.

Dayananda also met other reformers of the time—Keshab Chandra Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Ranade, Deshmukh, etc.

The Arya Samaj came to be known for the social service it rendered in times of calamities such as earthquake, famine and floods. It also took initiative in promoting education.

After the death of Dayananda in 1883, the work of the samaj was carried on by illustrious members. Education was an all-important field for the samaj. The Dayananda Anglo-Vedic (D.A.V.) College was established in 1886 at Lahore. But a difference of opinion between two groups in the samaj arose over the curriculum of the D.A.V. College. One group was known as the College Party (some sources say 'Culture' Party), among whose leaders were Lala Hansraj, Lala Lal Chand and Lala Lajpat Rai, and the other was the Mahatma (later Gurukul) Party led by Guru Datta Vidyarthi and Lala Munshi Ram (who later came to be known as Swami Shraddhanand). While the College Party favoured the government curriculum and English education to meet economic and professional needs, the Mahatma Party was interested in introducing the study of Sanskrit and Vedic

philosophy in the tradition of ancient gurukuls. Later, the issue of vegetarianism also became a point of contention: the College Party had nothing against non-vegetarianism, claiming that diet was a personal choice and it was not mentioned in the principles of the samaj; the Mahatma Party was in favour of all the Aryas being strict vegetarians. In the end, the Arya Samaj split in 1893 over these issues.

The College Party retained control over the D.A.V. School and College, while the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Punjab, and a majority of the local Arya Samaj branches were taken over by the Mahatma Party. Swami Shraddhanand opened the Gurukul in 1900 at Gujaranwala (in West Punjab, now in Pakistan). In 1902, the Gurukul was moved to Kangri near Haridwar, hence the name, Gurukul Kangri. The gurukul aimed at providing an indigenous alternative to Lord Macaulay's education policy by offering education in the areas of vedic literature, Indian philosophy, Indian culture as well as modern sciences and research. The Gurukul believed in radical social reform. It founded the Kanya Mahavidyalaya at Jalandhar in 1896 and sponsored education for widows.

The Arya Samaj was able to give self-respect and self-confidence to the Hindus which helped to undermine the myth of superiority of whites and the Western culture.

In its zeal to protect the Hindu society from the onslaught of Christianity and Islam, the Samaj started the *shuddhi* (purification) movement to reconvert to the Hindu fold the converts to Christianity and Islam. An aggressive campaign of shuddhi led to increasing communalisation of social life during the 1920s and later snowballed into communal political consciousness. The shuddhi movement also attempted to uplift those regarded as untouchables and outside the caste system of Hindus into pure caste Hindus.

Seva Sadan

A Parsi social reformer, Behramji M. Malabari (1853–1912), founded the Seva Sadan in 1908 along with a friend, Diwan Dayaram Gidumal. Malabari spoke vigorously against child marriage and for widow remarriage among Hindus. It was his efforts that led to the Age of Consent Act, regulating the age of consent for females, Seva Sadan specialised in taking

care of those women who were exploited and then discarded by society. It catered to all castes and provided the destitute women with education, and medical and welfare services.

[Behramji Malabari acquired and edited the *Indian Spectator.*]

Dev Samaj

Founded in 1887 at Lahore by Shiv Narayan Agnihotri (1850–1927), earlier a Brahmo follower, Dev Sadan is a religious and social reform society. The society emphasised on the eternity of the soul, the supremacy of the *guru,* and the need for good action. It called for an ideal social behaviour such as not accepting bribes, avoiding intoxicants and non-vegetarian food, and keeping away from violent actions. Its teachings were compiled in a book, *Deva Shastra.* Agnihotri spoke against child marriage.

Dharma Sabha

Radhakant Deb founded this sabha in 1830. An orthodox society, it stood for the preservation of the *status quo* in socio-religious matters, opposing even the abolition of sati. However, it favoured the promotion of Western education, even for girls.

Bharat Dharma Mahamandala

An all-India organisation of the orthodox educated Hindus, it stood for a defence of orthodox Hinduism against the teachings of the Arya Samajists, the Theosophists, and the Ramakrishna Mission. Other organisations created to defend orthodox Hinduism were the Sanatana Dharma Sabha (1895), the Dharma Maha Parishad in South India, and Dharma Mahamandali in Bengal. These organisations combined in 1902 to form the single organisation of Bharat Dharma Mahamandala, with headquarters at Varanasi. This organisation sought to introduce proper management of Hindu religious institutions, open Hindu educational institutions, etc. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was a prominent figure in this movement.

Radhaswami Movement

Tulsi Ram, a banker from Agra, also known as Shiv Dayal Saheb, founded this movement in 1861. The Radhaswamis

believe in one supreme being, supremacy of the *guru*, a company of pious people (*satsang*), and a simple social life. Spiritual attainment, they believe, does not call for renunciation of the worldly life. They consider all religions to be true. While the sect has no belief in temples, shrines, and sacred places, it considers as necessary duties, works of faith and charity, service and prayer.

Sree Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Movement

The SNDP movement was an example of a regional movement born out of conflict between the depressed classes and upper castes. It was started by Sree Narayana Guru Swamy (1856–1928) among the Ezhavas of Kerala, who were a backward caste of toddy-tappers and were considered to be untouchables, and were denied education and entry into temples. The Ezhavas were the single largest caste group in Kerala constituting 26 per cent of the total population. Narayana Guru, himself from the Ezhava caste, took a stone from the Neyyar river and installed it as a Sivalinga at Aruvippuram on Sivaratri in 1888. It was intended to show that consecration of an idol was not the monopoly of the higher castes. With this, he began a revolution that soon led to the removal of many discriminations in Kerala's society. The movement (**Aruvippuram Movement**) drew the famous poet Kumaran Asan as a disciple of Narayana Guru. In 1889, the Aruvippuram Kshetra Yogam was formed, which was decided to expand into a big organisation to help the Ezhavas to progress materially as well as spiritually.

Thus, the Aruvippuram Sree Narayana Guru Dharma Paripalana Yogam (in short SNDP) was registered in 1903 under the Indian Companies Act, with Narayana Guru as its permanent chairman, and Kumaran Asan as the general secretary. (In the formation of SNDP, the efforts of Dr Palpu must be acknowledged. He had started the fight for social justice through movements like Ezhava Memorial, Malayali Memorial, etc.)

Sree Narayana Guru held all religions to be the same and condemned animal sacrifice besides speaking against

divisiveness on the basis of caste, race, or creed. On the wall of the Aruvippuram temple he got inscribed the words, "Devoid of dividing walls of caste or race, or hatred of rival faith, we all live here in brotherhood." He urged the Ezhavas to leave the toddy-tapping profession and even to stop drinking liquor.

The SNDP Yogam took up several issues for the Ezhavas, such as: (i) right of admission to public schools; (ii) recruitment to government services; (iii) access to roads and entry to temples; and (iv) political representation. The movement as a whole brought transformative structural changes such as upward social mobility, shift in traditional distribution of power, and a federation of 'backward castes' into a large conglomeration.

Vokkaliga Sangha

The Vokkaliga Sangha in Mysore launched an anti-brahmin movement in 1905.

Justice Movement

This movement in Madras Presidency was started by C.N. Mudaliar, T.M. Nair, and P. Tyagaraja to secure jobs and representation for the non-brahmins in the legislature. In 1917, Madras Presidency Association was formed which demanded separate representation for the lower castes in the legislature.

Self-Respect Movement

This movement was started by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker, a Balija Naidu, in the mid-1920s. The movement aimed at nothing short of a rejection of the brahminical religion and culture which Naicker felt was the prime instrument of exploitation of the lower castes. He sought to undermine the position of brahmin priests by formalising weddings without brahmin priests.

Temple Entry Movement

Significant work in this direction had already been done by reformers and intellectuals like Sree Narayana Guru and N. Kumaran Asan. T.K. Madhavan, a prominent social reformer and editor of *Deshabhimani,* took up the issue of temple

entry with the Travancore administration. Nothing transpired. In the meanwhile, Vaikom, in the northern part of Travancore, became a centre of agitation for temple entry. In 1924, the Vaikom Satyagraha, led by K.P. Kesava, was launched in Kerala demanding the throwing open of Hindu temples and roads to the untouchables. The satyagraha was reinforced by *jathas* from Punjab and Madurai. Gandhi undertook a tour of Kerala in support of the movement.

Again, in 1931, when the Civil Disobedience Movement was suspended, temple entry movement was organised in Kerala. Inspired by K. Kelappan, poet Subramaniyam Tirumambu (the 'singing sword of Kerala') led a group of 16 volunteers to Guruvayur. Leaders like P. Krishna Pillai and A.K. Gopalan were among the satyagrahis. Finally, on November 12, 1936, the Maharaja of Travancore issued a proclamation throwing open all government-controlled temples to all Hindus.

A similar step was taken by the C. Rajagopalachari administration in Madras in 1938.

Indian Social Conference

Founded by M.G. Ranade and Raghunath Rao, the Indian Social Conference met annually from its first session in Madras in 1887 at the same time and venue as the Indian National Congress. It focused attention on the social issues of importance; it could be called the social reform cell of the Indian National Congress, in fact. The conference advocated inter-caste marriages, opposed polygamy and *kulinism*. It launched the 'Pledge Movement' to inspire people to take a pledge against child marriage.

Wahabi/Walliullah Movement

The teachings of Abdul Wahab of Arabia and the preachings of Shah Walliullah (1702–63) inspired this essentially revivalist response to Western influences and the degeneration which had set in among Indian Muslims and called for a return to the true spirit of Islam. He was the first Indian Muslim leader of the 18th century to organise Muslims around the two-fold ideals of this movement: (i) desirability of harmony among the four schools of Muslim jurisprudence which had

divided the Indian Muslims (he sought to integrate the best elements of the four schools); (ii) recognition of the role of individual conscience in religion where conflicting interpretations were derived from the *Quran* and the *Hadis*.

The teachings of Walliullah were further popularised by Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmad Barelvi who also gave them a political perspective. Un-Islamic practices that had crept into Muslim society were sought to be eliminated. Syed Ahmad called for a return to the pure Islam and the kind of society that had existed in the Arabia of the Prophet's time. India was considered to be *dar-ul-Harb* (land of the *kafirs*), and it needed to be converted to *dar-ul-Islam* (land of Islam). Initially, the movement was directed at the Sikhs in Punjab, but after the British annexation of Punjab (1849), the movement was directed against the British. During the 1857 Revolt, the Wahabi's played an important role in spreading anti-British feelings. The Wahabi Movement fizzled out in the face of British military might in the 1870s.

Titu Mir's Movement

Syed Mir Nisar Ali, popularly known as Titu Mir, was a disciple of Syed Ahmad Barelvi (of Rae Bareilly), an adherent of the Wahabi movement. Titu Mir adopted Wahabism and advocated the Sharia. He organised the Muslim peasants of Bengal against the landlords, who were mosly Hindu, and the British indigo planters. The movement was not as militant as the British records made it out to be; only in the last year of Titu's life was there a confrontation between him and the British police. He was killed in action in 1831.

Faraizi Movement

The movement, also called the Fara'idi Movement because of its emphasis on the Islamic pillars of faith, was founded by Haji Shariatullah in 1819. Its scene of action was East Bengal, and it aimed at the eradication of social innovations or un-Islamic practices current among the Muslims of the region and draw their attention to their duties as Muslims. Under the leadership of Haji's son, Dudu Mian, the movement became revolutionary from 1840 onwards. He gave the movement an organisational system from the village to the

provincial level with a khalifa or authorised deputy at every level. The Fara'idis organised a paramilitary force armed with clubs to fight the zamindars who were mostly Hindu, though there were some Muslim landlords too, besides the indigo planters. Dudu Mian asked his followers not to pay rent. The organisation even established its own law courts.

Dudu Mian was arrested several times, and his arrest in 1847 finally weakened the movement. The movement survived merely as a religious movement without political overtones after the death of Dudu Mian in 1862.

Ahmadiyya Movement

The Ahmadiyya forms a sect of Islam which originated from India. It was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1889. It was based on liberal principles. It described itself as the standard-bearer of Mohammedan Renaissance, and based itself, like the Brahmo Samaj, on the principles of universal religion of all humanity, opposing *jihad* (sacred war against non-Muslims). The movement spread Western liberal education among the Indian Muslims. The Ahmadiyya community is the only Islamic sect to believe that the Messiah had come in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to end religious wars and bloodshed and to reinstate morality, peace, and justice. They believed in separating the mosque from the State as well as in human rights and tolerance. However, the Ahmadiyya Movement, like Baha'ism which flourished in the West Asian countries, suffered from mysticism.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh Movement

The British view on the revolt of 1857 held the Muslims to be the main conspirators. This view was further strengthened by the activities of the Wahabis. But later, an opinion got currency among the rulers that the Muslims could be used as allies against a rising tide of nationalist political activity represented, among others, by the foundation of the Indian National Congress. This was to be achieved through offers of thoughtful concessions to the Muslims. A section of Muslims led by Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–98) was ready to allow the official patronage to stimulate a process of growth

among Indian Muslims through better education and employment opportunities.

Syed Ahmed Khan, born in a respectable Muslim family, was a loyalist member of the judicial service of the British government. After retirement in 1876, he became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in 1878. His loyalty earned him a knighthood in 1888. He wanted to reconcile Western scientific education with the teachings of the *Quran,* which were to be interpreted in the light of contemporary rationalism and science even though he also held the *Quran* to be the ultimate authority. He said that religion should be adaptable with time or else it would become fossilised, and that religious tenets were not immutable. He advocated a critical approach and freedom of thought and not complete dependence on tradition or custom. He was also a zealous educationist—as an official, he opened schools in towns, got books translated into Urdu, and started the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College (later, the Aligarh Muslim University) at Aligarh in 1875. He also struggled to bring about an improvement in the position of women through better education and by opposing *purdah* and polygamy, advocating easy divorce, and condemning the system of *piri* and *muridi*. He believed in the fundamental underlying unity of religions or 'practical morality'. He also preached the basic commonality of Hindu and Muslim interests.

Syed Ahmed Khan argued that Muslims should first concentrate on education and jobs and try to catch up with their Hindu counterparts who had gained the advantage of an early start. Active participation in politics at that point, he felt, would invite hostility of the government towards the Muslim masses. Therefore, he opposed political activity by the Muslims. Unfortunately, in his enthusiasm to promote the educational and employment interests of the Muslims, he allowed himself to be used by the colonial government in its obnoxious policy of divide and rule and, in later years, started propagating divergence of interests of Hindus and Muslims.

Syed's progressive social ideas were propagated through

his magazine *Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq* (Improvement of Manners and Morals).

The Aligarh Movement emerged as a liberal, modern trend among the Muslim intelligentsia based in Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh. It aimed at spreading: (i) modern education among Indian Muslims without weakening their allegiance to Islam; (ii) social reforms among Muslims relating to *purdah,* polygamy, widow remarriage, women's education, slavery, divorce, etc. The ideology of the followers of the movement was based on a liberal interpretation of the *Quran* and they sought to harmonise Islam with modern liberal culture. They wanted to impart a distinct socio-cultural identity to Muslims on modern lines. Soon, Aligarh became the centre of religious and cultural revival of the Muslim community.

The Deoband School (Darul Uloom)

The Deoband Movement was organised by the orthodox section among the Muslim ulema as a revivalist movement with the twin objectives of propagating pure teachings of the *Quran* and *Hadis* among Muslims and keeping alive the spirit of *jihad* against the foreign rulers.

The Deoband Movement was begun at the Darul Uloom (or Islamic academic centre), Deoband, in Saharanpur district (United Provinces) in 1866 by Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi (1832–80) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1828–1905) to train religious leaders for the Muslim community. In contrast to the Aligarh Movement, which aimed at the welfare of Muslims through Western education and support of the British government, the aim of the Deoband Movement was moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community. The instruction imparted at Deoband was in original Islamic religion.

On the political front, the Deoband school welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress and in 1888 issued a *fatwa* (religious decree) against Syed Ahmed Khan's organisations, the United Patriotic Association and the Mohammaden Anglo-Oriental Association. Some critics attribute Deoband's support to the nationalists more to its

determined opposition to Syed Ahmed Khan than to any positive political philosophy.

Mahmud-ul-Hasan, the new Deoband leader, gave a political and intellectual content to the religious ideas of the school. He worked out a synthesis of Islamic principles and nationalist aspirations. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema gave a concrete shape to Hasan's ideas of protection of the religious and political rights of the Muslims in the overall context of Indian unity and national objectives.

Shibli Numani, a supporter of the Deoband school, favoured the inclusion of English language and European sciences in the system of education. He founded the Nadwatal Ulama and Darul Uloom in Lucknow in 1894–96. He believed in the idealism of the Congress and cooperation between the Muslims and the Hindus of India to create a state in which both could live amicably.

Parsi Reform Movements

The Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha (Religious Reform Association) was founded in 1851 by a group of English-educated Parsis for the "regeneration of the social conditions of the Parsis and the restoration of the Zoroastrian religion to its pristine purity". The movement had Naoroji Furdonji, Dadabhai Naoroji, K.R. Cama, and S.S. Bengalee as its leaders. The message of reform was spread by the newspaper *Rast Goftar* (Truth-Teller). Parsi religious rituals and practices were reformed and the Parsi creed redefined. In the social sphere, attempts were made to uplift the status of Parsi women through removal of the *purdah* system, raising the age of marriage and education. Gradually, the Parsis emerged as the most westernised section of the Indian society.

Sikh Reform Movements

The Sikh community could not remain untouched by the rising tide of rationalist and progressive ideas of the 19th century.

The **Singh Sabha Movement** was founded at Amritsar in 1873 with a two-fold objective: (i) to make available modern western education to the Sikhs, and (ii) to counter the proselytising activities of Christian missionaries as well as the Brahmo Samajists, Arya Samajists, and Muslim maulvis.

For the first objective, a network of Khalsa schools was established by the Sabha throughout Punjab. In the second direction, everything that went against the Gurus' teachings was rejected, and rites and customs considered to be consistent with Sikh doctrine were sought to be established.

The **Akali Movement** (also known as Gurudwara Reform Movement) was an offshoot of the Singh Sabha Movement. It aimed at liberating the Sikh gurudwaras from the control of corrupt Udasi mahants (the post having become hereditary). These mahants were a loyalist and reactionary lot, enjoying government patronage. The government tried its repressive policies against the non-violent non-cooperation satyagraha launched by the Akalis in 1921, but had to bow before popular demands; it passed the Sikh Gurudwaras Act in 1922 (amended in 1925) which gave the control of gurudwaras to the Sikh masses to be administered through Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) as the apex body.

The Akali Movement was a regional movement but not a communal one. The Akali leaders played a notable role in the national liberation struggle though some dissenting voices were heard occasionally.

The Theosophical Movement

A group of westerners led by Madame H.P. Blavatsky (1831–91) and Colonel M.S. Olcott, who were inspired by Indian thought and culture, founded the Theosophical Society in New York City, United States in 1875. In 1882, they shifted their headquarters to Adyar, on the outskirts of Madras (at that time) in India. The society believed that a special relationship could be established between a person's soul and God by contemplation, prayer, revelation, etc. It accepted the Hindu beliefs in reincarnation and *karma*, and drew inspiration from the philosophy of the *Upanishads* and *samkhya, yoga,* and Vedanta schools of thought. It aimed to work for universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. The society also sought to investigate the unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man. The Theosophical Movement came to be allied with the Hindu renaissance. (At one time it allied with the

Arya Samaj too.) It opposed child marriage and advocated the abolition of caste discrimination, uplift of and improvement in the condition of widows.

In India, the movement became somewhat popular with the election of Annie Besant (1847–1933) as its president after the death of Olcott in 1907. Annie Besant had come to India in 1893. She laid the foundation of the Central Hindu College in Benaras in 1898 where both Hindu religion and Western scientific subjects were taught. The college became the nucleus for the formation of Benaras Hindu University in 1916. Annie Besant also did much for the cause of the education of women.

The Theosophical Society provided a common denominator for the various sects and fulfilled the urge of educated Hindus. However, to an average Indian, the Theosophist philosophy seemed to be vague and lacking a positive programme; to that extent, its impact was limited to a small segment of the westernised class. As religious revivalists, the Theosophists did not attain much success, but as a movement of westerners glorifying Indian religious and philosophical traditions, it gave much-needed self-respect to the Indians fighting British colonial rule. Viewed from another angle, the Theosophists also had the effect of giving a false sense of pride to the Indians in their outdated and sometimes backward-looking traditions and philosophy.

Significance of Reform Movements

Positive Aspects

The orthodox sections of society could not accept the scientific ideological onslaught of the socio-religious rebels. As a result of this, the reformers were subjected to abuse, persecution, issuing of *fatwas,* and even assassination attempts by the reactionaries.

However, in spite of opposition, these movements managed to contribute towards the liberation of the individual from the conformity born out of fear and from uncritical submission to exploitation by the priests and other classes.

The translation of religious texts into vernacular languages, emphasis on an individual's right to interpret the scriptures, and simplification of rituals made worship a more personal experience.

The movements emphasised the human intellect's capacity to think and reason.

By weeding out corrupt elements, religious beliefs and practices, the reformers enabled their followers to meet the official taunt that their religions and society were decadent and inferior.

The reform movements gave the rising middle classes the much-needed cultural roots to cling to, and served the purpose of reducing the sense of humiliation which the conquest by a foreign power had produced.

A realisation of the special needs of modern times, especially in terms of scientific knowledge, and thus promoting a modern, this-worldly, secular, and rational outlook was a major contribution of these reform movements. Socially, this attitude reflected in a basic change in the notions of 'pollution and purity'. Although traditional values and customs were a prominent target of attack from the reformers, yet the reformers aimed at modernisation rather than outright westernisation based on blind imitation of alien Western cultural values. In fact, the reform movements sought to create a favourable social climate for modernisation. To that extent, these movements ended India's cultural and intellectual isolation from the rest of the world. The reformers argued that modern ideas and culture could be best imbibed by integrating them into Indian cultural streams.

The underlying concern of these reformist efforts was revival of the native cultural personality which had got distorted by various factors over the years. This cultural ideological struggle was to prove to be an important instrument in the evolution of national consciousness and a part of Indian national resolve to resist colonial cultural and ideological hegemony. However, not all these progressive, nationalist tendencies were able to outgrow the sectarian and obscurantist outlook. This was possibly due to the divergent duality of

cultural and political struggles, resulting in cultural backwardness despite political advancement.

Negative Aspects

One of the major limitations of the religious reform movements was that they had a narrow social base, namely the educated and urban middle classes, while the needs of the vast masses of peasantry and the urban poor were ignored.

The tendency of reformers to appeal to the greatness of the past and to rely on scriptural authority encouraged mysticism in new garbs and fostered pseudo-scientific thinking while exercising a check on the full acceptance of the need for a modern scientific outlook. But, above all, these tendencies contributed, at least to some extent, in compartmentalising Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Parsis, as also alienating high-caste Hindus from low-caste Hindus.

The emphasis on religious and philosophical aspects of the cultural heritage got somewhat magnified by an insufficient emphasis on other aspects of culture—art, architecture, literature, music, science, and technology. To make matters worse, the Hindu reformers confined their praise of the Indian past to its ancient period and looked upon the medieval period of Indian history, essentially as an era of decadence. This tended to create a notion of two separate peoples, on the one hand; on the other, an uncritical praise of the past was not acceptable to the low-caste sections of society which had suffered under religiously sanctioned exploitation during the ancient period. Moreover, the past itself tended to be placed into compartments on a partisan basis. Many in the Muslim middle classes went to the extent of turning to the history of West Asia for their traditions and moments of pride.

The process of evolution of a composite culture which was evident throughout Indian history showed signs of being arrested with the rise of another form of consciousness—communal consciousness—along with national consciousness among the middle classes.

Many other factors were certainly responsible for the

birth of communalism in modern times, but, undoubtedly, the nature of religious reform movements also contributed to it.

On the whole, however, whatever the net outcome of these reform movements, it was out of this struggle that a new society evolved in India.

Summary

- **Reform Movements: Among Hindus and for Depressed classes**

  Bengal
  - Raja Rammohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj
  - Debendranath Tagore and Tattvabodhini Sabha
  - Keshub Chandra Sen and Brahmo Samaj of India
  - Prarthana Samaj
  - Derozio and Young Bengal Movement
  - Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

  Western India
  - Bal Shastri Jambekar
  - Students' Literary and Scientific Societies
  - Paramhansa Mandalis
  - Jyotiba Phule and Satyashodhak Samaj
  - Gopal Walangkar
  - Kisan Faguji Bansod
  - Vitthal Ramji Shinde
  - Gopalhari Deshmukh 'Lokahitawadi'
  - Gopal Ganesh Agarkar
  - Servants of India Society

  Southern India
  - Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Movement
  - Vokkaliga Sangha
  - Justice Movement
  - Self-respect Movement
  - Temple Entry Movement

  All India
  - Ramakrishna Movement and Vivekananda
  - Dayananda Saraswati and Arya Samaj
  - Theosophical Movement

- **Among Muslims**
  - Wahabi/Walliullah Movement
  - Ahmadiyya Movement

Syed Ahmed Khan and Aligarh Movement
Deoband Movement

- **Among Parsis**
  Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha
- **Among Sikhs**
  Singh Sabha Movement
  Akali Movement
- **Positive Aspects**
  Liberation of individual from conformity out of fear psychosis.
  Worship made a more personal affair
  Cultural roots to the middle classes—thus mitigating the sense of humiliation; much needed self-respect gained
  Fostered secular outlook
  Encouraged social climate for modernisation
  Ended India's cultural, intellectual isolation from rest of the world
  Evolution of national consciousness
- **Negative Aspects**
  Narrow social base
  Indirectly encouraged mysticism
  Overemphasis on religious, philosophical aspects of culture while underemphasising secular and moral aspects
  Hindus confined their praise to ancient Indian history and Muslims to medieval history—created a notion of two separate peoples and increased communal consciousness
  Historical process of evolution of composite culture arrested to some extent

UNIT 5

The Struggle Begins

Chapters 10 and 11

CHAPTER 10

Beginning of Modern Nationalism in India

Factors in the Growth of Modern Nationalism

The rise and growth of Indian nationalism has been traditionally explained in terms of Indian response to the stimulus generated by the British Raj through creation of new institutions, new opportunities, resources, etc. In other words, Indian nationalism grew partly as a result of colonial policies and partly as a reaction to colonial policies. In fact, it would be more correct to see Indian nationalism as a product of a mix of various factors:

(i) Worldwide upsurge of the concepts of nationalism and the right of self-determination initiated by the French Revolution

(ii) Indian Renaissance

(iii) Offshoot of modernisation initiated by the British in India
(iv) Strong reaction to British imperialist policies in India

Understanding of Contradictions in Indian and Colonial Interests

People came to realise that colonial rule was the major cause of India's economic backwardness and that the interests of the Indians involved the interests of all sections and classes—peasants, artisans, handicraftsmen, workers, intellectuals, the educated, and the capitalists. The nationalist movement arose to take up the challenge of these contradictions inherent in the character and policies of colonial rule.

Political, Administrative, and Economic Unification of the Country

The British rule in the Indian subcontinent extended from the Himalayas in the north to the Cape Comorin in the south and from Assam in the east to Khyber Pass in the west. While large areas of India had been brought under a single rule in the past—under the Mauryas or later under the Mughals—the British created a larger state than that of the Mauryas or the great Mughals. While Indian provinces were under 'direct' British rule, the princely states were under 'indirect' British rule. The British sword imposed political unity in India. A professional civil service, a unified judiciary and codified civil and criminal laws throughout the length and breadth of the country imparted a new dimension of political unity to the hitherto cultural unity that had existed in India for centuries. The necessities of administrative convenience, considerations of military defence, and the urge for economic penetration and commercial exploitation (all in British interests) were the driving forces behind the planned development of modern means of transport and communication such as railways, roads, electricity, and telegraph.

From the nationalists' point of view, this process of unification had a two-fold effect:

(i) The economic fate of the people of different regions got linked together; for instance, failure of crops in one region affected the prices and supply in another region.

(ii) Modern means of transport and communication brought people, especially the leaders, from different regions together. This was important for the exchange of political ideas and for mobilisation and organisation of public opinion on political and economic issues.

Western Thought and Education

The introduction of a modern system of education afforded opportunities for assimilation of modern Western ideas. This, in turn, gave a new direction to Indian political thinking, although the English system of education had been conceived by the rulers in the self-interest of efficient administration. The liberal and radical thought of European writers like Milton, Shelley, John Stuart Mill, Rousseau, Paine, Spencer and Voltaire helped many Indians imbibe modern rational, secular, democratic, and nationalist ideas.

The English language helped nationalist leaders from different linguistic regions to communicate with each other. Those among the educated who took up liberal professions (lawyers, doctors, etc.) often visited England for higher education. There they saw the working of modern political institutions in a free country and compared that system with the Indian situation where even basic rights were denied to the citizens. This ever-expanding English educated class formed the middle-class intelligentsia who constituted the nucleus for the newly arising political unrest. It was this section which provided leadership to the Indian political associations.

Role of Press and Literature

The second half of the 19th century saw an unprecedented growth of Indian-owned English and vernacular newspapers, despite numerous restrictions imposed on the press by the colonial rulers from time to time. In 1877, there were about 169 newspapers published in vernacular languages and their circulation reached the neighbourhood of 1,00,000.

The press while criticising official policies, on the one hand, urged the people to unite, on the other. It also helped spread modern ideas of self-government, democracy, civil rights, and industrialisation. The newspapers, journals, pamphlets, and nationalist literature helped in the exchange of political ideas among nationalist leaders from different regions.

Rediscovery of India's Past

The historical researches by European scholars, such as Max Mueller, Monier Williams, Roth and Sassoon, and by Indian scholars such as R.G. Bhandarkar, R.L. Mitra, and later Swami Vivekananda, created an entirely new picture of India's past. This picture was characterised by well-developed political, economic, and social institutions, a flourishing trade with the outside world, a rich heritage in arts and culture and numerous cities. The theory put forward by European scholars, that the Indo-Aryans belonged to the same ethnic group from which other nations of Europe had evolved, gave a psychological boost to the educated Indians. The self-respect and confidence so gained helped the nationalists to demolish colonial myths that India had a long history of servility to foreign rulers.

Progressive Character of Socio-religious Reform Movements

These reform movements sought to remove social evils which divided the Indian society; this had the effect of bringing different sections together and proved to be an important factor in the growth of Indian nationalism.

Rise of Middle-Class Intelligentsia

British administrative and economic innovations gave rise to a new urban middle class in towns. According to Percival Spear, "The new middle class was a well-integrated all-India class with varied background but a common foreground of knowledge, ideas and values.... It was a minority of Indian society, but a dynamic minority.... It had a sense of unity of purpose and of hope."

This class, prominent because of its education, new position, and its close ties with the ruling class, came to the forefront. The leadership to the Indian National Congress in all its stages of growth was provided by this class.

Impact of Contemporary Movements in the World

Rise of a number of nations on the ruins of the Spanish and Portuguese empires in South America, and the national liberation movements of Greece and Italy in general and of Ireland in particular deeply influenced the nationalist ranks.

Reactionary Policies and Racial Arrogance of Rulers

Racial myths of white superiority were sought to be perpetuated by the British through a deliberate policy of discrimination and segregation. Indians felt deeply hurt by this. Lytton's reactionary policies such as reduction of maximum age limit for the I.C.S. examination from 21 years to 19 years (1876), the grand Delhi Durbar of 1877 when the country was in the severe grip of famine, the Vernacular Press Act (1878), and the Arms Act (1878) provoked a storm of opposition in the country. Then came the Ilbert Bill controversy. Ripon's Government had sought to abolish "judicial disqualification based on race distinctions" and to give the Indian members of the covenanted civil service the same powers and rights as those enjoyed by their European colleagues. Ripon had to modify the bill, thus almost defeating the original purpose, because of the stiff opposition from the European community.

It became clear to the nationalists that justice and fair play could not be expected where interests of the European community were involved. However, the organised agitation by the Europeans to revoke the Ilbert Bill also taught the nationalists how to agitate for certain rights and demands.

Political Associations Before the Indian National Congress

The Indian National Congress was not the first political organisation in India. However, most of the political associations in the early half of the 19th century were dominated by wealthy and aristocratic elements. They were local or regional in character. Through long petitions to the British Parliament most of them demanded—

- administrative reforms;
- association of Indians with the administration; and
- spread of education.

The political associations of the second half of the 19th century came to be increasingly dominated by the educated middle class—the lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, etc.,—and they had a wider perspective and a larger agenda.

Political Associations in Bengal

The Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha was formed in 1836 by associates of Raja Rammohan Roy.

The Zamindari Association, more popularly known as the '**Landholders' Society**', was founded to safeguard the interests of the landlords. Although limited in its objectives, the Landholders' Society marked the beginning of an organised political activity and use of methods of constitutional agitation for the redressal of grievances.

The Bengal British India Society was founded in 1843 with the object of "the collection and dissemination of information relating to the actual condition of the people of British India... and to employ such other means of peaceful and lawful character as may appear calculated to secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes of our fellow subjects".

In 1851, both the Landholders' Society and the Bengal British India Society merged into the **British Indian Association**. It sent a petition to the British Parliament demanding inclusion of some of its suggestions in the renewed Charter of the Company, such as:

(i) establishment of a separate legislature of a popular character;
(ii) separation of executive from judicial functions;
(iii) reduction in salaries of higher officers; and
(iv) abolition of salt duty, abkari, and stamp duties.

These were partially accepted when the Charter Act of 1853 provided for the addition of six members to the governor general's council for legislative purposes.

The East India Association was organised by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1866 in London to discuss the Indian question and influence public men in England to promote Indian welfare. Later, branches of the association were started in prominent Indian cities.

The Indian League was started in 1875 by Sisir Kumar Ghosh with the object of "stimulating the sense of nationalism amongst the people" and of encouraging political education.

The Indian Association of Calcutta (also known as the **Indian National Association**) superseded the Indian

League and was founded in 1876 by younger nationalists of Bengal led by Surendranath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Bose, who were getting discontented with the conservative and pro-landlord policies of the British Indian Association. The Indian Association was the most important of pre-Congress associations and aimed to "promote by every legitimate means the political, intellectual and material advancement of the people." It set out to:

(i) create a strong public opinion on political questions; and

(ii) unify Indian people in a common political programme.

It protested against the reduction of age limit in 1877 for candidates of the Indian Civil Service examination. The association demanded simultaneous holding of civil service examination in England and India and Indianisation of higher administrative posts. It led a campaign against the repressive arms act and the vernacular press act.

Branches of the association were opened in other towns and cities of Bengal and even outside Bengal. The membership fee was kept low in order to attract the poorer sections to the association.

The association sponsored an all-India conference which first took place in Calcutta from December 28 to 30, 1883. More than hundred delegates from different parts of the country attended. So, in a way, the association was a forerunner of the Indian National Congress as an all-India nationalist organisation. It later merged with the Indian National Congress in 1886.

Political Associations in Bombay

The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was founded in 1867 by Mahadev Govind Ranade and others, with the object of serving as a bridge between the government and the people.

The Bombay Presidency Association was started by Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, and K.T. Telang in 1885.

Political Associations in Madras

The Madras Mahajan Sabha was founded in 1884 by M. Viraraghavachari (also, Veeraraghavachariar), B. Subramania Aiyer, and P. Ananda- charlu.

Pre-Congress Campaigns

The associations organised various campaigns before the Indian National Congress appeared on the scene. These campaigns were:

(i) for imposition of import duty on cotton (1875)
(ii) for Indianisation of government service (1878–79)
(iii) against Lytton's Afghan adventure
(iv) against Arms Act (1878)
(v) against Vernacular Press Act (1878)
(vi) for right to join volunteer corps
(vii) against plantation labour and against Inland Emigration Act
(viii) in support of Ilbert Bill
(ix) for an All-India Fund for Political Agitation
(x) campaign in Britain to vote for pro-India party
(xi) against reduction in maximum age for appearing in Indian Civil Service; the Indian Association took up this question and organised an all-India agitation against it, popularly known as the Indian Civil Service agitation.

Summary

- **Factors in Growth of Modern Nationalism**
  Understanding of contradictions in Indian and colonial interests
  Political, administrative, and economic unification of the country
  Western thought and education
  Role of press and literature
  Rediscovery of India's past—historical researches
  Rise of middle-class intelligentsia
  Impact of contemporary movements worldwide
  Reactionary policies and racial arrogance of rulers
- **Political Associations Before Indian National Congress**
  1836—Bangabhasha Prakasika Sabha
  Zamindari Association or Landholders' Society
  1843—Bengal British India Society
  1851—British Indian Association
  1866—East India Association
  1870—Poona Sarvajanik Sabha
  1875—Indian League
  1876—Indian Association of Calcutta or Indian National Association
  1885—Bombay Presidency Association
  1884—Madras Mahajan Sabha

CHAPTER 11

Indian National Congress: Foundation and the Moderate Phase

Foundation of the Indian National Congress

In the later 1870s and early 1880s, a solid ground had been prepared for the establishment of an all-India organisation. The final shape to this idea was given by a retired English civil servant, A.O. Hume, who mobilised leading intellectuals of the time and, with their cooperation, organised the first session of the Indian National Congress at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay in December 1885. As a prelude to this, two sessions of the Indian National Conference had been held in 1883 and 1885, which had representatives drawn from all major towns of India. Surendranath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Bose were the main architects of the Indian National Conference.

The first session of the Indian National Congress was attended by 72 delegates and presided over by Womesh Chandra (or Chunder) Bonnerjee. Hereafter, the Congress met every year in December, in a different part of the country each time. Some of the great presidents of the Congress during this early phase were Dadabhai Naoroji (thrice

president), Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, P. Anandacharlu, Surendranath Banerjea, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Ananda Mohan Bose, and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Other prominent leaders included Mahadev Govind Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sisir Kumar Ghosh, Motilal Ghosh, Madan Mohan Malaviya, G. Subramania Aiyar, C. Vijayaraghavachariar, Dinshaw E. Wacha.

In 1890, Kadambini Ganguly, the first woman graduate of Calcutta University, addressed the Congress session, which symbolised the commitment of the freedom struggle to give the women of India their due status in national life.

Apart from the Indian National Congress, nationalist activity was carried out through provincial conferences and associations, newspapers, and literature.

Was It a Safety Valve?

There is a theory that Hume formed the Congress with the idea that it would prove to be a 'safety valve' for releasing the growing discontent of the Indians. To this end, he convinced Lord Dufferin not to obstruct the formation of the Congress. The extremist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai believed in the 'safety valve' theory. Even the Marxist historian's 'conspiracy theory' was an offspring of the 'safety valve' notion. For example, R.P. Dutt opined that the Indian National Congress was born out of a conspiracy to abort a popular uprising in India and the bourgeois leaders were a party to it.

Modern Indian historians, however, dispute the idea of 'safety valve'. In their opinion, the Indian National Congress represented the urge of the politically conscious Indians to set up a national body to express the political and economic demands of the Indians. If the Indians had convened such a body on their own, there would have been unsurmountable opposition from the officials; such an organisation would not have been allowed to form. In the circumstances, as Bipan Chandra observes, the early Congress leaders used Hume as a 'lightning conductor', i.e., as a catalyst to bring together the nationalistic forces even if under the guise of a 'safety valve'.

Aims and Objectives of the Congress

The main aims of the Indian National Congress in the initial stage were to:

(i) found a democratic, nationalist movement;
(ii) politicise and politically educate people;
(iii) establish the headquarters for a movement;
(iv) promote friendly relations among nationalist political workers from different parts of the country;
(v) develop and propagate an anti-colonial nationalist ideology;
(vi) formulate and present popular demands before the government with a view to unifying the people over a common economic and political programme;
(vii) develop and consolidate a feeling of national unity among people irrespective of religion, caste, or province.
(viii) carefully promote and nurture Indian nationhood.

Era of Moderates (1885–1905)

Important Leaders

The national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, D.E. Wacha, W.C. Bonnerjea, S.N. Banerjea who dominated the Congress policies during the early period (1885–1905) were staunch believers in 'liberalism' and 'moderate' politics and came to be labelled as Moderates to distinguish them from the neo-nationalists of the early twentieth century who were referred to as the Extremists.

Moderate Approach

The moderate political activity involved constitutional agitation within the confines of law and showed a slow but orderly political progress. The Moderates believed that the British basically wanted to be just to the Indians but were not aware of the real conditions. Therefore, if public opinion could be created in the country and public demands be presented to the government through resolutions, petitions, meetings, etc., the authorities would concede these demands gradually.

To achieve these ends, they worked on a two-pronged methodology—one, create a strong public opinion to arouse consciousness and national spirit and then educate and unite people on common political questions; and two, persuade the British Government and British public opinion to introduce reforms in India on the lines laid out by the nationalists. They used the method of 'prayer and petition' and if that failed, they resorted to constitutional agitation.

A British committee of the Indian National Congress was established in London in 1889 which had *India* as its organ. Dadabhai Naoroji spent a substantial portion of his life and income campaigning for India's case abroad. In 1890, it was decided to hold a session of the Indian National Congress in London in 1892, but owing to the British elections of 1891 the proposal was postponed and never revived later.

The Moderate leaders believed that political connections with Britain were in India's interest at that stage of history and that the time was not ripe for a direct challenge to the British rule. Therefore, it was considered to be appropriate to try and transform the colonial rule to be as close to a national rule as possible.

Contributions of Moderate Nationalists

Economic Critique of British Imperialism

The early nationalists, led by Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C. Dutt, Dinshaw Wacha and others, carefully analysed the political economy of British rule in India, and put forward the "drain theory" to explain British exploitation of India. They opposed the transformation of a basically self-sufficient Indian economy into a colonial economy (i.e., a supplier of raw materials and food stuff, an importer of finished goods and a field of investment for British capital). Thus, the Moderates were able to create an all-India public opinion that British rule in India was the major cause of India's poverty and economic backwardness.

To mitigate the deprivation characterising Indian life,

the early nationalists demanded severance of India's economic subservience to Britain and development of an independent economy through involvement of Indian capital and enterprise. The early nationalists demanded reduction in land revenue, abolition of salt tax, improvement in working conditions of plantation labour, reduction in military expenditure, and encouragement to modern industry through tariff protection and direct government aid. (Also refer to chapter on Economic Impact of British Rule in India.)

Constitutional Reforms and Propaganda in Legislature

Legislative councils in India had no real official power till 1920. Yet, work done in them by the nationalists helped the growth of the national movement. The Imperial Legislative Council constituted by the Indian Councils Act (1861) was an impotent body designed to disguise official measures as having been passed by a representative body. Indian members were few in number—in the 30 years from 1862 to 1892 only 45 Indians were nominated to it, most of them being wealthy, landed, and with loyalist interests. Only a handful of political figures and independent intellectuals such as Syed Ahmed Khan, Kristodas Pal, V.N. Mandlik, K.L. Nulkar, and Rashbehari Ghosh (also written as Rash Behari Ghose) were among those nominated.

From 1885 to 1892, the nationalist demands for constitutional reforms were centred around:

(i) expansion of councils—i.e., greater participation of Indians in councils; and

(ii) reform of councils—i.e., more powers to councils, especially greater control over finances.

The early nationalists worked with the long-term objective of a democratic self-government. Their demands for constitutional reforms were meant to have been conceded in 1892 in the form of the Indian Councils Act.

These reforms were severely criticised at Congress sessions, where the nationalists made no secret of their dissatisfaction with them. Now, they demanded: (i) a majority of elected Indians; and (ii) control over the budget, i.e., the power to vote upon and amend the budget. They gave the

Indian Councils Act, 1892

Main Provisions

- Number of additional members in Imperial Legislative Councils and the Provincial Legislative Councils was raised. In Imperial Legislative Council, now the governor general could have 10 to 16 non-officials (instead of six to ten previously).
- The non-official members of the Indian legislative council were to be nominated by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and provincial legislative councils. The members could be recommended by universities, municipalities, zamindars, and chambers of commerce. So, the principle of representation was introduced.
- Budget could be discussed.
- Questions could be asked.

Limitations

- The officials retained their majority in the council, thus making ineffective the non-official voice.
- The 'reformed' Imperial Legislative Council met, during its tenure till 1909, on an average for only 13 days in a year, and the number of unofficial Indian members present was only five out of twenty-four.
- The budget could not be voted upon, nor could any amendments be made to it.
- Supplementaries could not be asked, nor could answers to any question be discussed.

slogan—"No taxation without representation". Gradually, the scope of constitutional demands was widened. Dadabhai Naoroji (1904), Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1905), and Lokmanya Tilak (1906) demanded self-government on the lines of the self-governing colonies of Canada and Australia. Also, leaders like Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale put government policies and proposals to severe criticism.

The British had intended to use the councils to incorporate the more vocal among Indian leaders, so as to allow them to let off their "political steam", while the impotent councils could afford to remain deaf to their criticism. But the nationalists were able to transform these councils into forums for ventilating popular grievances, for exposing the defects of an indifferent bureaucracy, for criticising government policies/proposals, raising basic economic issues, especially regarding public finance.

The nationalists were, thus, able to enhance their political stature and build a national movement while undermining the political and moral influence of imperialist rule. This helped in generating anti-imperialist sentiments among the public. But, at the same time, the nationalists failed to widen the democratic base of the movement by not including the masses, especially women, and not demanding the right to vote for all.

Campaign for General Administrative Reforms

The Moderates campaigned on the following grounds:

(i) Indianisation of government service: on the **economic grounds** that British civil servants got very high emoluments while inclusion of Indians would be more economical; on **political grounds** that, since salaries of British bureaucrats were remitted back home and pensions paid in England (all drawn from Indian revenue), this amounted to economic drain of national resources; and on **moral grounds** that Indians were being discriminated against by being kept away from positions of trust and responsibility.

(ii) Call for separation of judicial from executive functions.

(iii) Criticism of an oppressive and tyrannical bureaucracy and an expensive and time-consuming judicial system.

(iv) Criticism of an aggressive foreign policy which resulted in annexation of Burma, attack on Afghanistan, and suppression of tribals in the North-West—all costing heavily for the Indian treasury.

(v) Call for increase in expenditure on welfare (i.e., health, sanitation), education—especially elementary and technical—irrigation works and improvement of agriculture, agricultural banks for cultivators, etc.

(vi) Demand for better treatment for Indian labour abroad in other British colonies, where they faced oppression and racial discrimination.

Protection of Civil Rights

Civil rights included the right to speech, thought, association, and a free press. Through an incessant campaign, the nationalists

Views

You don't realise our place in the history of our country. These memorials are nominally addressed to the Government. In reality they are addressed to the people, so that they may learn how to think in these matters. This work must be done for many years, without expecting any other results, because politics of this kind is altogether new in this land.

—Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade to Gokhale (1891)

were able to spread modern democratic ideas, and soon the defence of civil rights became an integral part of the freedom struggle. It was due to the increased consciousness that there was a great public outrage at the arrest of Tilak and several other leaders and journalists in 1897 and at the arrest and deportation of the Natu brothers without a trial. (Also refer to chapter on Development of Press in India.)

An Evaluation of the Early Nationalists

The early nationalists did a great deal to awaken the national sentiment, even though they could not draw the masses to them.

(i) They represented the most progressive forces of the time.

(ii) They were able to create a wide national awakening of all Indians having common interests and the need to rally around a common programme against a common enemy, and above all, the feeling of belonging to one nation.

(iii) They trained people in political work and popularised modern ideas.

(iv) They exposed the basically exploitative character of colonial rule, thus undermining its moral foundations.

(v) Their political work was based on hard realities, and not on shallow sentiments, religion, etc.

(vi) They were able to establish the basic political truth that India should be ruled in the interest of Indians.

(vii) They created a solid base for a more vigorous, militant, mass-based national movement in the years that followed.

(viii) However, they failed to widen their democratic base and the scope of their demands.

Role of Masses

The moderate phase of the national movement had a narrow social base and the masses played a passive role. This was because the early nationalists lacked political faith in the masses; they felt that there were numerous divisions and subdivisions in the Indian society, and the masses were generally ignorant and had conservative ideas and thoughts. The Moderates felt that these heterogeneous elements had first to be welded into a nation before they entered the political sphere. But they failed to realise that it was only during a freedom struggle and with political participation that these diverse elements could come together.

Because of the lack of mass participation, the Moderates could not take militant political positions against the authorities. The later nationalists differed from the Moderates precisely on this point. Still, the early nationalists represented the emerging Indian nation against colonial interests.

Views

We cannot blame them for the attitude they adopted as pioneers of Indian political reform any more than we can blame the brick and mortar that is buried six feet deep in the foundation and plinth of a modern edifice. They have made possible the superstructure, storey by storey, by colonial self-government, home rule within the empire, swaraj and on the top of all, complete independence.

—Pattabhi Sitaramayya

The period from 1858 to 1905 was the seed time of Indian nationalism; and the early nationalists sowed the seeds well and deep.

—Bipan Chandra

It was at best an opportunist movement. It opened opportunities for treacheries and hypocrisies. It enabled some people to trade in the name of patriotism.

—Lala Lajpat Rai

Attitude of the Government

The British Indian Government was hostile to the Congress from the beginning despite the latter's moderate methods and emphasis on loyalty to the British Crown. The official attitude stiffened further after 1887 when the government failed to persuade the Congress to confine itself to social issues when the Congress was becoming increasingly critical

Views

The Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise.
—Lord Curzon (1900)

of the colonial rule. Now, the government resorted to open condemnation of the Congress, calling the nationalists "seditious brahmins", "disloyal babus", etc. Dufferin called the Congress "a factory of sedition". Later, the government adopted a 'divide and rule' policy towards the Congress. The officials encouraged reactionary elements like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Raja Shiv Prasad Singh of Benaras to organise the United Indian Patriotic Association to counter Congress propaganda. The government also tried to divide the nationalists on the basis of religion, and, through a policy of 'carrot and stick', pitted the Moderates against the Extremists. But the government failed to check the rising tide of nationalism.

Summary

- **Foundation of Indian National Congress**
  First session held in 1885 (Bombay).
  Indian National Union, formed by A.O. Hume, became Indian National Congress.
  Foundational theories of INC and prominent believers:
  Safety Valve Theory —Lala Lajpat Rai
  Conspiracy Theory—R.P. Dutt
  Lightning conductor Theory—G.K. Gokhale
  Important leaders of Moderate Phase: Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, P. Ananda Charlu, Surendranath Banerjea, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Ananda Mohan Bose, G.K. Gokhale, etc.
- **Early Nationalist Methodology**
  Constitutional agitation within four walls of law
  Create public opinion in India and campaign for support to Indian demands in England
  Political education of people
  Political connections with Britain in India's interests at that stage
  Time not ripe for direct challenge to colonial rule
- **Contributions of Moderate Nationalists**
  Economic critique of British imperialism
  Constitutional reforms and propaganda in legislature
  Campaign for general administrative reforms
  Defence of civil rights

UNIT 6

National Movement (1905–1918)

Chapters 12 to 14

CHAPTER 12

Era of Militant Nationalism (1905–1909)

Growth of Militant Nationalism

A radical trend of a militant nationalist approach to political activity started emerging in the 1890s, and it took a concrete shape by 1905. As an adjunct to this trend, a revolutionary wing also took shape.

Why Militant Nationalism Grew

Many factors contributed to the rise of militant nationalism.

Recognition of the True Nature of British Rule

Having seen that the British government was not conceding any of their important demands, the more militant among

those politically conscious got disillusioned and started looking for a more effective mode of political action. Also, the feeling that only an Indian government could lead India on to a path of progress started attracting more and more people. The economic miseries of the 1890s further exposed the exploitative character of colonial rule. Severe famines killed 90 lakh persons between 1896 and 1900. Bubonic plague affected large areas of the Deccan. There were large-scale riots in the Deccan.

The nationalists were wide awake to the fact that instead of giving more rights to the Indians, the government was taking away even the existing ones.

1892 — The Indian Councils Act was criticised by nationalists as it failed to satisfy them.
1897 — The Natu brothers were deported without trial and Tilak and others, imprisoned on charges of sedition.
1898 — Repressive laws under IPC Section 124 A were further amplified with new provisions under IPC Section 156 A.
1899 — The number of Indian members in Calcutta Corporation were reduced.
1904 — Official Secrets Act curbed freedom of press.
1904 — The Indian Universities Act ensured greater government control over universities, which it described as factories producing political revolutionaries.

Also, British rule was no longer progressive socially and culturally. It was suppressing the spread of education, especially mass and technical education.

Growth of Confidence and Self-Respect

There was a growing faith in self-effort. Tilak, Aurobindo, and Bipin Chandra Pal repeatedly urged the nationalists to rely on the character and capacities of the Indian people. A feeling started gaining currency that the masses had to be involved in the battle against colonial government as they were capable of making the immense sacrifices needed to win freedom.

Growth of Education

While, on the one hand, the spread of education led to an increased awareness among the masses, on the other hand,

the rise in unemployment and underemployment among the educated drew attention to poverty and the underdeveloped state of the country's economy under colonial rule. This added to the already simmering discontent among the more radical nationalists.

International Influences

Remarkable progress made by Japan after 1868 and its emergence as an industrial power opened the eyes of Indians to the fact that economic progress was possible even in an Asian country without any external help. The defeat of the Italian army by Ethiopians (1896), the Boer wars (1899–1902) where the British faced reverses, and Japan's victory over Russia (1905) demolished myths of European invincibility. Also, the nationalists were inspired by the nationalist movements worldwide—in Ireland, Russia, Egypt, Turkey, Persia, and China. The Indians realised that a united people willing to make sacrifices could take on the mightiest of empires.

Reaction to Increasing Westernisation

The new leadership felt the stranglehold of excessive westernisation and sensed colonial designs to submerge the Indian national identity in the British Empire. The intellectual and moral inspiration of the new leadership was Indian. Intellectuals like Swami Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and Swami Dayananda Saraswati inspired many young nationalists with their forceful and articulate arguments, painting India's past in brighter colours than the British ideologues had. These thinkers exploded the myth of western superiority by referring to the richness of the Indian civilisation in the past. Dayananda's political message was 'India for the Indians'.

Dissatisfaction with Achievements of Moderates

The younger elements within the Congress were dissatisfied with the achievements of the Moderates during the first 15–20 years. They were strongly critical of the methods of peaceful and constitutional agitation, popularly known as the "Three 'P's"—prayer, petition and protest—and described these methods as 'political mendicancy'.

Views

If there is a sin in the world, it is weakness; avoid all weakness, weakness is sin, weakness is death.

Swami Vivekananda

The Extremists of today will be the Moderates of tomorrow, just as the Moderates of today were the Extremists of yesterday.

B.G. Tilak

What one Asiatic has done, others can do... if Japan can drub Russia, India can drub England with equal ease... let us drive the British into the sea and take our place side by side with Japan among the great powers of the world.

Karachi Chronicle (June 18, 1905)

Reactionary Policies of Curzon

A sharp reaction was created in the Indian mind by Curzon's seven-year rule in India which was full of missions, commissions, and omissions. He refused to recognise India as a nation and insulted Indian nationalists and the intelligentsia by describing their activities as "letting off of gas". He spoke derogatorily of Indian character in general. Administrative measures adopted during his rule—the Official Secrets Act, the Indian Universities Act, the Calcutta Corporation Act, and, above all, the partition of Bengal—left no doubt in Indian minds about the basically reactionary nature of British rule in India.

Existence of a Militant School of Thought

By the dawn of the 20th century, a band of nationalist thinkers had emerged who advocated a more militant approach to political work. These included Raj Narain Bose, Ashwini Kumar Dutta, Aurobindo Ghosh, and Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal; Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Maharashtra; and Lala Lajpat Rai in Punjab. Tilak emerged as the most outstanding representative of this school of thought.

The basic tenets of this school of thought were:

- hatred for foreign rule; since no hope could be derived from it, Indians should work out their own salvation;
- swaraj to be the goal of national movement;
- direct political action required;

- belief in the capacity of the masses to challenge the authority;
- personal sacrifices required and a true nationalist to be always ready for it.

Emergence of a Trained Leadership

The new leadership could provide a proper channelisation of the immense potential for political struggle which the masses possessed and, as the militant nationalists thought, were ready to give expression to. This energy of the masses got a release during the movement against the partition of Bengal, which acquired the form of the swadeshi agitation.

The Swadeshi and Boycott Movement

The Swadeshi Movement had its genesis in the anti-partition movement which was started to oppose the British decision to partition Bengal.

Partition of Bengal to Divide People

The British government's decision to partition Bengal had been made public in December 1903. The idea was to have two provinces: Bengal comprising Western Bengal as well as the provinces of Bihar and Orissa, and Eastern Bengal, and Assam. Bengal retained Calcutta as its capital, while Dacca became the capital of Eastern Bengal. The official reason given for the decision was that Bengal, with a population of 78 million (about a quarter of the population of British India), had become too big to be administered. It was also stated that partition would help in the development of Assam if it came under the direct jurisdiction of the government. This was true to some extent, but the real motive behind the partition plan was seen to be the British desire to weaken Bengal, the nerve centre of Indian nationalism. This it sought to achieve by putting the Bengalis under two administrations by dividing them:

(i) on the basis of language, thus reducing the Bengalis to a minority in Bengal itself (as in the new proposal Bengal proper was to have 17 million

View

Bengal united is a power. Bengal divided will pull in several different ways..... One of our main objects is to split up and thereby to weaken a solid body of opponents to our rule.

—**Risley** (home secretary to the Government of India, 1904)

Bengalis and 37 million Hindi and Oriya speakers); and

(ii) on the basis of religion, as the western half was to be a Hindu majority area (42 million out of a total 54 million) and the eastern half was to be a Muslim majority area (18 million out of a total of 31 million).

Trying to woo the Muslims, Curzon, the viceroy at that time, argued that Dacca could become the capital of the new Muslim majority province, which would provide them with a unity not experienced by them since the days of old Muslim viceroys and kings. Thus, it was clear that the government was up to its old policy of propping up Muslim communalists to counter the Congress and the national movement.

Anti-Partition Campaign Under Moderates (1903–05)

In the period 1903–05, the leadership was provided by men like Surendranath Banerjea, K.K. Mitra, and Prithwishchandra Ray. The methods adopted were petitions to the government, public meetings, memoranda, and propaganda through pamphlets and newspapers such as *Hitabadi, Sanjibani,* and *Bengalee*. Their objective was to exert sufficient pressure on the government through an educated public opinion in India and England to prevent the unjust partition of Bengal from being implemented.

Ignoring a loud public opinion against the partition proposal, the government announced the partition of Bengal in July 1905. Within days, protest meetings were held in small towns all over Bengal. It was in these meetings that the pledge to boycott foreign goods was first taken. **On August 7, 1905, with the passage of the Boycott Resolution in a massive meeting held in the Calcutta Townhall, the**

formal proclamation of Swadeshi Movement was made. After this, the leaders dispersed to other parts of Bengal to propagate the message of boycott of Manchester cloth and Liverpool salt.

October 16, 1905, the day the partition formally came into force, was observed as a day of mourning throughout Bengal. People fasted, bathed in the Ganga, and walked barefoot in processions singing *Bande Mataram* (which almost spontaneously became the theme song of the movement). *'Amar Sonar Bangla'*, the national anthem of present-day Bangladesh, was composed by Rabindranath Tagore and sung by huge crowds marching in the streets. Rabindranath Tagore and Ramendrasundar Trivedi, secretary of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad at the time, appealed to the people to observe Rakshabandhan day on the date the partition came into effect, i.e., on October 6, 1905. People tied *rakhis* on each other's hands as a symbol of unity of the two halves of Bengal. Later in the day, Surendranath Banerjea and Ananda Mohan Bose addressed huge gatherings (perhaps the largest till then under the nationalist banner). Within a few hours of the meeting, Rs 50,000 was raised for the movement.

Soon, the movement spread to other parts of the country—in Poona and Bombay under Tilak; in Punjab under Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh; in Delhi under Syed Haider Raza; and in Madras under Chidambaram Pillai.

The Congress Position

The Indian National Congress meeting in 1905, under the presidentship of Gokhale, resolved to: (i) condemn the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon, and (ii) support the anti-partition and Swadeshi Movement of Bengal.

The militant nationalists led by Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Aurobindo Ghosh wanted the movement to be taken outside Bengal to other parts of the country and go beyond a boycott of foreign goods to become a full-fledged political mass struggle with the goal of attaining swaraj. But the Moderates, dominating the Congress at that time, were not willing to go that far. However, a big step forward was taken at the Congress session held at Calcutta

(1906) under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji, where it was declared that the goal of the Indian National Congress was "self-government or swaraj like the United Kingdom or the colonies" of Australia or Canada. The Moderate-Extremist dispute over the pace of the movement and techniques of struggle reached a deadlock at the Surat session of the Indian National Congress (1907) where the party split with serious consequences for the Swadeshi Movement.

The Movement under Extremist Leadership

After 1905, the Extremists acquired a dominant influence over the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal. There were three reasons for this:

(i) The Moderate-led movement had failed to yield results.

(ii) The divisive tactics of the governments of both the Bengals had embittered the nationalists.

(iii) The government had resorted to suppressive measures, which included atrocities on students—many of whom were given corporal punishment; ban on public singing of *Vande Mataram*; restriction on public meetings; prosecution and long imprisonment of swadeshi workers; clashes between the police and the people in many towns; arrests and deportation of leaders; and suppression of freedom of the press.

The Extremist Programme

Emboldened by Dadabhai Naoroji's declaration at the Calcutta session (1906) that self-government or swaraj was to be the goal of the Congress, the Extremists gave a call for passive resistance in addition to swadeshi and boycott which would include a boycott of government schools and colleges, government service, courts, legislative councils, municipalities, government titles, etc. The purpose, as Aurobindo put it, was to "make the administration under present conditions impossible by an organised refusal to do anything which will help either the British commerce in the

exploitation of the country or British officialdom in the administration of it".

The militant nationalists tried to transform the anti-partition and Swadeshi Movement into a mass struggle and gave the slogan of India's independence from foreign rule. "Political freedom is the lifebreath of a nation," declared Aurobindo. Thus, the Extremists gave the idea of India's independence the central place in India's politics. The goal of independence was to be achieved through self-sacrifice.

New Forms of Struggle and Impact

The militant nationalists put forward several fresh ideas at the theoretical, propaganda, and programme levels. Among the several forms of struggle thrown up by the movement were the following:

Boycott of Foreign Goods

Boycott included boycott and public burning of foreign cloth, boycott of foreign-made salt or sugar, refusal by priests to ritualise marriages involving exchange of foreign goods, refusal by washermen to wash foreign clothes. This form of protest met with great success at the practical and popular level.

Public Meetings and Processions

Public meetings and processions emerged as major methods of mass mobilisation. Simultaneously, they were forms of popular expression.

Corps of Volunteers or 'Samitis'

Samitis such as the Swadesh Bandhab Samiti of Ashwini Kumar Dutta (in Barisal) emerged as a very popular and powerful means of mass mobilisation. In Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, Subramania Siva, and some lawyers formed the Swadeshi Sangam which inspired the local masses. These samitis generated political consciousness among the masses through magic lantern lectures, swadeshi songs, providing physical and moral training to their members, social work during famines and epidemics, organisation of schools, and training in swadeshi crafts and arbitration courts.

Imaginative use of Traditional Popular Festivals and Melas

The idea was to use traditional festivals and occasions as a means of reaching out to the masses and spreading political messages. For instance, Tilak's Ganapati and Shivaji festivals became a medium of swadeshi propaganda not only in western India but also in Bengal. In Bengal also, the traditional folk theatre forms were used for this purpose.

Emphasis Given to Self-Reliance

Self-reliance or *'atma shakti'* was encouraged. This implied re-assertion of national dignity, honour and, confidence and social and economic regeneration of the villages. In practical terms, it included social reform and campaigns against caste oppression, early marriage, dowry system, consumption of alcohol, etc.

Programme of Swadeshi or National Education

The movement to boycott British educational institutions gathered momentum in the wake of the British government's efforts to suppress the participation of students in the Swadeshi Movement and the threat to stop grants, affiliation, and scholarships of the institutions that were dominated by nationalists. The British action led to the founding of national schools. In this context, it may be recalled that Raja Subodh Mullick made a contribution of Rs 100,000 towards the

Views

Swaraj or self-government is essential for the exercise of swadharma. Without swaraj there could be no social reform, no industrial progress, no useful education, no fulfilment of national life. That is what we seek, that is why God has sent us to the world to fulfil Him.

—B.G. Tilak

Swadeshism during the days of its potency coloured the entire texture of our social and domestic life.

—Surendranath Banerjea

Swaraj is the fulfilment of the ancient life of India under modern conditions, the return of *satyuga* of national greatness, the resumption by her of her great role of the teacher and guide, self-liberation of the people for final fulfilment of the Vedantic idea in politics, that is the true swaraj for India.

—Aurobindo Ghosh

foundation of a national university in Bengal. A National Council of Education was set up on August 15, 1906, and the Bengal National College and Bengal Technical Institute were established. The first principal of the Bengal National College was Aurobindo Ghosh and its first president was Rashbehari Ghosh. The college was inspired by Tagore's school at Shantiniketan which had been set up in 1901. Several more national schools were established in Bengal and Bihar.

Satishchandra Mukherjee's role in encouraging national education should not be ignored. His newspaper *Dawn*, in circulation since 1897, and his Dawn Society, set up in 1902, had already been propagating the message of self-help in industry and education. Mukherjee pioneered the national education movement by founding the Bhagabat Chatuspathi in 1895. He took a leading part in the formation of the National Council of Education and later became a lecturer in the Bengal National College, and its principal when Aurobindo resigned. The National Council of Education was set up to organise a system of education—literary, scientific, and technical—on national lines and under national control. Education was to be imparted through the vernacular medium. Funds were even raised to send students to Japan for advanced learning.

Swadeshi or Indigenous Enterprises

The swadeshi spirit also found expression in the establishment of swadeshi textile mills, soap and match factories, tanneries, banks, insurance companies, shops, etc. These enterprises were based more on patriotic zeal than on business acumen.

Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar, a close associate of Aurobindo Ghosh, published *Desher Katha* in 1904. The work inspired the swadeshi activists. He popularised the ideas of Dadabhai Naoroji and Mahadev Govind Ranade and promoted swadeshi in a popular idiom. *Desher Katha,* writes Ishita Banerjee-Dube, warned against the colonial state's "hypnotic conquest of the mind". Before the book was banned by the colonial government in 1910, it had sold over 15,000 copies. It was the inspiration for many swadeshi street plays and folk songs, besides becoming mandatory reading for the swadeshi activists.

V.O. Chidambaram Pillai's venture into a national shipbuilding enterprise—Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company—at Tuticorin, however, gave a challenge to the British Indian Steam Navigation Company.

There had been a consciousness even in the 1890s that Indian products should be encouraged in the face of the onslaught of the imported foreign goods. To this effect, members of the Tagore family and other leaders had been organising melas (fairs) to exhibit Indian handicrafts and putting up stores for their sale so that their production could be encouraged. Rabindranath's Swadeshi Bhandar (1897), Jogeshchandra Chaudhuri's Indian Stores (1901), and Sarala Debi's Lakshmir Bhandar (1903) were all efforts in this direction. The Bengal Chemicals factory had been established by Prafullachandra Ray in 1893, and attempts were made to manufacture porcelain in 1901, as pointed out by Sumit Sarkar. Such efforts gained in momentum with the mood of the Swadeshi Movement.

Impact in the Cultural Sphere

The nationalists of all hues took inspiration from songs written by Rabindranath Tagore, Rajnikant Sen, Dwijendralal Ray, Mukunda Das, Syed Abu Muhammad, and others. Tagore's *Amar Sonar Bangla* written on this occasion was later to inspire the liberation struggle of Bangladesh and was adopted by it as its national anthem. In Tamil Nadu, Subramania Bharati wrote *Sudesha Geetham.*

In painting, Abanindranath Tagore broke the domination of Victorian naturalism over the Indian art scene and took inspiration from Ajanta, Mughal, and Rajput paintings. Nandalal Bose, who left a major imprint on Indian art, was the first recipient of a scholarship offered by the Indian Society of Oriental Art, founded in 1907.

In science, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Prafullachandra Roy, and others pioneered original research which was praised the world over.

Extent of Mass Participation

Students Students came out in large numbers to propagate and practise swadeshi, and to take a lead in organising picketing of shops selling foreign goods. Student

participation was visible in Bengal, Maharashtra, especially in Poona, and in many parts of the South—Guntur, Madras, Salem. Police adopted a repressive attitude towards the students. Schools and colleges whose students participated in the agitation were to be penalised by disaffiliating them or stopping of grants and privileges to them. Students who were found guilty of participation were to be disqualified for government jobs or for government scholarships, and disciplinary action—fine, expulsion, arrest, beating, etc.—was to be taken against them.

Women Women, who were traditionally home-centred, especially those of the urban middle classes, took active part in processions and picketing. From now onwards, they were to play a significant role in the national movement.

Stand of Muslims Some of the Muslims participated—Barrister Abdul Rasul, Liaqat Hussain, Guznavi, Maulana Azad (who joined one of the revolutionary terrorist groups); but most of the upper and middle class Muslims stayed away or, led by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, supported the partition on the plea that it would give them a Muslim-majority East Bengal. To further government interests, the All-India Muslim League was propped up on December 30, 1905 as an anti-Congress front, and reactionary elements like Nawab Salimullah of Dacca were encouraged. Also, the nature of the Swadeshi Movement, with leaders evoking Hindu festivals and goddesses for inspiration, tended to exclude the Muslims.

Labour Unrest and Trade Unions In the beginning, some strikes were organised on the issue of rising prices and racial insult, primarily in the foreign-owned companies. In September 1905, more than 250 Bengali clerks of the Burn Company, Howrah, walked out in protest against a derogatory work regulation. In July 1906, a strike of workers in the East Indian Railway resulted in the formation of a Railwaymen's Union. Between 1906 and 1908, strikes in the jute mills were very frequent, at times affecting 18 out of 18 mills. Subramania Siva and Chidambaram Pillai led strikes in Tuticorin and Tirunelveli in a foreign-owned cotton mill. In Rawalpindi (Punjab), the arsenal and railway workers went on strike led by Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. However,

by summer of 1908, the labour unrests subsided under strict action.

Thus, the social base of the movement expanded to include certain sections of the zamindari, the students, the women, and the lower middle classes in cities and towns. An attempt was also made to give political expression to economic grievances of the working class by organising strikes. But the movement was not able to garner support of the Muslims, especially the Muslim peasantry, because of a conscious government policy of divide and rule helped by overlap of class and community at places.

All India Aspect

Movements in support of Bengal's unity and the swadeshi and boycott agitation were organised in many parts of the country. Tilak, who played a leading role in the spread of the movement outside Bengal, saw in this the ushering in of a new chapter in the history of the national movement. He realised that here was a challenge and an opportunity to organise popular mass struggle against the British rule to unite the country in a bond of common sympathy.

Annulment of Partition

It was decided to annul the partition of Bengal in 1911, mainly to curb the menace of revolutionary terrorism. The annulment came as a rude shock to the Muslim political elite. It was also decided to shift the capital to Delhi as a sop to the Muslims, as it was associated with Muslim glory, but the Muslims were not pleased. Bihar and Orissa were taken out of Bengal, and Assam was made a separate province.

Evaluation of the Swadeshi Movement

The Movement Fizzles Out

By 1908, the open phase (as different from the underground revolutionary phase) of the Swadeshi and Boycott movement was almost over. This was due to many reasons:

- There was severe government repression.

● The movement failed to create an effective organisation or a party structure. It threw up an entire gamut of techniques that later came to be associated with Gandhian politics—non-cooperation, passive resistance, filling of British jails, social reform, and constructive work—but failed to give these techniques a disciplined focus.

● The movement was rendered leaderless with most of the leaders either arrested or deported by 1908 and with Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal retiring from active politics.

● Internal squabbles among leaders, magnified by the Surat split (1907), did much harm to the movement.

● The movement aroused the people but did not know how to tap the newly released energy or how to find new forms to give expression to popular resentment.

● The movement largely remained confined to the upper and middle classes and zamindars, and failed to reach the masses—especially the peasantry.

● Non-cooperation and passive resistance remained mere ideas.

● It is difficult to sustain a mass-based movement at a high pitch for too long.

Movement a Turning Point

Despite its gradual decline into inactivity, the movement was a turning point in modern Indian history.

● It proved to be a 'leap forward' in more ways than one. Hitherto untouched sections—students, women, workers, some sections of urban and rural population—participated. All the major trends of the national movement, from conservative moderation to political extremism, from revolutionary activities to incipient socialism, from petitions and prayers to passive resistance and non-cooperation emerged during the Swadeshi Movement.

● The richness of the movement was not confined to the political sphere, but encompassed art, literature, science, and industry also.

● People were aroused from slumber and now they learned to take bold political positions and participate in new forms of political work.

Differences between Moderates and Extremists

Moderates	Extremists
1. Social base—zamindars and upper middle classes in towns.	1. Social base—educated middle and lower middle classes in towns.
2. Ideological inspiration—western liberal thought and European history.	2. Ideological inspiration—Indian history, cultural heritage, and Hindu traditional symbols.
3. Believed in England's providential mission in India.	3. Rejected 'providential mission theory' as an illusion.
4. Believed political connections with Britain to be in India's social, political, and cultural interests.	4. Believed that political connections with Britain would perpetuate British exploitation of India.
5. Professed loyalty to the British Crown.	5. Believed that the British Crown was unworthy of claiming Indian loyalty.
6. Believed that the movement should be limited to middle-class intelligentsia; masses not yet ready for participation in political work.	6. Had immense faith in the capacity of masses to participate and to make sacrifices.
7. Demanded constitutional reforms and share for Indians in services.	7. Demanded swaraj as the panacea for Indian ills.
8. Insisted on the use of constitutional methods only.	8. Did not hesitate to use extra-constitutional methods like boycott and passive resistance to achieve their objectives.
9. They were patriots and did not play the role of a comprador class.	9. They were patriots who made sacrifices for the sake of the country.

- The swadeshi campaign undermined the hegemony of colonial ideas and institutions.
- The future struggle was to draw heavily from the experience gained.

Moderate Methods Give Way to Extremist Modes

With the coming of the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement, it became clear that the Moderates had outlived their utility

and their politics of petitions and speeches had become obsolete. They had not succeeded in keeping pace with time, and this was highlighted by their failure to get the support of the younger generation for their style of politics. Their failure to work among the masses had meant that their ideas did not take root among the masses. Even the propaganda by the Moderates did not reach the masses. No all-India campaigns of the scale of the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement had been organised earlier by the Moderates and, in this campaign, they discovered that they were not its leaders, which was rather natural.

The Extremist ideology and its functioning also lacked consistency. Its advocates ranged from open members and secret sympathisers to those opposed to any kind of political violence. Its leaders—Aurobindo, Tilak, B.C. Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai—had different perceptions of their goal. For Tilak, swaraj meant some sort of self-government, while for Aurobindo it meant complete independence from foreign rule. But at the politico-ideological level, their emphasis on mass participation and on the need to broaden the social base of the movement was a progressive improvement upon the Moderate politics. They raised patriotism from a level of 'academic pastime' to one of 'service and sacrifice for the country'. But the politically progressive Extremists proved to be social reactionaries. They had revivalist and obscurantist undertones attached to their thoughts. Tilak's opposition to the Age of Consent Bill (which would have raised the marriageable age for girls from 10 years to 12 years, even though his objection was mainly that such reforms must come from people governing themselves and not under an alien rule), his organising of Ganapati and Shivaji festivals as national festivals, his support to anti-cow killing campaigns, etc., portrayed him as a Hindu nationalist. Similarly, B.C. Pal and Aurobindo spoke of a Hindu nation and Hindu interests. This alienated many Muslims from the movement.

Though the seemingly revivalist and obscurantist tactics of the Extremists were directed against the foreign rulers, they had the effect of promoting a very unhealthy relationship between politics and religion, the bitter harvests of which the Indians had to reap in later years.

The Surat Split

The Congress split at Surat came in December 1907, around the time when revolutionary activity had gained momentum. The two events were not unconnected.

Run-up to Surat

In December 1905, at the Benaras session of the Indian National Congress presided over by Gokhale, the Moderate-Extremist differences came to the fore. The Extremists wanted to extend the Boycott and Swadeshi Movement to regions outside Bengal and also to include all forms of associations (such as government service, law courts, legislative councils, etc.) within the boycott programme and thus start a nationwide mass movement. The Extremists wanted a strong resolution supporting their programme at the Benaras session. The Moderates, on the other hand, were not in favour of extending the movement beyond Bengal and were totally opposed to boycott of councils and similar associations. They advocated constitutional methods to protest against the partition of Bengal. As a compromise, a relatively mild resolution condemning the partition of Bengal and the reactionary policies of Curzon and supporting the swadeshi and boycott programme in Bengal was passed. This succeeded in averting a split for the moment.

At the Calcutta session of the Congress in December 1906, the Moderate enthusiasm had cooled a bit because of the popularity of the Extremists and the revolutionaries and because of communal riots. Here, the Extremists wanted either Tilak or Lajpat Rai as the president, while the Moderates proposed the name of Dadabhai Naoroji, who was widely respected by all the nationalists. Finally, Dadabhai Naoroji was elected as the president and as a concession to the militants, the goal of the Indian National Congress was defined as 'swarajya or self-government' like the United Kingdom or the colonies of Australia and Canada. Also, a resolution supporting the programme of swadeshi, boycott, and national education was passed. The word 'swaraj' was mentioned for the first time, but its connotation was not spelt out, which left the field open for differing interpretations by the Moderates and the Extremists.

The Extremists, encouraged by the proceedings at the Calcutta session, gave a call for wide passive resistance and boycott of schools, colleges, legislative councils, municipalities, law courts, etc. The Moderates, encouraged by the news that council reforms were on the anvil, decided to tone down the Calcutta programme. The two sides seemed to be heading for a showdown.

The Extremists thought that the people had been aroused and the battle for freedom had begun. They felt the time had come for the big push to drive the British out and considered the Moderates to be a drag on the movement. They decided that it was necessary to part company with the Moderates, even if it meant a split in the Congress.

The Moderates thought that it would be dangerous at that stage to associate with the Extremists whose anti-imperialist agitation, it was felt, would be ruthlessly suppressed by the mighty colonial forces. The Moderates saw in the council reforms an opportunity to realise their dream of Indian participation in the administration. Any hasty action by the Congress, the Moderates felt, under Extremist pressure was bound to annoy the Liberals, then in power in England. The Moderates were also ready to part company with the Extremists.

The Moderates failed to realise that the council reforms were meant by the government more to isolate the Extremists than to reward the Moderates. The Extremists did not realise that the Moderates could act as their front line of defence against state repression. And neither side realised that in a vast country like India ruled by a strong imperialist power, only a broad-based nationalist movement could succeed.

Split Takes Place

The Extremists wanted the 1907 session to be held in Nagpur (Central Provinces) with Tilak or Lajpat Rai as the president along with a reiteration of the swadeshi, boycott, and national education resolutions. The Moderates wanted the session at Surat in order to exclude Tilak from the presidency, since a leader from the host province could not be session president (Surat being in Tilak's home province of Bombay). Instead, they wanted Rashbehari Ghosh as the president and

View

"…the mischief of the trial and condemnation of Tilak would be greater than if you left him alone".

—**John Morley**, Secretary of State for India in a letter to Sydenham, Governor of Bombay

sought to drop the resolutions on swadeshi, boycott, and national education. Both sides adopted rigid positions, leaving no room for compromise. The split became inevitable, and the Congress was now dominated by the Moderates who lost no time in reiterating Congress' commitment to the goal of self-government within the British Empire and to the use of constitutional methods only to achieve this goal.

Government Repression

The government launched a massive attack on the Extremists. Between 1907 and 1911, five new laws were brought into force to check anti-government activity. These legislations included the Seditious Meetings Act, 1907; Indian Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908; Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908; and the Indian Press Act, 1910. Tilak, the main Extremist leader, was tried in 1909 for sedition for what he had written in 1908 in his *Kesari* about a bomb thrown by Bengal revolutionaries in Muzaffarpur, resulting in the death of two innocent European women.

Tilak had written: "This, no doubt, will inspire many with hatred against the people belonging to the party of rebels. It is not possible to cause British rule to disappear from this country by such monstrous deeds. But rulers who exercise unrestricted power must always remember that there is also a limit to the patience of humanity … many newspapers had warned the government that if they resorted to Russian methods, then Indians too will be compelled to imitate the Russian methods."

In another article, Tilak wrote that the real means of stopping the bombs consisted in making a beginning towards the grant of rights of 'Swarajya' to the people. Tilak was again arrested; judged guilty, and sentenced to six years' transportation and a fine of Rs 1,000. He was sent to Mandalay (Burma) jail for six years. When the judge asked Tilak if he had anything to say, Tilak said: "In spite of the

verdict of the jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of men and nations and it may be the will of providence that the cause which I represent may prosper more by my suffering than my remaining free." (In 1956, the then Chief Justice of Bombay High Court, M.C. Chagla, unveiled a marble plaque with these words engraved on it outside the central courtroom – courtroom 46 – where Tilak was tried in the Bombay High Court.)

Aurobindo and B.C. Pal retired from active politics. Lajpat Rai left for abroad.

The Extremists were not able to organise an effective alternative party to sustain the movement. The Moderates were left with no popular base or support, especially as the youth rallied behind the Extremists.

After 1908, the national movement as a whole declined for a time. In 1914, Tilak was released and he picked up the threads of the movement.

The Government Strategy

The British government in India had been hostile to the Congress from the beginning. Even after the Moderates, who dominated the Congress from the beginning, began distancing themselves from the militant nationalist trend which had become visible during the last decade of the 19th century itself, government hostility did not stop. This was because, in the government's view, the Moderates still represented an anti-imperialist force consisting of basically patriotic and liberal intellectuals.

With the coming of Swadeshi and Boycott Movement and the emergence of militant nationalist trend in a big way, the government modified its strategy towards the nationalists. Now, the policy was to be of 'rallying them' (John Morley—the secretary of state) or the policy of 'carrot and stick'. It may be described as a three-pronged approach of repression-conciliation-suppression. In the first stage, the Extremists were to be repressed mildly, mainly to frighten the Moderates. In the second stage, the Moderates were to be placated through some concessions, and hints were to be dropped that

more reforms would be forthcoming if the distance from the Extremists was maintained. This was aimed at isolating the Extremists: With the Moderates on its side, the government could suppress the Extremists with its full might; the Moderates could then be ignored.

Unfortunately, neither the Moderates nor the Extremists understood the purpose behind the strategy. The Surat split suggested that the policy of carrot and stick had brought rich dividends to the British India government.

Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909

In October 1906, a group of Muslim elites called the **Simla Deputation**, led by the Agha Khan, met Lord Minto and demanded separate electorates for the Muslims and representation in excess of their numerical strength in view of 'the value of the contribution' Muslims were making 'to the defence of the empire'. The same group quickly took over the Muslim League, initially floated by Nawab Salimullah of Dacca along with Nawabs Mohsin-ul-Mulk and Waqar-ul-Mulk in December 1906. The Muslim League intended to preach loyalty to the empire and to keep the Muslim intelligentsia away from the Congress.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale also went to England to meet the Secretary of State for India, John Morley, to put Congress demands of self-governing system similar to that in the other British colonies.

The Reforms

The viceroy, Lord Minto, and the Secretary of State for India, John Morley, agreed that some reforms were due so as to placate the Moderates as well as the Muslims. They worked out a set of measures that came to be known as the **Morley-Minto (or Minto-Morley) Reforms** that translated into the **Indian Councils Act of 1909**.

- The elective principle was recognised for the non-official membership of the councils in India. Indians were allowed to participate in the election of various legislative councils, though on the basis of class and community.
- For the first time, separate electorates for Muslims for election to the central council was established—a most detrimental step for India.

● The number of elected members in the Imperial Legislative Council and the Provincial Legislative Councils was increased. In the provincial councils, non-official majority was introduced, but since some of these non-officials were nominated and not elected, the overall non-elected majority remained.

● According to Sumit Sarkar, in the Imperial Legislative Council, of the total 69 members, 37 were to be the officials and of the 32 non-officials, 5 were to be nominated. Of the 27 elected non-officials, 8 seats were reserved for the Muslims under separate electorates (only Muslims could vote here for the Muslim candidates), while 4 seats were reserved for the British capitalists, 2 for the landlords, and 13 seats came under general electorate.

● The elected members were to be indirectly elected. The local bodies were to elect an electoral college, which in turn would elect members of provincial legislatures, who, in turn, would elect members of the central legislature.

● Besides separate electorates for the Muslims, representation in excess of the strength of their population was accorded to the Muslims. Also, the income qualification for Muslim voters was kept lower than that for Hindus.

● Powers of legislatures—both at the centre and in provinces—were enlarged and the legislatures could now pass

Views

Reforms may not save the Raj, but if they don't, nothing else will.

Lord Morley

The reforms of 1909 afforded no answer, and could afford no answer to Indian problems.

Montford Report

Political barrier was created round them, isolating them from the rest of India and reversing the unifying and amalgamating process which had been going on for centuries... The barrier was a small one at first, for the electorates were very limited, but with every extension of franchise it grew and affected the whole structure of political and social life like some canker which corrupted the entire system.

Jawaharlal Nehru

resolutions (which may or may not be accepted), ask questions and supplementaries, vote separate items in the budget though the budget as a whole could not be voted upon.

- One Indian was to be appointed to the viceroy's executive council (Satyendra Sinha was the first Indian to be appointed in 1909).

Evaluation

The reforms of 1909 afforded no answer to the Indian political problem. Lord Morley made it clear that colonial self-government (as demanded by the Congress) was not suitable for India, and he was against the introduction of parliamentary or responsible government in India. He said, "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."

The 'constitutional' reforms were, in fact, aimed at dividing the nationalist ranks by confusing the Moderates and at checking the growth of unity among Indians through the obnoxious instrument of separate electorates. The government aimed at rallying the Moderates and the Muslims against the rising tide of nationalism. The officials and the Muslim leaders often talked of the entire community when they talked of the separate electorates, but in reality it meant the appeasement of just a small section of the Muslim elite.

Besides, the system of election was too indirect and it gave the impression of "infiltration of legislators through a number of sieves". And, while parliamentary forms were introduced, no responsibility was conceded, which sometimes led to thoughtless and irresponsible criticism of the government. Only some members like Gokhale put to constructive use the opportunity to debate in the councils by demanding universal primary education, attacking repressive policies, and drawing attention to the plight of indentured labour and Indian workers in South Africa.

What the reforms of 1909 gave to the people of the country was a shadow rather than substance. The people had demanded self-government, but what they were given instead was 'benevolent despotism'.

Summary

- **Why Militant Nationalism Grew**
  1. Realisation that the true nature of British rule was exploitative, and that the British India government, instead of conceding more, was taking away even what existed
  2. Growth of self-confidence and self-respect
  3. Impact of growth of education—increase in awareness and unemployment
  4. International influences and events which demolished the myth of white/European supremacy. These included
     — emergence of Japan—an Asian country—as an industrial power
     — Abyssinia's (Ethiopia) victory over Italy
     — Boer Wars (1899–1902) in which the British faced reverses
     — Japan's victory over Russia (1905)
     — nationalist movements worldwide
  5. Reaction to increasing westernisation
  6. Dissatisfaction with the achievements as well as the methods of the Moderates
  7. Reactionary policies of Curzon such as the Calcutta Corporation Act (1899), the Official Secrets Act (1904), the Indian Universities Act (1904), and partition of Bengal (1905)
  8. Existence of a militant school of thought
  9. Emergence of a trained leadership

- **The Extremist Ideology**
  (i) Hatred for foreign rule
  (ii) Belief in the capacity of the masses
  (iii) Swarajya as goal
  (iv) Advocacy of direct political action and self-sacrifice

- **The Swadeshi and Boycott Movement**
  * **Began as a reaction to partition of Bengal** which became known in 1903, was formally announced in July 1905 and came into force in October 1905. The motive behind partition was to weaken Bengal which was the nerve centre of Indian nationalist activity; the official reason given for the partition was that Bengal had become too big to administer—which was true to some extent.
  * **Moderate-led anti-partition movement (1903–05)** was under Surendranath Banerjea, K.K. Mitra, Prithwishchandra Ray. **Methods** included public meetings, petitions, memoranda, propaganda through newspapers and pamphlets.

* **The movement under Extremists (1905–08)** was led by Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghosh.
  Methods included boycott of foreign cloth and other goods, public meetings and processions, forming corps of volunteers or samitis, use of traditional popular festivals and *melas* for propaganda, emphasis on self-reliance or *atma shakti*, launching programme of swadeshi or national education, swadeshi or indigenous enterprises, initiating new trends in Indian painting, songs, poetry, pioneering research in science and later calling for boycott of schools, colleges, councils, government service, etc.
* **Extremists took over because of** the failure of the Moderates to achieve positive results, divisive tactics of governments of both Bengals, severe government repression.
* **Extent of mass participation**—students, women, certain sections of zamindari, labour, some lower middle and middle classes in towns and cities participated for the first time while the Muslims generally kept away.
* **Annulment of Partition** mainly to curb the 'menace' of revolutionary terrorism
* **Why Swadeshi Movement fizzled out by 1908**
  Severe government repression
  Lack of effective organisation and a disciplined focus
  With arrest/deportation of all leaders, the movement left leaderless
  Split in nationalist ranks
  Narrow social base
* **Achievements**
  "A leap forward" because hitherto untouched sections participated, major trends of later movement emerged; richness of the movement extended to culture, science, and literature; people educated in bolder form of politics; colonial hegemony undermined.

● **Major Cause of Moderate-Extremist Split at Surat (1907)**
Moderates wanted to restrict the Boycott Movement to Bengal and to a boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.
Extremists wanted to take the movement to all parts of the country and include within its ambit all forms of association with the government through a boycott of schools, colleges, law courts, legislative councils, government service, municipalities, etc.

● **Government Acts for Repression of Swadeshi Movement**
Seditious Meetings Act (1907)
Criminal Law (Amendment) Act (1908)

Indian Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act (1908)
Explosive Substances Act (1908)
Indian Press Act (1910)

- **Morley-Minto Reforms**

Number of elected members in Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils increased—elected non-officials still in minority.
Non-officials to be elected indirectly—thus elections introduced for the first time.
Separate electorates introduced for Muslims
Legislatures could pass resolutions, ask questions and supplementaries, vote separate items of the budget.
One Indian to be on viceroy's executive council.
Aimed at dividing the nationalist ranks and at rallying the Moderates and the Muslims to the government's side.
No responsibility entrusted to legislators—this resulted in thoughtless criticism sometimes.
System of election was too indirect.

CHAPTER 13

First Phase of Revolutionary Activities (1907–1917)

Why the Surge of Revolutionary Activities

The activities of revolutionary heroism started as a by-product of the growth of militant nationalism. The first phase acquired a more activist form as a fallout of the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement and continued till 1917. The second phase started as a fallout of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

After the decline of the open movement, the younger nationalists who had participated in the movement found it impossible to leave off and disappear into the background. They looked for avenues to give expression to their patriotic energies, but were disillusioned by the failure of the leadership, even the Extremists, to find new forms of struggle to bring into practice the new militant trends. The Extremist leaders, although they called upon the youth to make sacrifices, failed to create an effective organisation or find new forms of political work to tap these revolutionary energies. The youth, finding all avenues of peaceful political protest closed to them under government repression, thought that if nationalist goals of independence were to be met, the British must be expelled physically by force.

The Revolutionary Programme

The revolutionaries considered, but did not find it practical at that stage to implement, the options of creating a violent mass revolution throughout the country or of trying to subvert the loyalties of the army. Instead, they opted to follow in the footsteps of Russian nihilists or the Irish nationalists. This methodology involved individual heroic actions, such as organising assassinations of unpopular officials and of traitors and informers among the revolutionaries themselves; conducting swadeshi dacoities to raise funds for revolutionary activities; and (during the First World War) organising military conspiracies with an expectation of help from the enemies of Britain.

The idea was to strike terror in the hearts of the rulers, arouse people, and remove the fear of authority from their minds. The revolutionaries intended to inspire the people by appealing to their patriotism, especially the idealistic youth who would finally drive the British out.

The Extremist leaders failed to ideologically counter the revolutionaries as they did not highlight the difference between a revolution based on activity of the masses and one based on individual violent activity, thus allowing the individualistic violent activities to take root.

A Survey of Revolutionary Activities

A brief survey of revolutionary activities in different parts of India and abroad before and during the First World War is given below.

Bengal

By the 1870s, Calcutta's student community was honeycombed with secret societies, but these were not very active. The first revolutionary groups were organised in 1902 in Midnapore (under Jnanendranath Basu) and in Calcutta (the **Anushilan Samiti** founded by Promotha Mitter, and including Jatindranath Banerjee, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, and others.) But their activities were limited to giving physical and moral training to the members and remained insignificant till 1907–08.

In April 1906, an inner circle within Anushilan (Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Bhupendranath Dutta) started the weekly *Yugantar* and conducted a few abortive 'actions'. By 1905–06, several newspapers had started advocating revolutionary violence. For instance, after severe police brutalities on participants of the Barisal Conference (April 1906), the *Yugantar* wrote: "The remedy lies with the people. The 30 crore people inhabiting India must raise their 60 crore hands to stop this curse of oppression. Force must be stopped by force."

Rashbehari (or Rash Behari) Bose and Sachin Sanyal had organised a secret society covering far-flung areas of Punjab, Delhi, and United Provinces, while some others like Hemachandra Kanungo went abroad for military and political training.

In 1907, an abortive attempt was made by the *Yugantar* group on the life of a very unpopular British official, Sir Fuller (the first Lt. Governor of the new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam, although he had resigned from the post on August 20, 1906).

In December 1907, there were attempts to derail the train on which the lieutenant-governor, Sri Andrew Fraser, was travelling

In 1908, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose threw a bomb at a carriage supposed to be carrying a particularly sadistic white judge, Kingsford, in Muzaffarpur. Kingsford was not in the carriage. Unfortunately, two British ladies, instead, got killed. Prafulla Chaki shot himself dead, while Khudiram Bose was tried and hanged.

The whole Anushilan group was arrested, including the Ghosh brothers, Aurobindo and Barindra, who were tried in the **Alipore conspiracy case**, variously called Manicktolla bomb conspiracy or Muraripukur conspiracy. (Barindra Ghosh's house was on Muraripukur Road in the Manicktolla suburb of Calcutta.) The Ghosh brothers were charged with 'conspiracy' or 'waging war against the King' – the equivalent of high treason and punishable with death by hanging. Chittaranjan Das defended Aurobindo. Aurobindo was acquitted of all charges, with the judge condemning the flimsy nature of the evidence against him. Barindra Ghosh, as the head of

the secret society of revolutionaries and Ullaskar Dutt (or Dutta), as the maker of bombs, were given the death penalty, which was later commuted to life in prison. During the trial, Narendra Gosain (or Goswami), who had turned approver and Crown witness, was shot dead by two co-accused, Satyendranath Bose and Kanailal Dutta in jail.

In February 1909, the public prosecutor was shot dead in Calcutta, and in February 1910, a deputy superintendent of police met the same fate while leaving the Calcutta High Court. In 1908, Barrah dacoity was organised by Dacca Anushilan under Pulin Das to raise funds for revolutionary activities. Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal staged a spectacular bomb attack on Viceroy Hardinge while he was making his official entry into the new capital of Delhi in a procession through Chandni Chowk in December 1912. (Hardinge was injured, but not killed.)

Investigations following the assassination attempt led to the Delhi Conspiracy trial. At the end of the trial, Basant Kumar Biswas, Amir Chand, and Avadh Behari were convicted and executed for their roles in the conspiracy. Rashbehari Bose was known as the person behind the plan, but he evaded arrest because, it is said, he escaped donning a disguise.

The western Anushilan Samiti found a good leader in Jatindranath Mukherjee or Bagha Jatin and emerged as the Jugantar (or Yugantar). Jatin revitalised links between the central organisation in Calcutta and other places in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa.

During the First World War, the Jugantar party arranged to import German arms and ammunition through sympathisers and revolutionaries abroad. Jatin asked Rashbehari Bose to take charge of Upper India, aiming to bring about an all-India insurrection in what has come to be called the ‘German Plot’ or the ‘Zimmerman Plan’. The Jugantar party raised funds through a series of dacoities which came to be known as taxicab dacoities and boat dacoities, so as to work out the Indo-German conspiracy. It was planned that a guerrilla force would be organised to start an uprising in the country, with a seizure of Fort William and a mutiny by armed forces. Unfortunately for the revolutionaries, the plot was leaked out by a traitor. Police came to know that Bagha Jatin was in

Balasore waiting for the delivery of German arms. Jatin and his associates were located by the police. There was a gun-fight as a result of which the revolutionaries were either killed or arrested. The German plot thus failed. Jatin Mukherjee was shot and died a hero's death in Balasore on the Orissa coast in September 1915.

"We shall die to awaken the nation", was the call of Bagha Jatin.

The newspapers and journals advocating revolutionary activity included *Sandhya* and *Yugantar* in Bengal, and *Kal* in Maharashtra.

In the end, revolutionary activity emerged as the most substantial legacy of swadeshi Bengal, which had an impact on educated youth for a generation or more. But an overemphasis on Hindu religion kept the Muslims aloof. Moreover, it encouraged quixotic heroism. No involvement of the masses was envisaged, which, coupled with the narrow upper caste social base of the movement in Bengal, severely limited the scope of the revolutionary activity. In the end, it failed to withstand the weight of State repression.

Maharashtra

The first of the revolutionary activities in Maharashtra was the organisation of the **Ramosi Peasant Force** by Vasudev Balwant Phadke in 1879, which aimed to rid the country of the British by instigating an armed revolt by disrupting communication lines. It hoped to raise funds for its activities through dacoities. It was suppressed prematurely.

During the 1890s, Tilak propagated a spirit of militant nationalism, including the use of violence, through Ganapati and Shivaji festivals and his journals *Kesari* and *Maharatta*. Two of his disciples—the Chapekar brothers, Damodar and Balkrishna—murdered the Plague Commissioner of Poona, Rand, and one Lt. Ayerst in 1897.

Savarkar and his brother organised **Mitra Mela**, a secret society, in 1899, which merged with **Abhinav Bharat** (after Mazzinni's 'Young Italy') in 1904. Soon Nasik, Poona, and Bombay emerged as centres of bomb manufacture. In 1909, A.M.T. Jackson, the Collector of Nasik, who was also a well-known indologist, was killed by Anant Lakshman Kanhere, a member of Abhinav Bharat.

It was found that the killing was part of a conspiracy to overthrow the British government in India by means of armed revolution. Thirty-eight people were arrested. Among these, it was found that Savarkar (with his two brothers,) was the brain, leader, and moving spirit of the conspiracy. At the trial, Savarkar as the soul, inspiration, and moving spirit of the conspiracy extending over a number of years, was sentenced to transportation for life and forfeiture of all his property.

Punjab

The Punjab extremism was fuelled by issues such as frequent famines coupled with rise in land revenue and irrigation tax, practice of 'begar' by zamindars and by the events in Bengal. Among those active here were Lala Lajpat Rai who brought out *Punjabee* (with its motto of self-help at any cost) and Ajit Singh (Bhagat Singh's uncle) who organised the extremist **Anjuman-i-Mohisban-i-Watan** in Lahore with its journal, *Bharat Mata.* Before Ajit Singh's group turned to extremism, it was active in urging non-payment of revenue and water rates among Chenab colonists and Bari Doab peasants. Other leaders included Aga Haidar, Syed Haider Raza, Bhai Parmanand, and the radical Urdu poet, Lalchand 'Falak'.

Extremism in Punjab died down quickly after the government struck in May 1907 with a ban on political meetings and the deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. After this, Ajit Singh and a few other associates—Sufi Ambaprasad, Lalchand, Bhai Parmanand, Lala Hardayal—developed into full-scale revolutionaries.

During the First World War, Rashbehari Bose was involved as one of the leading figures of the Ghadr Revolution. At the close of 1913, Bose met Jatin to discuss the possibilities of an all-India armed rising of 1857 type. Then, he worked in cooperation with Bagha Jatin, extending the Bengal plan to Punjab and the upper provinces. As the plan for revolution did not succeed, Rashbehari Bose escaped to Japan in 1915. Much later, he was to play an important part in the founding of the Indian National Army.

Revolutionary Activities Abroad

The need for shelter, the possibility of bringing out revolutionary literature that would be immune from the Press

Acts, and the quest for arms took Indian revolutionaries abroad.

Shyamji Krishnavarma had started in London in 1905 an Indian Home Rule Society—'India House'—as a centre for Indian students, a scholarship scheme to bring radical youth from India, and a journal *The Indian Sociologist.* Revolutionaries such as Savarkar and Hardayal became the members of India House.

Madanlal Dhingra from this circle assassinated the India office bureaucrat Curzon-Wyllie in 1909. Soon, London became too dangerous for the revolutionaries, particularly after Savarkar had been extradited in 1910 and transported for life in the Nasik conspiracy case.

New centres emerged on the continent—Paris and Geneva—from where Madam Bhikaji Cama, a Parsi revolutionary who had developed contacts with French socialists and who brought out *Bande Mataram,* and Ajit Singh operated. And after 1909 when Anglo-German relations deteriorated, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya chose Berlin as his base.

The Ghadr

The Ghadr Party was a revolutionary group organised around a weekly newspaper *The Ghadr* with its headquarters at San

Views

The ultimate object of the revolutionaries is not terrorism but revolution and the purpose of the revolution is to install a national government.

Subhas Chandra Bose

Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood?

M.K. Gandhi

Neither rich nor able, a poor son like myself can offer nothing but his blood on the altar of mother's deliverance... may I be reborn of the same mother and may I redie in the same sacred cause, till my mission is done and she stands free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God.

Madanlal Dhingra

God has not conferred upon the foreigners the grant inscribed on a copper plate of the kingdom of Hindustan... Do not circumscribe your vision like a frog in a well; get out of the Penal Code and enter the extremely high atmosphere of the *Srimat Bhagvad Gita* and consider the actions of great men.

B.G. Tilak in *Kesari* (June 15, 1897)

Francisco and branches along the US coast and in the Far East.

These revolutionaries included mainly ex-soldiers and peasants who had migrated from the Punjab to the USA and Canada in search of better employment opportunities. They were based in the US and Canadian cities along the western (Pacific) coast. Pre-Ghadr revolutionary activity had been carried on by Ramdas Puri, G.D. Kumar, Taraknath Das, Sohan Singh Bhakna, and Lala Hardayal who reached there in 1911. To carry out revolutionary activities, the earlier activists had set up a 'Swadesh Sevak Home' at Vancouver and 'United India House' at Seattle. Finally, in 1913, the Ghadr was established.

The Ghadr programme was to organise assassinations of officials, publish revolutionary and anti-imperialist literature, work among Indian troops stationed abroad, procure arms, and bring about a simultaneous revolt in all British colonies.

The moving spirits behind the Ghadr Party were Lala Hardayal, Ramchandra, Bhagwan Singh, Kartar Singh Saraba, Barkatullah, and Bhai Parmanand. The Ghadrites intended to bring about a revolt in India. Their plans were encouraged by two events in 1914—the *Komagata Maru* incident and the outbreak of the First World War.

Komagata Maru Incident and the Ghadr The importance of this event lies in the fact that it created an explosive situation in the Punjab. *Komagata Maru* was the name of a ship which was carrying 370 passengers, mainly Sikh and Punjabi Muslim would-be immigrants, from Singapore to Vancouver. They were turned back by Canadian authorities after two months of privation and uncertainty. It was generally believed that the Canadian authorities were influenced by the British government. The ship finally anchored at Calcutta in September 1914. The inmates refused to board the Punjab-bound train. In the ensuing conflict with the police at Budge Budge near Calcutta, 22 persons died.

Inflamed by this and with the outbreak of the First World War, the Ghadr leaders decided to launch a violent attack to oust British rule in India. They urged fighters to go to India. Kartar Singh Saraba and Raghubar Dayal Gupta

left for India. Bengal revolutionaries were contacted; Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal were asked to lead the movement. Political dacoities were committed to raise funds. The Punjab political dacoities of January–February 1915 had a somewhat new social content. In at least 3 out of the 5 main cases, the raiders targeted the moneylenders and the debt records before decamping with the cash. Thus, an explosive situation was created in Punjab.

The Ghadrites fixed February 21, 1915 as the date for an armed revolt in Ferozepur, Lahore, and Rawalpindi garrisons. The plan was foiled at the last moment due to treachery. The authorities took immediate action, aided by the Defence of India Rules, 1915. Rebellious regiments were disbanded, leaders arrested and deported, and 45 of them hanged. Rashbehari Bose fled to Japan (from where he and Abani Mukherji made many efforts to send arms), while Sachin Sanyal was transported for life.

The British met the wartime threat with a formidable battery of repressive measures—the most intensive since 1857—and above all by the Defence of India Act passed in March 1915 primarily to smash the Ghadr movement. There were large-scale detentions without trial, special courts giving extremely severe sentences, and numerous court-martials of armymen. Apart from the Bengal revolutionaries and the Punjab Ghadrites, radical pan-Islamists—Ali brothers, Maulana Azad, Hasrat Mohani—were interned for years.

Evaluation of Ghadr The achievement of the Ghadr movement lay in the realm of ideology. It preached militant nationalism with a completely secular approach. But politically and militarily, it failed to achieve much because it lacked an organised and sustained leadership, underestimated the extent of preparation required at every level—organisational, ideological, financial, and tactical strategic—and perhaps Lala Hardayal was unsuited for the job of an organiser.

Revolutionaries in Europe

The **Berlin Committee for Indian Independence** was established in 1915 by Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Dutta, Lala Hardayal, and others with the help of the German foreign office under ‘Zimmerman Plan’. These

revolutionaries aimed to mobilise the Indian settlers abroad to send volunteers and arms to India to incite rebellion among Indian troops there and to even organise an armed invasion of British India to liberate the country.

The Indian revolutionaries in Europe sent missions to Baghdad, Persia, Turkey, and Kabul to work among Indian troops and the Indian prisoners of war (POWs) and to incite anti-British feelings among the people of these countries. One mission under Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, Barkatullah, and Obaidullah Sindhi went to Kabul to organise a 'provisional Indian government' there with the help of the crown prince, Amanullah.

Mutiny in Singapore

Among the scattered mutinies during this period, the most notable was in Singapore on February 15, 1915 by Punjabi Muslim 5th Light Infantry and the 36th Sikh battalion under Jamadar Chisti Khan, Jamadar Abdul Gani, and Subedar Daud Khan. It was crushed after a fierce battle in which many were killed. Later, 37 persons were executed and 41 transported for life.

Decline

There was a temporary respite in revolutionary activity after the First World War because the release of prisoners held under the Defence of India Rules cooled down passions a bit; there was an atmosphere of conciliation after Montagu's August 1917 statement and the talk of constitutional reforms; and the coming of Gandhi on the scene with the programme of non-violent non-cooperation promised new hope.

Summary

- **Revolutionary Activities**
  - * **Reasons for Emergence**
    Younger elements not ready to retreat after the decline of open phase
    Leadership's failure to tap revolutionary energies of the youth
    Government repression left no peaceful avenues open for protest.

* **Ideology**
  Assassinate unpopular officials, thus strike terror in the hearts of rulers and arouse people to expel the British with force; based on individual heroic actions on lines of Irish nationalists or Russian nihilists and not a mass-based countrywide struggle.

- **Revolutionary Activities**
  * **Bengal**
    1902—First revolutionary groups in Midnapore and Calcutta (The Anushilan Samiti)
    1906—*Yugantar,* the revolutionary weekly started
    By 1905-06—Several newspapers started advocating revolutionary terrorism.
    1907—Attempt on life of the former Lt. governor of East Bengal and Assam
    1908—Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose attempt to murder Muzaffarpur Magistrate, Kingsford
    Alipore conspiracy case involving Aurobindo Ghosh, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, and others
    1908—Burrah dacoity by Dacca Anushilan
    1912—Bomb thrown at Viceroy Hardinge by Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal
    Sandhya, Yugantar—newspapers advocating revolutionary activity
    Jatin Das and Yugantar; the German Plot during World War I
  * **Maharashtra**
    1879—Ramosi Peasant Force by Vasudev Balwant Phadke
    1890s—Tilak's attempts to propagate militancy among the youth through Shivaji and Ganapati festivals, and his journals *Kesari* and *Maharatta*
    1897—Chapekar brothers kill Rand, the plague commissioner of Poona and Lt. Ayerst
    1899—Mitra Mela—a secret society organised by Savarkar and his brother
    1904—Mitra Mela merged with Abhinav Bharat
    1909—District Magistrate of Nasik—Jackson—killed
  * **Punjab**
    Revolutionary activity by Lala Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh, Aga Haidar Syed Haidar Raza, Bhai Parmanand, Lalchand 'Falak', Sufi Ambaprasad

- **Revolutionary Activity Abroad**
  1905—Shyamji Krishnavarma set up Indian Home Rule Society and India House and brought out journal *The Sociologist* in London.

1909—Madan Lal Dhingra murdered Curzon-Wyllie; Madame Bhikaji Cama operated from Paris and Geneva and brought out journal *Bande Mataram*.
Ajit Singh also active
Berlin Committee for Indian Independence established by Virendranath Chattopadhyay and others
Missions sent to Baghdad, Persia, Turkey, Kabul.
* In *North America*, the Ghadr was organised by Lala Hardayal, Ramchandra, Bhawan Singh, Kartar Singh Saraba, Barkatullah, Bhai Parmanand.

The Ghadr Programme

Assassinate officials
Publish revolutionary literature
Work among Indian troops abroad and raise funds
Bring about a simultaneous revolt in all colonies of Britain.
Attempt to bring about an armed revolt in India on February 21, 1915 amidst favourable conditions created by the outbreak of First World War and the *Komagata Maru* incident (September 1914). The plan was foiled due to treachery.
Defence of India Act, 1915 passed primarily to deal with the Ghadrites

CHAPTER 14

First World War and Nationalist Response

In the First World War (1914–19), Britain allied with France, Russia, USA, Italy, and Japan against Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. This period saw the maturing of Indian nationalism. The nationalist response to British participation in the First World War was three-fold:

(i) the Moderates supported the empire in the war as a matter of duty;

(ii) the Extremists, including Tilak (who was released in June 1914), supported the war efforts in the mistaken belief that Britain would repay India's loyalty with gratitude in the form of self-government; and

(iii) the revolutionaries decided to utilise the opportunity to wage a war on British rule and liberate the country.

The Indian supporters of British war efforts failed to see that the imperialist powers were fighting to safeguard their own colonies and markets.

The revolutionary activity was carried out through the Ghadr Party in North America, Berlin Committee in Europe, and some scattered mutinies by Indian soldiers, such as the one in Singapore. In India, for revolutionaries striving for immediate complete independence, the War seemed a heaven-

sent opportunity, draining India of troops (the number of white soldiers went down at one point to only 15,000), and raising the possibility of financial and military help from Germany and Turkey—the enemies of Britain. (Details of revolutionary activities of this period have been covered in the previous chapter.)

Home Rule League Movement

The Home Rule Movement was the Indian response to the First World War in a less charged but a more effective way than the response of Indians living abroad which took the form of the romantic Ghadr adventure.

Prominent leaders—Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Annie Besant, G.S. Khaparde, Sir S. Subramania Iyer, Joseph Baptista, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah among others—got together and decided that it was necessary to have a national alliance that would work throughout the year (unlike the Congress which had annual sessions) with the main objective of demanding self-government or home rule for all of India within the British commonwealth. This alliance was to be the All India Home Rule League along the lines of the Irish Home Rule League.

In the end, however, two Home Rule Leagues were launched—one by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the other by Annie Besant, both with the aim of beginning a new trend of aggressive politics.

Factors Leading to the Movement

Some of the factors leading to the formation of the Home Rule Movement were as follows:

(i) A section of the nationalists felt that popular pressure was required to attain concessions from the government.

(ii) The Moderates were disillusioned with the Morley-Minto reforms.

(iii) People were feeling the burden of wartime miseries caused by high taxation and a rise in prices, and were ready to participate in any aggressive movement of protest.

(iv) The war, being fought among the major imperialist powers of the day and backed by naked propaganda against each other, exposed the myth of white superiority.

(v) Tilak was ready to assume leadership after his release in June 1914, and had made conciliatory gestures—to the government reassuring it of his loyalty and to the Moderates that he wanted, like the Irish Home Rulers, a reform of the administration and not an overthrow of the government. He also admitted that the acts of violence had only served to retard the pace of political progress in India. He urged all Indians to assist the British government in its hour of crisis.

(vi) Annie Besant, the Irish theosophist based in India since 1896, had decided to enlarge the sphere of her activities to include the building of a movement for home rule on the lines of the Irish Home Rule Leagues.

The Leagues

Both Tilak and Besant realised that the sanction of a Moderate-dominated Congress as well as full cooperation of the Extremists was essential for the movement to succeed. Having failed at the 1914 session of the Congress to reach a Moderate-Extremist rapprochement, Tilak and Besant decided to revive political activity on their own.

By early 1915, Annie Besant had launched a campaign to demand self-government for India after the war on the lines of white colonies. She campaigned through her newspapers, *New India* and *Commonweal,* and through public meetings and conferences. At the annual session of the Congress in 1915, the efforts of Tilak and Besant met with some success. It was decided that the Extremists be admitted to the Congress. Although Besant failed to get the Congress to approve her scheme of Home Rule Leagues, the Congress did commit itself to a programme of educative propaganda and to a revival of local-level Congress committees. Not willing to wait for too long, Besant laid the condition that if the Congress did not implement its commitments, she would be free to set up her own league—which she finally had to, as there was no response from the Congress.

Tilak and Besant set up their separate leagues to avoid any friction. As Annie Besant said, some supporters of Tilak were not at ease with her and similarly, some of her own supporters were not at ease with Tilak. However, both leagues coordinated their efforts by confining their work to their specific areas. They cooperated where they could.

Tilak's League

Tilak set up his Indian Home Rule League in April 1916. Tilak held his first Home Rule meeting at Belgaum. Poona was the headquarters of his league. His league was restricted to Maharashtra (excluding Bombay city), Karnataka, Central Provinces, and Berar. It had six branches and the demands included swarajya, formation of linguistic states and education in the vernacular.

Besant's League

Annie Besant set up her All-India Home Rule League in September 1916 in Madras (now Chennai) and covered the rest of India (including Bombay city). It had 200 branches, was loosely organised as compared to Tilak's league and had George Arundale as the organising secretary. Besides Arundale, the main work was done by B.W. Wadia and C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyar.

The Home Rule League Programme

The League campaign aimed to convey to the common man the message of home rule as self-government. It carried a much wider appeal than the earlier mobilisations had and also attracted the hitherto 'politically backward' regions of Gujarat and Sindh. The aim was to be achieved by promoting political education and discussion through public meetings, organising libraries and reading rooms containing books on national politics, holding conferences, organising classes for students on politics, carrying out propaganda through newspapers, pamphlets, posters, illustrated post-cards, plays, religious songs, etc., collecting funds, organising social work, and participating in local government activities. The Russian Revolution of 1917 proved to be an added advantage for the Home Rule campaign.

The Home Rule agitation was later joined by Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai, Chittaranjan Das, K.M. Munshi, B. Chakravarti, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Tej Bahadur Sapru, and Lala Lajpat Rai. Some of these leaders became heads of local branches of Annie Besant's League. Muhammad Ali Jinnah led the Bombay division. Many of the Moderate Congressmen who were disillusioned with Congress inactivity, and some members of Gokhale's Servants of India Society

also joined the agitation. However, Anglo-Indians, most of the Muslims and non-brahmins from the South did not join as they felt Home Rule would mean rule of the Hindu majority, and that too mainly by the high caste.

Government Attitude

The government came down with severe repression, especially in Madras where the students were prohibited from attending political meetings. A case was instituted against Tilak which was, however, rescinded by the high court. Tilak was barred from entering Punjab and Delhi. In June 1917, Annie Besant and her associates, B.P. Wadia and George Arundale, were arrested. This invited nationwide protest. In a dramatic gesture, Sir S. Subramania Aiyar renounced his knighthood, while Tilak advocated a programme of passive resistance. The repression only served to harden the attitude of the agitators and strengthen their resolve to resist the government. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, commented that "Shiva ...cut his wife into fifty-two pieces only to discover that he had fifty-two wives. This is what happens to the Government of India when it interns Mrs Besant." Annie Besant was released in September 1917.

Why the Agitation Faded Out by 1919

The Home Rule agitation proved to be short-lived. By 1919, it had petered out. The reasons for the decline were as follows:

(i) There was a lack of effective organisation.

(ii) Communal riots were witnessed during 1917–18.

(iii) The Moderates who had joined the Congress after Annie Besant's arrest were pacified by talk of reforms (contained in Montagu's statement of August 1917 which held self-government as the long-term goal of the British rule in India) and Besant's release.

(iv) Talk of passive resistance by the Extremists kept the Moderates away from activity from September 1918 onwards.

(v) The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, which became known in July 1918, further divided the nationalist ranks. Annie Besant herself was in two minds about the use of the league after the announcement of the reforms. Annie Besant

vacillated over her response to the reforms and the techniques of passive resistance.

(vi) Tilak had to go abroad (September 1918) in connection with a libel case against Valentine Chirol whose book, *Indian Unrest*, had featured Tilak as responsible for the agitational politics that had developed in India. With Besant unable to give a positive lead and Tilak away in England, the movement was left leaderless.

(vii) Gandhi's fresh approach to the struggle for freedom was slowly but surely catching the imagination of the people, and the mass movement that was gathering momentum pushed the home rule movement onto the side lines till it petered out.

[In 1920, Gandhi accepted the presidentship of the All India Home Rule League and changed the organisation's name to *Swarajya Sabha.* Within a year, however, the league joined the Indian National Congress.]

Positive Gains

The Home Rule Leagues and the associated activities had some positive effects and contributed to the fresh direction that the freedom struggle was to take in the coming years. The Home Rule Movement marked a transition between the deliberative and rather inactive nature of the Congress till then and the Gandhian phase that was to come with its mass involvement in the struggle for freedom.

(i) The movement shifted the emphasis from the educated elite to the masses and permanently deflected the movement from the course mapped by the Moderates.

(ii) It created an organisational link between the town and the country, which was to prove crucial in later years when the national movement entered its mass phase in a true sense.

(iii) It created a generation of ardent nationalists.

(iv) It prepared the masses for politics of the Gandhian style.

(v) The August 1917 declaration of Montagu and the Montford reforms were influenced by the Home Rule agitation.

(vi) The efforts of Tilak and Annie Besant towards the

Moderate-Extremist reunion at Lucknow (1916) revived the Congress as an effective instrument of Indian nationalism.

(vii) The home rule movement lent a new dimension and a sense of urgency to the national movement.

Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress (1916)

Readmission of Extremists to Congress

The Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress, presided over by a Moderate, Ambika Charan Majumdar, finally readmitted the Extremists led by Tilak to the Congress fold. Various factors facilitated this reunion:

(i) Old controversies had become meaningless now.

(ii) Both the Moderates and the Extremists realised that the split had led to political inactivity.

(iii) Annie Besant and Tilak had made vigorous efforts for the reunion. To allay Moderate suspicions, Tilak had declared that he supported a reform of administration and not an overthrow of the government. He also denounced acts of violence.

(iv) The death of Pherozeshah Mehta, who had led the Moderate opposition to the Extremists, facilitated the reunion.

Lucknow Pact between Congress and Muslim League

Another significant development to take place at Lucknow was the coming together of the Muslim League and the Congress and the presentation of common demands by them to the government. This happened at a time when the Muslim League, now dominated by the younger militant nationalists, was coming closer to the Congress objectives and turning increasingly anti-imperialist.

Why the Change in the League's Attitude

There were many reasons for the shift in the League's position:

(i) Britain's refusal to help Turkey (ruled by the Khalifa who claimed religio-political leadership of all Muslims) in

its wars in the Balkans (1912–13) and with Italy (during 1911) had angered the Muslims.

(ii) Annulment of partition of Bengal in 1911 had annoyed those sections of the Muslims who had supported the partition.

(iii) The refusal of the British government in India to set up a university at Aligarh with powers to affiliate colleges all over India also alienated some Muslims.

(iv) The younger League members were turning to bolder nationalist politics and were trying to outgrow the limited political outlook of the Aligarh school. The Calcutta session of the Muslim League (1912) had committed the League to "working with other groups for a system of self-government suited to India, provided it did not come in conflict with its basic objective of protection of interests of the Indian Muslims". Thus, the goal of self-government similar to that of the Congress brought both sides closer.

(v) Younger Muslims were infuriated by the government repression during the First World War. Maulana Azad's *Al Hilal* and Mohammad Ali's *Comrade* faced suppression, while the leaders such as Ali brothers, Maulana Azad and Hasrat Mohani faced internment. This generated anti-imperialist sentiments among the 'Young Party'.

The Nature of the Pact

The Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League could be considered an important event in the course of the nationalistic struggle for freedom.

While the League agreed to present joint constitutional demands with the Congress to the government, the Congress accepted the Muslim League's position on separate electorates which would continue till any one community demanded joint electorates. The Muslims were also granted a fixed proportion

View

After nearly ten years of painful separation and wanderings through the wilderness of misunderstanding and mazes of unpleasant controversies...both wings of Indian Nationalist Party have come to realise the fact that united they stand, but divided they fall.

A.C. Majumdar (president of the Lucknow session of the INC—1916)

of seats in the legislatures at all-India and provincial levels. The joint demands were:

- Government should declare that it would confer self-government on Indians at an early date.
- The representative assemblies at the central as well as provincial level should be further expanded with an elected majority and more powers given to them.
- The term of the legislative council should be five years.
- The salaries of the Secretary of State for India should be paid by the British treasury and not drawn from Indian funds.
- Half the members of the viceroy's and provincial governors' executive councils should be Indians.

Critical Comments

Though half the executive was to be elected by the legislature, the executive as a whole was not to be responsible to the legislature. The legislature could not remove the elected half of the executive, but since important matters like the budget were dependent upon the approval of the legislature, a constitutional deadlock was most likely. This was the nature of executive-legislature relations that the Congress seemed to ask for in any scheme of post-war constitutional reforms. The Lucknow Pact demands were thus just a significantly expanded version of the Morley-Minto reforms.

While the effort of the Congress and the Muslim League to put up a united front was a far-sighted one, the acceptance of the principle of separate electorates by the Congress implied that the Congress and the League came together as separate political entities. This was a major landmark in the evolution of the two-nation theory by the Muslim League. Secondly, while the leaders of the two groups came together, efforts to bring together the masses from the two communities were not considered. However, the controversial decision to accept the principle of separate electorates represented a serious desire on the part of the Congress to allay minority fears of majority domination. Moreover, there was a large amount of enthusiasm generated among the people by this reunion. Even the government decided to placate the nationalists by declaring its intention

to grant self-government to Indians in times to come, as contained in Montagu's August 1917 declaration.

Montagu's Statement of August 1917

The Secretary of State for India, Edwin Samuel Montagu, made a statement on August 20, 1917 in the British House of Commons in what has come to be known as the **August Declaration of 1917**. The statement said: "The government policy is of an increasing participation of Indians in every branch of administration and gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."

From now onwards, the demand by nationalists for self-government or home rule could not be termed as seditious since attainment of self-government for Indians now became a government policy, unlike Morley's statement in 1909 that the reforms were not intended to give self-government to India. Also, in the use of the term 'responsible government' was implied the condition that the rulers were to be answerable to the elected representatives, and not only to the imperial government in London. However, it was equally clear that the British had no intention of handing over power to predominantly elected legislatures with an Indian majority. So, in order that the executive be made responsible in some measure to the elected assemblies, whose size and the proportion of elected members in which was going to be increased in any case, the concept of 'dyarchy' was to be evolved.

Indian Objections

The objections of the Indian leaders to Montagu's statement were two-fold:

(i) No specific time frame was given.

(ii) The government alone was to decide the nature and the timing of advance towards a responsible government, and the Indians were resentful that the British would decide what was good and what was bad for Indians.

Summary

- **Home Rule League Movement**
  Manifestation of a trend of aggressive politics in national movement; was pioneered by Tilak and Annie Besant on lines of a similar movement in Ireland
  * **Factors Favouring the Movement**
    1. Need being felt for popular pressure to attain concessions
    2. Disillusionment with Morley-Minto Reforms
    3. Wartime miseries—public ready to protest
    4. Tilak, Besant ready to assume leadership
  * **Aim of the Movement** To convey to the common man the concept of Home Rule as self-government.
  * **Tilak's League**—Started in April 1916 and operated in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Central Provinces, and Berar; had six branches
  * **Besant's League**—Started in September 1916 and operated in rest of India; had 200 branches
    Later, the leagues were joined by others including Moderate Congressmen.
  * **Methods Used** Organising discussions, reading rooms, propaganda through public meetings, newspapers, pamphlets, posters, etc.
  * **Positive Gains** Emphasis shifted to the masses permanently; organisational link established between town and country; prepared a generation of ardent nationalists, influenced Moderate-Extremist reunion at Lucknow (1916)
- **Lucknow Session of INC—1916**
  Extremists were readmitted to Congress.
  Muslim League and Congress put up joint demands under Lucknow Pact.
  Congress accepted the League's position on separate electorates.
- **Importance of Montagu's Statement** Attainment of self-government for Indians became a government policy.

UNIT 7

Era of Mass Nationalism Begins (1919–1939)

Chapters 15 to 21

CHAPTER 15

Emergence of Gandhi

Towards the end of the First World War, various forces were at work in India and on the international scene. After the end of the war, there was a resurgence of nationalist activity in India and in many other colonies in Asia and Africa. The Indian struggle against imperialism took a decisive turn towards a broad-based popular struggle with the emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi on the Indian political scene.

Why Nationalist Resurgence Now

After the war, the conditions in India and influences from abroad created a situation that was ready for a national upsurge against foreign rule.

Post-War Economic Hardships

India contributed in men and money towards the British war efforts. Thousands of Indian men died in the war on various fronts. The food supplies and ammunition and the army's keep came from the money raised by taxing Indians. When the war ended, all sections of the Indian population were experiencing hardships on various fronts.

Industry First, an increase in prices, then a recession coupled with increased foreign investment brought many industries to the brink of closure and loss. They now demanded protection against imports besides government aid.

Workers and Artisans This section of the populace faced unemployment and bore the brunt of high prices.

Peasantry Faced with high taxation and poverty, the peasants waited for a lead to protest.

Soldiers Soldiers who returned from battlefields abroad gave an idea of their experience to the rural folk. They were also surprised to return to a country that was impoverished and had less liberty than before.

Educated Urban Classes This section was facing unemployment as well as suffering from an acute awareness of racism in the attitude of the British.

Expectations of Political Gains for Cooperation in the War

The contribution of Indians to the British war effort, was huge, though it has gone unacknowledged. Gandhi and most nationalists extended cooperation to the war effort, and a huge number of Indian troops sacrificed their lives on the

war fronts. So, after the war, there were high expectations of political gains from the British government and this too contributed towards the charged atmosphere in the country.

Nationalist Disillusionment with Imperialism Worldwide

The Allied powers, to rally the colonies to their side during the war, had promised them an era of democracy and self-determination after the war. During the war, both sides to the war had launched vicious propaganda to malign each other and expose each other's uncivilised colonial record. But soon it became clear from the Paris Peace Conference and other peace treaties that the imperialist powers had no intention of loosening their hold over the colonies; in fact they went on to divide the colonies of the vanquished powers among themselves. All this served to further erode the myth of the cultural and military superiority of the whites. As a result, the post-war period saw a resurgence of militant nationalist activity throughout Asia and Africa—in Turkey, Egypt, Ireland, Iran, Afghanistan, Burma, Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia, Indo-China, China, and Korea.

Impact of Russian Revolution (November 7, 1917)

The Bolshevik Party of workers overthrew the Czarist regime and founded the first socialist state, the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov or Lenin. The Soviet Union unilaterally renounced the Czarist imperialist rights in China and the rest of Asia, gave rights of self-determination to former Czarist colonies in Asia, and gave equal status to the Asian nationalities within its borders.

The October Revolution brought home the message that immense power lay with the people, and that the masses were capable of challenging the mightiest of tyrants provided they were organised, united, and determined.

Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and Government of India Act, 1919

The British government, not prepared to part with or even share its power with the Indians, once again resorted to the policy of 'carrot and stick'. The carrot was represented by the insubstantial Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, while measures such as the Rowlatt Act represented the stick.

In line with the government policy contained in Montagu's statement of August 1917, the government announced further constitutional reforms in July 1918, known as Montagu-Chelmsford or Montford Reforms. Based on these, the **Government of India Act, 1919** was enacted.

Main Features

The main features of the Montford Reforms were as follows.

- **Provincial Government—Introduction of Dyarchy**

The Act introduced dyarchy for the executive at the level of the provincial government.

Executive (i) Dyarchy, i.e., rule of two—executive councillors and popular ministers—was introduced. The governor was to be the executive head in the province.

(ii) Subjects were divided into two lists: 'reserved' which included subjects such as law and order, finance, land revenue, irrigation, etc., and 'transferred' subjects such as education, health, local government, industry, agriculture, excise, etc. The reserved subjects were to be administered by the governor through his executive council of bureaucrats, and the transferred subjects were to be administered by ministers nominated from among the elected members of the legislative council.

(iii) The ministers were to be responsible to the legislature and had to resign if a no-confidence motion was passed against them by the legislature, while the executive councillors were not to be responsible to the legislature.

(iv) In case of failure of constitutional machinery in

the province the governor could take over the administration of transferred subjects also.

(v) The secretary of state for India and the governor general could interfere in respect of reserved subjects while in respect of the transferred subjects, the scope for their interference was restricted.

Legislature (i) Provincial legislative councils were further expanded and 70 per cent of the members were to be elected.

(ii) The system of communal and class electorates was further consolidated.

(iii) Women were also given the right to vote.

(iv) The legislative councils could initiate legislation, but the governor's assent was required. The governor could veto bills and issue ordinances.

(v) The legislative councils could reject the budget, but the governor could restore it, if necessary.

(vi) The legislators enjoyed freedom of speech.

- **Central Government—Still without Responsible Government**

No responsible government was envisaged in the act for the government at the all-India level. The main points were:

Executive (i) The governor general was to be the chief executive authority.

(ii) There were to be two lists for administration—central and provincial.

(iii) In the viceroy's executive council of eight, three were to be Indians.

(iv) The governor general retained full control over the reserved subjects in the provinces.

(v) The governor-general could restore cuts in grants, certify bills rejected by the central legislature, and issue ordinances.

Legislature (i) A bicameral arrangement was introduced. The lower house or Central Legislative Assembly would consist of 145 members (41 nominated and 104 elected—52 General, 30 Muslims, 2 Sikhs, 20 Special), and the upper house or Council of State would have 60 members, of which 26 were to be nominated and 34 elected—20 General, 10

Muslims, 3 Europeans, and 1 Sikh (as per the figures given by Subhash Kashyap).

(ii) The Council of State had a tenure of 5 years and had only male members, while the Central Legislative Assembly had a tenure of 3 years.

(iii) The legislators could ask questions and supplementaries, pass adjournment motions, and vote a part of the budget, but 75 per cent of the budget was still not votable.

Some Indians found their way into important committees, including finance.

- On the home government (in Britain) front, the Government of India Act, 1919 made an important change—the Secretary of State for India was henceforth to be paid out of the British exchequer.

Drawbacks

The reforms had many drawbacks:

(i) Franchise was very limited. The electorate was extended to some one-and-a-half million for the central legislature, while the population of India was around 260 million, as per one estimate.

(ii) At the centre, the legislature had no control over the viceroy and his executive council.

(iii) Division of subjects was not satisfactory at the centre.

(iv) Allocation of seats for central legislature to the provinces was based on 'importance' of provinces—for instance, Punjab's military importance and Bombay's commercial importance.

(v) At the level of provinces, division of subjects and parallel administration of two parts was irrational and, hence, unworkable. Subjects like irrigation, finance, police, press, and justice were 'reserved'.

(vi) The provincial ministers had no control over finances and over the bureaucrats; this would lead to constant friction between the two. Ministers were often not consulted on important matters too; in fact, they could be overruled

Views

When the Cabinet used the expression 'ultimate self-government' they probably contemplated an intervening period of 500 years.
—Lord Curzon

The Government of India Act, 1919 forged fresh fetters for the people. **—Subhash Chandra Bose**

The Montford Reforms...were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude.
—M.K. Gandhi

The dyarchy of the double executive was open to almost every theoretical objection that the armoury of political philosophy can supply. **—P.E. Roberts**

Never in the history of the world was such a hoax perpetrated upon a great people as England perpetrated upon India, when in return for India's invaluable service during the War, we gave to the Indian nation such a discreditable, disgraceful, undemocratic, tyrannical constitution.
—Dr. Rutherford, British Member of Parliament

Devolution was intended to tie in a larger element of society to the status quo. But giving powers to local communities meant that energies which could have been applied against the imperial power were dissipated into communal rivalry. Division always worked for Britain's benefit ….. In Montford despotism proclaimed its benevolence.
—Walter Reid, *Keeping the Jewel in the Crown*

by the governor on any matter that the latter considered special.

Congress Reaction

The Congress met in a special session in August 1918 at Bombay under Hasan Imam's presidency and declared the reforms to be "disappointing" and "unsatisfactory" and demanded effective self-government instead.

The Montford reforms were termed "unworthy and disappointing—a sunless dawn" by Tilak, even as Annie Besant found them "unworthy of England to offer and India to accept".

Making of Gandhi

Early Career and Experiments with Truth in South Africa

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 in Porbandar in the princely state of Kathiawar in Gujarat. His father was a *diwan* (minister) of the state. Having studied law in England, Gandhi, in 1893, went to South Africa in connection with a case involving his client, Dada Abdullah. In South Africa, he witnessed the ugly face of white racism and the humiliation and contempt to which Asians, who had gone to South Africa as labourers, were subjected. He decided to stay in South Africa to organise the Indian workers to enable them to fight for their rights. He stayed there till 1914, after which he returned to India.

The Indians in South Africa consisted of three categories—one, the indentured Indian labour, mainly from South India, who had migrated to South Africa after 1890 to work on sugar plantations; two, the merchants—mostly Meman Muslims who had followed the labourers; and three, the ex-indentured labourers who had settled down with their children in South Africa after the expiry of their contracts. These Indians were mostly illiterate and had little or no knowledge of English. They accepted racial discrimination as a part of their daily existence. These Indian immigrants had to suffer many disabilities. They were denied the right to vote. They could reside only in prescribed locations which were insanitary and congested. In some colonies, Asians and Africans could not stay out of doors after 9 p.m. nor could they use public footpaths.

Moderate Phase of Struggle (1894–1906)

During this phase, Gandhi relied on sending petitions and memorials to the authorities in South Africa and in Britain, hoping that once the authorities were informed of the plight of Indians, they would take sincere steps to redress their grievances as the Indians were, after all, British subjects. To unite different sections of Indians, he set up the Natal Indian Congress and started a paper *Indian Opinion.*

Phase of Passive Resistance or Satyagraha (1906–1914)

The second phase, which began in 1906, was characterised by the use of the method of passive resistance or civil disobedience, which Gandhi named *satyagraha*.

Satyagraha against Registration Certificates (1906) A new legislation in South Africa made it compulsory for Indians there to carry at all times certificates of registration with their fingerprints. The Indians under Gandhi's leadership decided not to submit to this discriminatory measure. Gandhi formed the Passive Resistance Association to conduct the campaign of defying the law and suffering all the penalties resulting from such a defiance. Thus was born *satyagraha* or devotion to truth, the technique of resisting adversaries without violence. The government jailed Gandhi and others who refused to register themselves. Later, the authorities used deceit to make these defiant Indians register themselves. The Indians under the leadership of Gandhi retaliated by publicly burning their registration certificates. All this showed up the South African government in a bad light. In the end, there was a compromise settlement.

Campaign against Restrictions on Indian Migration The earlier campaign was widened to include protest against a new legislation imposing restrictions on Indian migration. The Indians defied this law by crossing over from one province to another and by refusing to produce licences. Many of these Indians were jailed.

Campaign against Poll Tax and Invalidation of Indian Marriages A poll tax of three pounds was imposed on all ex-indentured Indians. The demand for the abolition of poll tax (which was too much for the poor ex-indentured Indians who earned less than ten shillings a month) widened the base of the campaign. Then a Supreme Court order which invalidated all marriages not conducted according to Christian rites and registered by the registrar of marriages drew the anger of the Indians and others who were not Christians. By implication, Hindu, Muslim, and Parsi marriages were illegal and children born out of such marriages, illegitimate. The Indians treated this judgement as an insult to the honour of

Tolstoy Farm

As it became rather difficult to sustain the high pitch of the struggle, Gandhi decided to devote all his attention to the struggle.

The Tolstoy Farm was founded in 1910 and named as such by Gandhi's associate, Herman Kallenbach, after the Russian writer and moralist, whom Gandhi admired and corresponded with. Besides being an experiment in education, it was to house the families of the *satyagrahis* and to give them a way to sustain themselves.

The Tolstoy Farm was the second of its kind established by Gandhi. He had set up the Phoenix Farm in 1904 in Natal, inspired by a reading of John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, a critique of capitalism, and a work that extolled the virtues of the simple life of love, labour, and the dignity of human beings. As at the Phoenix settlement, at Tolstoy Farm too, manual work went hand-in-hand with instruction. Vocational training was introduced to give "all-round development to the boys and girls". Co-educational classes were held, and boys and girls were encouraged to work together. The activities included general labour, cooking, scavenging, sandal-making, simple carpentry, and messenger work. Manual work such as sweeping, scavenging, and fetching water was perceived to be invaluable to the psychological, social, and moral well-being of an integrated community. Gandhi's objective in this context was to inculcate the ideals of social service and citizenship besides a healthy respect for manual work from the early formative years itself. The farm worked till 1913.

women, and many women were drawn into the movement because of this indignity.

Protest against Transvaal Immigration Act The Indians protested the Transvaal Immigration Act, by illegally migrating from Natal into Transvaal. The government held these Indians in jails. Miners and plantation workers went on a lightning strike. In India, Gokhale toured the whole country mobilising public opinion in support of the Indians in South

View

"... a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasure, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort or praise, or promotion, but is simply determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy, because his body which you can always conquer gives you so little purchase upon his soul."

—**Gilbert Murray** on Gandhi in the *Hibbert Journal*

Africa. Even the viceroy, Lord Hardinge, condemned the repression and called for an impartial enquiry.

Compromise Solution Eventually, through a series of negotiations involving Gandhi, Lord Hardinge, C.F. Andrews, and General Smuts, an agreement was reached by which the Government of South Africa conceded the major Indian demands relating to the poll tax, the registration certificates and marriages solemnised according to Indian rites, and promised to treat the issue of Indian immigration in a sympathetic manner.

Gandhi's Experience in South Africa

(i) Gandhi found that the masses had immense capacity to participate in and sacrifice for a cause that moved them.

(ii) He was able to unite Indians belonging to different religions and classes, and men and women alike under his leadership.

(iii) He also came to realise that at times the leaders have to take decisions unpopular with their enthusiastic supporters.

(iv) He was able to evolve his own style of leadership and politics and new techniques of struggle on a limited scale, untrammelled by the opposition of contending political currents.

Gandhi's Technique of Satyagraha

Gandhi evolved the technique of Satyagraha during his stay in South Africa. It was based on truth and non-violence. He combined some elements from Indian tradition with the Christian requirement of turning the other cheek and the philosophy of Tolstoy, who said that evil could best be countered by non-violent resistance. Its basic tenets were as follows:

- A satyagrahi was not to submit to what he considered as wrong, but was to always remain truthful, non-violent, and fearless.
- A satyagrahi works on the principles of withdrawal of cooperation and boycott.
- Methods of satyagraha include non-payment of taxes, and declining honours and positions of authority.

- A satyagrahi should be ready to accept suffering in his struggle against the wrongdoer. This suffering was to be a part of his love for truth.
- Even while carrying out his struggle against the wrongdoer, a true satyagrahi would have no ill feeling for the wrongdoer; hatred would be alien to his nature.
- A true satyagrahi would never bow before the evil, whatever the consequence.
- Only the brave and strong could practise satyagraha; it was not for the weak and cowardly. Even violence was preferred to cowardice. Thought was never to be separated from practice. In other words, ends could not justify the means.

Gandhi in India

Gandhi returned to India in January 1915. His efforts in South Africa were well known not only among the educated but also among the masses. He decided to tour the country the next one year and see for himself the condition of the masses. He also decided not to take any position on any political matter for at least one year. As for the political currents prevalent at that time in India, he was convinced about the limitations of moderate politics and was also not in favour of Home Rule agitation which was becoming popular at that time. He thought that it was not the best time to agitate for Home Rule when Britain was in the middle of a war. He was convinced that the only technique capable of meeting the nationalist aims was a non-violent satyagraha. He also said that he would join no political organisation unless it too accepted the creed of non-violent satyagraha.

During 1917 and 1918, Gandhi was involved in three struggles—in Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda—before he launched the Rowlatt Satyagraha.

Champaran Satyagraha (1917)—First Civil Disobedience

Gandhi was requested by Rajkumar Shukla, a local man, to look into the problems of the farmers in context of indigo

planters of Champaran in Bihar. The European planters had been forcing the peasants to grow indigo on 3/20 part of the total land (called *tinkathia* system). When towards the end of the 19th century German synthetic dyes replaced indigo, the European planters demanded high rents and illegal dues from the peasants in order to maximise their profits before the peasants could shift to other crops. Besides, the peasants were forced to sell the produce at prices fixed by the Europeans.

When Gandhi, joined now by Rajendra Prasad, Mazhar-ul-Haq, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parekh, and J.B. Kripalani, reached Champaran to probe into the matter, the authorities ordered him to leave the area at once. Gandhi defied the order and preferred to face the punishment. This passive resistance or civil disobedience of an unjust order was a novel method at that time. Finally, the authorities retreated and permitted Gandhi to make an enquiry. Now, the government appointed a committee to go into the matter and nominated Gandhi as a member. Gandhi was able to convince the authorities that the *tinkathia* system should be abolished and that the peasants should be compensated for the illegal dues extracted from them. As a compromise with the planters, he agreed that only 25 per cent of the money taken should be compensated.

Within a decade, the planters left the area. Gandhi had won the first battle of civil disobedience in India. Other popular leaders associated with Champaran Satyagraha were Brajkishore Prasad, Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Ramnavmi Prasad, and Shambhusharan Varma.

Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)—First Hunger Strike

In March 1918, Gandhi intervened in a dispute between cotton mill owners of Ahmedabad and the workers over the issue of discontinuation of the plague bonus. The mill owners wanted to withdraw the bonus. The workers were demanding a rise of 50 per cent in their wages so that they could manage in the times of wartime inflation (which doubled the prices of food grains, cloth, and other necessities) caused by

Britain's involvement in World War I. The mill owners were ready to give only a 20 per cent wage hike. The workers went on strike.

The relations between the workers and the mill owners worsened with the striking workers being arbitrarily dismissed and the mill owners deciding to bring in weavers from Bombay. The workers of the mill turned to Anusuya Sarabhai for help in fighting for justice. Anusuya Sarabhai was a social worker who was also the sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, one of the mill owners and the president of the Ahmedabad Mill Owners Association (founded in 1891 to develop the textile industry in Ahmedabad), for help in fighting for justice. Anusuya Behn went to Gandhi, who was respected by the mill owners and workers, and asked him to intervene and help resolve the impasse between the workers and the employers. Though Gandhi was a friend of Ambalal, he took up the workers' cause. Anusuya too supported the workers and was one of the chief lieutenants of Gandhi's. (It was Anusuya Behn who went on later to form the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association in 1920.) Gandhi asked the workers to go on a strike and demand a 35 per cent increase in wages instead of 50 per cent.

Gandhi advised the workers to remain non-violent while on strike. When negotiations with mill owners did not progress, he himself undertook a fast unto death (his first) to strengthen the workers' resolve. But the fast also had the effect of putting pressure on the mill owners who finally agreed to submit the issue to a tribunal. The strike was withdrawn. In the end, the tribunal awarded the workers a 35 per cent wage hike.

Kheda Satyagraha (1918)—First Non-Cooperation

Because of drought in 1918, the crops failed in Kheda district of Gujarat. According to the Revenue Code, if the yield was less than one-fourth the normal produce, the farmers were entitled to remission. The Gujarat Sabha, consisting of the peasants, submitted petitions to the highest governing

authorities of the province requesting that the revenue assessment for the year 1919 be suspended. The government, however, remained adamant and said that the property of the farmers would be seized if the taxes were not paid.

Gandhi asked the farmers not to pay the taxes. Gandhi, however, was mainly the spiritual head of the struggle. It was Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and a group of other devoted Gandhians, namely, Narahari Parikh, Mohanlal Pandya, and Ravi Shankar Vyas, who went around the villages, organised the villagers and told them what to do, and gave the necessary political leadership. Patel, along with his colleagues, organised the tax revolt which the different ethnic and caste communities of Kheda supported.

The revolt was remarkable in that discipline and unity were maintained. Even when, on non-payment of taxes, the government seized the farmers' personal property, land, and livelihood, a vast majority of Kheda's farmers did not desert Sardar Patel. Gujaratis in other parts who sympathised with the cause of the revolt helped by sheltering the relatives and property of the protesting peasants. Those Indians who sought to buy the confiscated lands were socially ostracised.

Ultimately, the government sought to bring about an agreement with the farmers. It agreed to suspend the tax for the year in question, and for the next; reduce the increase in rate; and return all the confiscated property.

The struggle at Kheda brought a new awakening among the peasantry. They became aware that they would not be free of injustice and exploitation unless and until their country achieved complete independence.

Gains from Champaran, Ahmedabad, and Kheda

- Gandhi demonstrated to the people the efficacy of his technique of satyagraha.
- He found his feet among the masses and came to have a surer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the masses.
- He acquired respect and commitment of many, especially the youth.

Rowlatt Act, Satyagraha, and Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

While, on the one hand, the government dangled the carrot of constitutional reforms (though of an unsatisfactory order), on the other hand, it decided to arm itself with extraordinary powers to suppress any discordant voice against the reforms.

The Rowlatt Act

Just six months before the Montford Reforms were to be put into effect, two bills were introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council. One of them was dropped, but the other—an extension to the Defence of India Regulations Act, 1915—was passed in March 1919. It was what was officially called the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, but popularly known as the Rowlatt Act. It was based on the recommendations made in the previous year to the Imperial Legislative Council by the Rowlatt Commission, headed by the British judge, Sir Sidney Rowlatt, to investigate the 'seditious conspiracy' of the Indian people. (The committee had recommended that activists should be deported or imprisoned without trial for two years, and that even possession of seditious newspapers would be adequate evidence of guilt.) All the elected Indian members of the Imperial Legislative Council voted against the bill, but they were in a minority and easily overruled by the official nominees. All the elected Indian members—who included Muhammed Ali Jinnah, Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Mazhar Ul Haq—resigned in protest.

The act allowed political activists to be tried without juries or even imprisoned without trial. It allowed arrest of Indians without warrant on the mere suspicion of 'treason'. Such suspects could be tried in secrecy without recourse to legal help. A special cell consisting of three high court judges was to try such suspects, and there was no court of appeal above that panel. This panel could even accept evidence not acceptable under the Indian Evidences Act. The law of *habeas corpus*, the basis of civil liberty, was sought to be suspended. The object of the government was to replace the repressive

provisions of the wartime Defence of India Act (1915) by a permanent law. So, the wartime restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly were re-imposed in India. There was strict control over the press, and the government was armed with a variety of powers to deal with anything the authorities chose to consider as terrorism or revolutionary tactics.

Satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act—First Mass Strike

Just when the Indians expected a huge advance towards self-rule as a reward for their contribution to the war, they were given the Montford Reforms with its very limited scope and the shockingly repressive Rowlatt Act. Not surprisingly the Indians felt betrayed—more so Gandhi, who had been at the forefront in offering cooperation in the British war effort, and who had even offered to encourage recruitment of Indians into the British Indian forces. He called the Rowlatt Act the "Black Act" and argued that not everyone should get punishment in response to isolated political crimes.

Gandhi called for a mass protest at all-India level. But soon, having seen the constitutional protest meet with ruthless repression, Gandhi organised a Satyagraha Sabha and roped in younger members of Home Rule Leagues and the Pan Islamists. The forms of protest finally chosen included observance of a nationwide *hartal* (strike) accompanied by fasting and prayer, and civil disobedience against specific laws, and courting arrest and imprisonment.

There was a radical change in the situation by now.

(i) The masses had found a direction; now they could 'act' instead of just giving verbal expression to their grievances.

(ii) From now onwards, peasants, artisans, and the urban poor were to play an increasingly important part in the struggle.

(iii) Orientation of the national movement turned to the masses permanently. Gandhi said that salvation would come when masses were awakened and became active in politics.

Satyagraha was to be launched on April 6, 1919, but before it could be launched, there were large-scale violent, anti-British demonstrations in Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Ahmedabad, etc. Especially in Punjab, the situation became

so very explosive due to wartime repression, forcible recruitments, and ravages of disease that the Army had to be called in. April 1919 saw the biggest and the most violent anti-British upsurge since 1857. The Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, is said to have used aircraft strafing against the violent protestors.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (April 13, 1919)

Amritsar was the worst affected by violence. In the beginning, there was no violence by the protestors. Indians shut down their shops and normal trade, and the empty streets showed the Indians' displeasure at the British betrayal. On April 9, two nationalist leaders, Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal, were arrested by the British officials without any provocation, except that they had addressed protest meetings and taken to some unknown destination. This caused resentment among the Indian protestors who came out in thousands on April 10 to show their solidarity with their leaders. Soon the protests turned violent because the police resorted to firing in which some of the protestors were killed. Tension ran high. In the riot that followed, five Englishmen are reported to have been killed and Marcella Sherwood, an English woman missionary going on a bicycle, was beaten up.

Troops were sent immediately to quell the disturbances. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer was the senior British officer with the responsibility to impose martial law and restore order. By then the city had returned to calm and the protests that were being held were peaceful. Dyer, however, issued a proclamation on April 13 (which was also *Baisakhi*), forbidding people from leaving the city without a pass and from organising demonstrations or processions, or assembling in groups of more than three.

On *Baisakhi* day, a large crowd of people mostly from neighbouring villages, unaware of the prohibitory orders in the city, gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh, a popular place for public events, to celebrate the *Baisakhi* festival. Local leaders had also called for a protest meeting at the venue. It is not clear how many in the 20,000 odd people collected there were political protestors, but the majority were those who had collected for the festival. Meanwhile, the meeting had gone on peacefully, and two resolutions, one calling for

the repeal of the Rowlatt Act and the other condemning the firing on April 10, had been passed. It was then that Brigadier-General Dyer arrived on the scene with his men.

The troops surrounded the gathering under orders from General Dyer and blocked the only exit point and opened fire on the unarmed crowd. No warning was issued, no instruction to disperse was given. An unarmed gathering of men, women, and children was fired upon as they tried to flee.

According to official British Indian sources, 379 were identified dead, and approximately 1,100 were wounded. The Indian National Congress, on the other hand, estimated more than 1,500 were injured, and approximately 1,000 were killed. But it is precisely known that 1,650 bullets were fired into the crowd. The incident was followed by uncivilised brutalities on the inhabitants of Amritsar. Martial law was proclaimed in Punjab, and public floggings and other humiliations were perpetrated. To take just one instance, Indians were forced to crawl on their bellies down the road on which the English missionary had been assaulted.

The entire nation was stunned. Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood in protest. Gandhi gave up the title of Kaiser-i-Hind, bestowed by the British for his work during the Boer War. Gandhi was overwhelmed by the atmosphere of total violence and withdrew the movement on April 18, 1919.

Seen in an objective way, Dyer ensured the beginning of the end of the British Raj.

What had happened in Amritsar made Gandhi declare that cooperation with a 'satanic regime' was now impossible. He realised that the cause of Indian independence from British rule was morally righteous. The way to the non-cooperation movement was ready.

According to the historian, A.P.J Taylor, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre was the "decisive moment when Indians were alienated from British rule".

The events of 1919 were to shape Punjab's politics of resistance. Bhagat Singh was just 11 at the time of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. For Bhagat Singh's Bharat Naujawan Sabha, the massacre was to act as a symbol that would help overcome the apathy that came in the wake of the end of the non-cooperation movement.

Views

The enormity of the measures taken by the Government in the Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has, with a rude shock, revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India ... [T]he very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen, surprised into a dumb anguish of terror. The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation...

—Rabindranath Tagore in a letter to the Viceroy

No government deserves respect which holds cheap the liberty of its subjects.

—M.K. Gandhi in *Young India*, after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre

Udham Singh, who bore the name, Ram Mohammad Singh Azad, later assassinated Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor who presided over the brutal British suppression of the 1919 protests in Punjab. Udham Singh was hanged in 1940 for his deed. (His ashes were returned to India in 1974.)

The Hunter Committee of Inquiry

The massacre at Jallianwalla Bagh shocked Indians and many British as well. The Secretary of State for India, Edwin Montagu, ordered that a committee of inquiry be formed to investigate the matter. So, on October 14, 1919, the Government of India announced the formation of the **Disorders Inquiry Committee**, which came to be more widely and variously known as the **Hunter Committee/Commission** after the name of its chairman, Lord William Hunter, former Solicitor General for Scotland and Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland. The purpose of the commission was to "investigate the recent disturbances in Bombay, Delhi and Punjab, about their causes, and the measures taken to cope with them".

There were three Indians among the members, namely, Sir Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad, Vice-Chancellor of Bombay

University, and advocate of the Bombay High Court; Pandit Jagat Narayan, lawyer and Member of the Legislative Council of the United Provinces; and Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Khan, lawyer from Gwalior State.

After meeting in Delhi on October 29, the committee took statements from witnesses called in from Delhi, Ahmedabad, Bombay, and Lahore. In November, the committee reached Lahore and examined the principal witnesses to the events in Amritsar. Dyer was called before the committee. He was confident that what he had done was only his duty. Dyer stated that his intentions had been to strike terror throughout the Punjab and in doing so, reduce the moral stature of the 'rebels'. Dyer is reported to have explained his sense of honour by saying, "I think it quite possible that I could have dispersed the crowd without firing but they would have come back again and laughed, and I would have made, what I consider, a fool of myself." He also stated that he did not make any effort to tend to the wounded after the shooting as he did not consider it his job.

Though Dyer's statement caused racial tensions among the members of the committee, the final report, released in March 1920, unanimously condemned Dyer's actions. The report stated that the lack of notice to disperse from the Bagh in the beginning was an error; the length of firing showed a grave error; Dyer's motive of producing a sufficient moral effect was to be condemned; Dyer had overstepped the bounds of his authority; there had been no conspiracy to overthrow British rule in Punjab. The minority report of the Indian members further added that the proclamations banning public meetings were insufficiently publicised; there were innocent people in the crowd, and there had not been any violence in the Bagh beforehand; Dyer should have either ordered his troops to help the wounded or instructed the civil authorities to do so; Dyer's actions had been "inhuman and un-British" and had greatly injured the image of British rule in India.

The Hunter Committee did not impose any penal or disciplinary action because Dyer's actions were condoned by various superiors (later upheld by the Army Council).

Also, before the Hunter Committee began its proceedings, the government had passed an Indemnity Act for the protection of its officers. The "white washing bill", as the Indemnity Act was called, was severely criticised by Motilal Nehru and others.

In England, it fell to the Secretary of State for War at the time, Winston Churchill, to review the report of the commission. In the House of Commons, Churchill (no lover of Indians) condemned what had happened at Amritsar. He called it "monstrous". A former prime minister of Britain, H.H. Asquith called it "one of the worst outrages in the whole of our history". The cabinet agreed with Churchill that Dyer was a dangerous man and could not be allowed to continue in his post. The decision that Dyer should be dismissed was conveyed to the Army Council. In the end, Dyer was found guilty of a mistaken notion of duty and relieved of his command in March 1920. He was recalled to England. No legal action was taken against him; he drew half pay and received his army pension.

Dyer was not, however, universally condemned. In the House of Lords, most of the peers favoured Dyer, and the house passed a motion in his support. And the *Morning Post* is reported to have raised a sum of 26,000 pounds for Dyer; a famous contributor to the fund was Rudyard Kipling.

Strangely enough, the clergy of the Golden Temple, led by Arur Singh, honoured Dyer by declaring him a Sikh. The honouring of Dyer by the priests of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, was one of the reasons behind the intensification of the demand for reforming the management of Sikh shrines already being voiced by societies such as the Khalsa Diwan Majha and Central Majha Khalsa Diwan. This resulted in the launch of what came to be known as the Gurudwara Reform movement.

Congress View

The Indian National Congress appointed its own non-official committee that included Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Abbas Tyabji, M.R. Jayakar, and Gandhi. The Congress put forward its own view. This view criticised Dyer's act as inhuman and also said that there was no justification in the introduction of the martial law in Punjab.

Summary

- **Why Nationalist Upsurge at End of First World War?**
  Post-War economic hardship
  Nationalist disillusionment with imperialism worldwide
  Impact of the Russian Revolution

- **Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms**
  Dyarchy in provinces
  Two lists—reserved and transferred—for administration. Reserved subjects to be administered by governor through executive council and transferred subjects to be administered by ministers from legislative council.
  Extensive powers to governor, governor general, and secretary of state for interference
  Franchise expanded, powers also extended.
  Governor general to administer with an executive council of 8—three to be Indians.
  Two lists for administration—central and provincial
  Bicameral central legislature—Central Legislative Assembly as the lower house and Council of States as the upper house

Drawbacks
  Dyarchy arrangement too complex and irrational to be functional
  Central executive not responsible to legislature
  Limited franchise

- **Sense of Betrayal by the British specially after Rowlatt Act**
  British promises of reward after war failed to materialise
  Nationalists disappointed

- **Gandhi's Activism in South Africa (1893–1914)**
  Set up Natal Indian Congress and started *Indian Opinion*
  Satyagraha against registration certificates
  Campaign against restrictions on Indian migration
  Campaign against poll tax and invalidation of Indian marriages
  Gandhi's faith in capacity of masses to fight established; he was able to evolve his own style of leadership and politics and techniques of struggle.

- **Gandhi's Early Activism in India**
  Champaran Satyagraha (1917)—First Civil Disobedience
  Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918)—First Hunger Strike
  Kheda Satyagraha (1918)—First Non-Cooperation
  Rowlatt Satyagraha (1918)—First mass-strike
  Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre and the Inquiry Committee

CHAPTER 16

Non-Cooperation Movement and Khilafat Aandolan

During 1919–22, the British were opposed through two mass movements—the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation. Though the two movements emerged from separate issues, they adopted a common programme of action—that of non-violent non-cooperation. The Khilafat issue was not directly linked to Indian politics, but it provided the immediate background to the movement and gave an added advantage of cementing Hindu-Muslim unity against the British.

Background

The background to the two movements was provided by a series of events after the First World War, which belied all hopes of the government's generosity towards the Indian subjects. The year 1919, in particular, saw a strong feeling of discontent among all sections of Indians for various reasons:

- The economic situation of the country in the post-War years had become alarming, with a rise in prices of commodities, decrease in production of Indian industries, increase in burden of taxes and rents, etc. Almost all sections of society suffered economic hardship due to the war, and this strengthened the anti-British attitude.
- The Rowlatt Act, the imposition of martial law in

Punjab and the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre exposed the brutal and uncivilised face of the foreign rule.

- The Hunter Committee on the Punjab atrocities proved to be an eyewash. In fact, the House of Lords (of the British Parliament) endorsed General Dyer's action and the British public showed solidarity with General Dyer by helping *The Morning Post* collect 30,000 pounds for him.
- The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms with their ill-conceived scheme of dyarchy failed to satisfy the rising demand of the Indians for self-government.

The post-First World War period also saw the preparation of the ground for common political action by Hindus and Muslims—(i) the Lucknow Pact (1916) had stimulated Congress-Muslim League cooperation; (ii) the Rowlatt Act agitation brought Hindus and Muslims, and also other sections of the society, together; and (iii) radical nationalist Muslims like Muhammad Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan, and Hasan Imam had now become more influential than the conservative Aligarh school elements who had dominated the League earlier. The younger elements advocated militant nationalism and active participation in the nationalist movement. They had strong anti-imperialist sentiments.

In this atmosphere, the Khilafat issue emerged, around which developed the historic Non-Cooperation Movement.

The Khilafat Issue

The Khilafat issue paved the way for the consolidation of the emergence of a radical nationalist trend among the younger generation of Muslims and the section of traditional Muslim scholars who were becoming increasingly critical of British rule. This time, they were angered by the treatment meted out to Turkey by the British after the First World War. The Muslims in India, as the Muslims all over the world, regarded the sultan of Turkey as their spiritual leader, Khalifa, so naturally their sympathies were with Turkey. During the war, Turkey had allied with Germany and Austria against the British. When the war ended, the British took a stern attitude towards Turkey—Turkey was dismembered and the Khalifa removed from power. This incensed Muslims all over the world.

In India, too, the Muslims demanded from the British (i) that the Khalifa's control over Muslim sacred places should be retained, and (ii) the Khalifa should be left with sufficient territories after territorial arrangements. In early 1919, a Khilafat Committee was formed under the leadership of the Ali brothers (Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali), Maulana Azad, Ajmal Khan, and Hasrat Mohani, to force the British government to change its attitude towards Turkey. Thus, the ground for a country-wide agitation was prepared.

Development of the Khalifat-Non-Cooperation Programme

For some time, the Khilafat leaders limited their actions to meetings, petitions, and deputations in favour of the Khilafat. Later, however, a militant trend emerged, demanding an active agitation such as stopping all cooperation with the British. Thus, at the All India Khilafat Conference held in Delhi in November 1919, a call was made for the boycott of British goods. The Khilafat leaders also clearly spelt out that unless peace terms after the War were favourable to Turkey they would stop all cooperation with the Government. Gandhi, who was the president of the All India Khilafat Committee, saw in the issue a platform from which mass and united non-cooperation could be declared against the Government.

Congress Stand on Khilafat Question

It was quite clear that the support of the Congress was essential for the Khilafat movement to succeed. However, although Gandhi was in favour of launching satyagraha and non-cooperation against the government on the Khilafat issue, the Congress was not united on this form of political action. Tilak was opposed to having an alliance with Muslim leaders over a religious issue, and he was also sceptical of satyagraha as an instrument of politics. According to Professor Ravinder Kumar, Gandhi made a concerted bid to convince Tilak of the virtues of satyagraha and of the expediency of an alliance with the Muslim community over the Khilafat issue. There was opposition to some of the other provisions of the Gandhi's non-cooperation programme also, such as boycott of councils. Later, however, Gandhi was able to get

the approval of the Congress for his programme of political action and the Congress felt inclined to support a non-cooperation programme on the Khilafat question because:

- it was felt that this was a golden opportunity to cement Hindu-Muslim unity and to bring Muslim masses into the national movement; now different sections of society—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, peasants, artisans, capitalists, tribals, women, students—could come into the national movement by fighting for their own rights and realising that the colonial rule was opposed to them;
- the Congress was losing faith in constitutional struggle, especially after the Punjab incidents and the blatantly partisan Hunter Committee Report;
- the Congress was aware that the masses were eager to give expression to their discontent.

Muslim League Support to Congress

The Muslim League also decided to give full support to the Congress and its agitation on political questions.

The Non-Cooperation Khilafat Movement

February 1920 In early 1920, a joint Hindu-Muslim deputation was sent to the viceroy to seek redress of grievances on the issue of Khilafat, but the mission proved abortive.

In February 1920, Gandhi announced that the issues of Punjab wrongs and constitutional advance had been overshadowed by the Khilafat question and that he would soon lead a movement of non-cooperation if the terms of the peace treaty failed to satisfy the Indian Muslims.

May 1920 The Treaty of Sevres with Turkey, signed in May 1920, completely dismembered Turkey.

June 1920 An all-party conference at Allahabad approved a programme of boycott of schools, colleges, and law courts, and asked Gandhi to lead it.

August 31, 1920 The Khilafat Committee started a campaign of non-cooperation, and the movement was formally launched. (Tilak had, incidentally, breathed his last on August 1, 1920.)

September 1920 At a special session in Calcutta, the Congress approved a non-cooperation programme till the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs were removed and swaraj was established. The programme was to include:

- boycott of government schools and colleges;
- boycott of law courts and dispensation of justice through panchayats instead;
- boycott of legislative councils (there were some differences over this as some leaders like C.R. Das were not willing to include a boycott of councils, but bowed to Congress discipline; these leaders boycotted elections held in November 1920, and the majority of the voters too stayed away);
- boycott of foreign cloth and use of khadi instead; also practice of hand-spinning to be done;
- renunciation of government honours and titles; the second phase could include mass civil disobedience including resignation from government service, and non-payment of taxes.

During the movement, the participants were supposed to work for Hindu-Muslim unity and for removal of untouchability, all the time remaining non-violent.

December 1920 At the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress:

(i) The programme of non-cooperation was endorsed.

(ii) An important change was made in the Congress creed: now, instead of having the attainment of self-government through constitutional means as its goal, the Congress decided to have the attainment of swaraj through peaceful and legitimate means, thus committing itself to an extra-constitutional mass struggle.

(iii) Some important organisational changes were made: a **congress working committee** (CWC) of 15 members was set up to lead the Congress from now onwards; **provincial congress committees** on linguistic basis were organised;

ward committees were organised; and entry fee was reduced to four annas.

(iv) Gandhi declared that if the non-cooperation programme was implemented completely, swaraj would be ushered in within a year.

Many groups of revolutionary terrorists, especially those from Bengal, also pledged support to the Congress programme.

At this stage, some leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Annie Besant, G.S. Kharpade, and B.C. Pal left the Congress as they believed in a constitutional and lawful struggle, while some others like Surendranath Banerjea founded the **Indian National Liberal Federation** and played a minor role in national politics henceforward.

The adoption by the Congress of the non-cooperation movement initiated earlier by the Khilafat Committee gave it a new energy, and the years 1921 and 1922 saw an unprecedented popular upsurge.

Spread of the Movement

Gandhi accompanied by the Ali brothers undertook a nationwide tour. Thousands of students left government schools and colleges and joined around 800 national schools and colleges which cropped up during this time. These educational institutions were organised under the leadership of Acharya Narendra Dev, C.R. Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Zakir Hussain, Subhash Bose (who became the principal of **National College** at Calcutta) and included **Jamia Millia** at Aligarh, Kashi Vidyapeeth, **Gujarat Vidyapeeth,** and **Bihar Vidyapeeth**.

Many lawyers gave up their practice, some of whom were Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, C.R. Das, C. Rajagopalachari, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Vallabhbhai Patel, Asaf Ali, T. Prakasam, and Rajendra Prasad.

Heaps of foreign cloth were burnt publicly and their imports fell by half. Picketing of shops selling foreign liquor and of toddy shops was undertaken at many places.

The Tilak Swaraj Fund was oversubscribed and one crore rupees were collected.

Congress volunteer corps emerged as the parallel police.

In July 1921, the Ali brothers gave a call to the Muslims to resign from the army as it was unreligious. The Ali brothers were arrested for this in September. Gandhi echoed their call and asked local Congress committees to pass similar resolutions to that effect.

Now, the Congress gave a call to local Congress bodies to start civil disobedience if it was thought that the people were ready for it. Already, a no-tax movement against union board taxes in Midnapore (Bengal) and in Guntur (Andhra) was going on.

In Assam, strikes in tea plantations, steamer services, and Assam-Bengal Railways had been organised. J.M. Sengupta was a prominent leader in these strikes.

In November 1921, the visit of the Prince of Wales to India invited strikes and demonstrations.

The spirit of defiance and unrest gave rise to many local struggles such as Awadh Kisan Movement (UP), Eka Movement (UP), Mappila Revolt (Malabar), and the Sikh agitation for the removal of *mahants* in Punjab.

People's Response

The participation in the movement was from a wide range of the society but to a varying extent.

Middle Class

People from the middle classes led the movement at the beginning, but later they showed a lot of reservations about Gandhi's programme. In places like Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, which were centres of elite politicians, the response to Gandhi's call was very limited. The response to the call for resignation from the government service, surrendering of titles, etc., was not taken seriously. The comparative newcomers in Indian politics found expression of their interests and aspirations in the movement. Rajendra Prasad in Bihar and Vallabhbhai Patel in Gujarat provided solid support and, in fact, leaders like them found non-cooperation to be a viable political alternative to terrorism in order to fight against a colonial government.

Business Class
The economic boycott received support from the Indian business group because they had benefited from the nationalists' emphasis on the use of swadeshi. But a section of the big business remained sceptical towards the movement. They seemed to be afraid of labour unrest in their factories.

Peasants
Peasants' participation was massive. Although the Congress was against class war, the masses broke this restraint. In Bihar, the confrontation between the 'lower and upper castes' on the issue of the former taking the sacred thread got merged with the Non-Cooperation Movement. In general, the peasants turned against the landlords and the traders. The movement gave an opportunity to the toiling masses to express their real feelings against the British as well as against their Indian masters and oppressors (landlords and traders).

Students
Students became active volunteers of the movement, and thousands of them left government schools and colleges and joined national schools and colleges. The newly opened national institutions like the Kashi Vidyapeeth, the Gujarat Vidyapeeth, and the Jamila Milia Islamia and others accommodated many students.

Women
Women gave up *purdah* and offered their ornaments for the Tilak Fund. They joined the movement in large numbers and took active part in picketing before the shops selling foreign cloth and liquor.

Hindu-Muslim Unity
The massive participation of Muslims and the maintenance of communal unity, despite the events like Moppila Uprisings, were great achievements. In many places, two-thirds of those arrested were Muslims, and such type of participation had neither been seen in the past nor would be seen in the future. Gandhi and other leaders addressed the Muslim masses from mosques, and Gandhi was even allowed to address meetings of Muslim women in which he was the only male who was not blindfolded.

Government Response

Talks between Gandhi and Reading, the viceroy, broke down in May 1921 as the government wanted Gandhi to urge the Ali brothers to remove those portions from speeches which suggested violence. Gandhi realised that the government was trying to drive a wedge between him and the Khilafat leaders and refused to fall into the trap. In December, the government came down heavily on the protestors. Volunteer corps were declared illegal, public meetings were banned, the press was gagged, and most of the leaders barring Gandhi were arrested.

The Last Phase of the Movement

Gandhi was now under increasing pressure from the Congress rank and file to start the civil disobedience programme. The Ahmedabad session in 1921 (presided over, incidentally, by C.R. Das while still in jail; Hakim Ajmal Khan was the acting president) appointed Gandhi the sole authority on the issue.

On February 1, 1922, Gandhi threatened to launch civil disobedience from Bardoli (Gujarat) if (i) political prisoners were not released, and (ii) press controls were not removed. The movement had hardly begun before it was brought to an abrupt end.

Chauri Chaura Incident

A small sleepy village named Chauri-Chaura (Gorakhpur district in United Provinces) has found a place in history books due to an incident of violence on February 5, 1922, which was to prompt Gandhi to withdraw the movement. The police here had beaten up the leader of a group of volunteers campaigning against liquor sale and high food prices, and then opened fire on the crowd which had come to protest before the police station. The agitated crowd torched the police station with policemen inside who had taken shelter there; those who tried to flee were hacked to death and thrown back into the fire. Twenty-two policemen were killed in the violence. Gandhi, not happy with the increasingly violent trend of the movement, immediately announced the withdrawal of the movement.

The Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli in February 1922 and resolved to stop all activity that led to

Views

To sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling point was nothing short of a national calamity. The principal lieutenants of the Mahatma, Deshbandhu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Lala Lajpat Rai, who were all in prison, shared the popular resentment.

—Subhas Chandra Bose

A mass wave of revolutionary unrest in India in 1919 (evident from the labour unrest and strike wave of 1919-20 and peasant protests in UP and Bihar) ..... worked as a kind of popular ground-swell virtually forcing the leadership to a radical posture...Gandhi and the Congress bigwigs sensed that a revolutionary mass movement was in the offing. They decided to take over the leadership to keep the movement a 'controlled' affair and 'within safe channels'. The movement was called off just when the masses seemed to be taking the initiative.

—Marxist Interpretation

I would suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent.

—M.K. Gandhi, in *Young India,* February 16, 1922

breaking of the law and to get down to constructive work, instead, which was to include popularisation of khadi, national schools, and campaigning for temperance, for Hindu-Muslim unity and against untouchability.

Most of the nationalist leaders including C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Subhash Bose, Jawaharlal Nehru, however, expressed their bewilderment at Gandhi's decision to withdraw the movement.

In March 1922, Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years in jail. He made the occasion memorable by a magnificent court speech: "I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen."

Why Gandhi Withdrew the Movement

Gandhi felt that people had not learnt or fully understood the method of non-violence. Incidents like Chauri-Chaura

could lead to the kind of excitement and fervour that would turn the movement to become generally violent. A violent movement could be easily suppressed by the colonial regime who would make the incidents of violence an excuse for using the armed might of the State against the protestors.

The movement was also showing signs of fatigue. This was natural as it is not possible to sustain any movement at a high pitch for very long. The government seemed to be in no mood for negotiations.

The central theme of the agitation—the Khilafat question—also dissipated soon. In November 1922, the people of Turkey rose under Mustafa Kamal Pasha and deprived the sultan of political power. Turkey was made a secular state. Thus, the Khilafat question lost its relevance. A European style of legal system was established in Turkey and extensive rights granted to women. Education was nationalised and modern agriculture and industries developed. In 1924, the caliphate was abolished.

Evaluation of Khilafat Non-Cooperation Movement

The movement brought the urban Muslims into the national movement, but at the same time it communalised the national politics, to an extent. Although Muslim sentiments were a manifestation of the spread of a wider anti-imperialist feeling, the national leaders failed to raise the religious political consciousness of the Muslims to a level of secular political consciousness.

With the Non-Cooperation Movement, nationalist sentiments reached every nook and corner of the country and politicised every strata of population—the artisans, peasants,

View

It (Khilafat movement) was a purely retrograde and reactionary movement, and more importantly for Indian nationalism, it was an intrinsically anti-nationalist movement pitting specifically Islamic interests against secular and non-Muslim interests.

—Dr. Koenraad Elst

students, urban poor, women, traders, etc. It was this politicisation and activisation of millions of men and women which imparted a revolutionary character to the national movement. Colonial rule was based on two myths—one, that such a rule was in the interest of Indians and two, that it was invincible. The first myth had been exploded by the economic critique by Moderate nationalists. The second myth had been challenged by satyagraha through mass struggle. Now, the masses lost the hitherto all-pervasive fear of the colonial rule and its mighty repressive organs.

Summary

- **Khilafat-Non-Cooperation Movement**
  - **Three demands—**
    1. Favourable treaty for Turkey
    2. Redressal of Punjab wrongs
    3. Establishment of swaraj
  - **Techniques Used**
    Boycott of government-run schools, colleges, law courts, municipality and government service, foreign cloth, liquor; setting up of national schools, colleges, panchayats, and using khadi; second stage to include civil disobedience by non-payment of taxes.
  - **Nagpur Congress Session (December 1920)**—Congress goal changed to attainment of swaraj through peaceful and legitimate means from attainment of self-government through constitutional means.
  - **Chauri-Chaura Incident (February 5, 1922)**—Violence by agitated mob prompted Gandhi to withdraw the movement.

CHAPTER 17

Emergence of Swarajists, Socialist Ideas, Revolutionary Activities, and Other New Forces

Swarajists and No-Changers

Genesis of Congress-Khilafat Swarajya Party

After Gandhi's arrest (March 1922), there was disintegration, disorganisation, and demoralisation among nationalist ranks. A debate started among Congressmen on what to do during the transition period, i.e., the passive phase of the movement.

One section led by C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, and Ajmal Khan wanted an end to the boycott of legislative councils so that the nationalists could enter them to expose the basic weaknesses of these assemblies and use these councils as an arena of political struggle to arouse popular enthusiasm. They wanted, in other words, to 'end or mend' these councils, i.e., if the government did not respond to the nationalists' demands, then they would obstruct the working of these councils.

Those advocating entry into legislative councils came to be known as the 'Swarajists', while the other school of

thought led by C. Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, and M.A. Ansari came to be known as the 'No-changers'. The 'No-Changers' opposed council entry, advocated concentration on constructive work, and continuation of boycott and non-cooperation, and quiet preparation for resumption of the suspended civil disobedience programme.

The differences over the question of council entry between the two schools of thought resulted in the defeat of the Swarajists' proposal of 'ending or mending' the councils at the Gaya session of the Congress (December 1922). C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru resigned from the presidentship and secretaryship respectively of the Congress and announced the formation of **Congress-Khilafat Swarajya Party** or simply Swarajist Party, with C.R. Das as the president and Motilal Nehru as one of the secretaries.

Swarajists' Arguments

The Swarajists had their reasons for advocating the entry into the councils.

- Entering the councils would not negate the non-cooperation programme; in fact, it would be like carrying on the movement through other means—opening a new front.
- In a time of political vacuum, council work would serve to enthuse the masses and keep up their morale. Entry of nationalists would deter the government from stuffing the councils with undesirable elements who may be used to provide legitimacy to government measures.
- The councils could be used as an arena of political struggle; there was no intention to use the councils as organs for gradual transformation of colonial rule.

No-Changers' Arguments

The No-Changers argued that parliamentary work would lead to neglect of constructive work, loss of revolutionary zeal, and to political corruption. Constructive work would prepare everyone for the next phase of civil disobedience.

Agree to Disagree

Both sides, however, wanted to avoid a 1907-type split and kept in touch with Gandhi who was in jail. Both sides also realised the significance of putting up a united front to get

a mass movement to force the government to introduce reforms, and both sides accepted the necessity of Gandhi's leadership of a united nationalist front. Keeping these factors in mind, a compromise was reached at a meeting in Delhi in September 1923.

The Swarajists were allowed to contest elections as a group within the Congress. The Swarajists accepted the Congress programme with only one difference—that they would join legislative councils. The elections to the newly constituted Central Legislative Assembly and to provincial assemblies were to be held in November 1923.

The Swarajist Manifesto for Elections

Released in October 1923, the Swarajist manifesto took a strong anti-imperialist line. The points put forward were as follows:

- The guiding motive of the British in governing India lay in selfish interests of their own country.
- The so-called reforms were only a blind to further the said interests under the pretence of granting a responsible government, the real objective being to continue exploitation of the unlimited resources of the country by keeping Indians permanently in a subservient position to Britain.
- The Swarajists would present the nationalist demand of self-government in councils.
- If this demand was rejected, they would adopt a policy of uniform, continuous, and consistent obstruction within the councils to make governance through councils impossible.
- Councils would thus be wrecked from within by creating deadlocks on every measure.

Gandhi's Attitude

Gandhi was initially opposed to the Swarajist proposal of council entry. But after his release from prison on health grounds in February 1924, he gradually moved towards a reconciliation with the Swarajists.

- He felt public opposition to the programme of council entry would be counterproductive.
- In the November 1923 elections, the Swarajists had managed to win 42 out of 141 elected seats and a clear

majority in the provincial assembly of Central Provinces. In legislatures, in cooperation with the Liberals and the independents like Jinnah and Malaviya, they won a majority. The courageous and uncompromising manner in which the Swarajists functioned convinced him that they would not become just another limb of colonial administration.

● There was a government crackdown on revolutionary terrorists and the Swarajists towards the end of 1924; this angered Gandhi and he expressed his solidarity with the Swarajists by surrendering to their wishes.

Both sides came to an agreement in 1924 (endorsed at the Belgaum session of the Congress in December 1924 over which Gandhi—the only time—presided over the Congress session) that the Swarajists would work in the councils as an integral part of the Congress.

Swarajist Activity in Councils

Gradually, the Swarajist position had weakened because of widespread communal riots, and a split among Swarajists themselves on communal and Responsivist-Non-responsivist lines. The government strategy of dividing the Swarajists—the more militant from the moderate, the Hindus from the Muslims—was successful. The Swarajists lost the support of many Muslims when the party did not support the tenants' cause against the zamindars in Bengal (most of the tenants were Muslims). Communal interests also entered the party. The death of C.R. Das in 1925 weakened it further.

The **Responsivists** among Swarajists—Lala Lajpat Rai, Madan Mohan Malaviya, and N.C. Kelkar—advocated cooperation with the government and holding of office wherever possible. Besides, they also wanted to protect the so-called Hindu interests. The communal elements accused leaders like Motilal Nehru, who did not favour joining the council, of being anti-Hindu even as Muslim communalists called the Swarajists anti-Muslim.

Thus, the main leadership of the Swarajist Party reiterated faith in mass civil disobedience and withdrew from legislatures in March 1926, while another section of Swarajists went into the 1926 elections as a party in disarray and did not fare well on the whole. They won 40 seats in the Centre and some

seats in Madras but were routed in the United Provinces, the Central Provinces and Punjab.

In 1930, the Swarajists finally walked out as a result of the Lahore Congress resolution on *purna swaraj* and the beginning of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Achievements

(i) With coalition partners, they out-voted the government several times, even on matters relating to budgetary grants, and passed adjournment motions.

(ii) They agitated through powerful speeches on self-government, civil liberties, and industrialisation.

(iii) Vithalbhai Patel was elected speaker of Central Legislative Assembly in 1925.

(iv) A noteworthy achievement was the defeat of the Public Safety Bill in 1928, which was aimed at empowering the Government to deport undesirable and subversive foreigners (because the Government was alarmed by the spread of socialist and communist ideas and believed that a crucial role was being played by the British and other foreign activists being sent by the Commintern).

(v) By their activities, they filled the political vacuum at a time when the national movement was recouping its strength.

(vi) They exposed the hollowness of the Montford scheme.

(vii) They demonstrated that the councils could be used creatively.

Drawbacks

(i) The Swarajists lacked a policy to coordinate their militancy inside legislatures with the mass struggle outside. They relied totally on newspaper reporting to communicate with the public.

(ii) An obstructionist strategy had its limitations.

(iii) They could not carry on with their coalition partners very far because of conflicting ideas, which further limited their effectiveness.

(iv) They failed to resist the perks and privileges of power and office.

(v) They failed to support the peasants' cause in Bengal

and lost support among Muslim members who were pro-peasant.

Constructive Work by No-Changers

The No-Changers devoted themselves to constructive work that connected them to the different sections of the masses.

(i) Ashrams sprang up where young men and women worked among tribals and lower castes (especially in Kheda and Bardoli areas of Gujarat), and popularised the use of charkha and khadi.

(ii) National schools and colleges were set up where students were trained in a non-colonial ideological framework.

(iii) Significant work was done for Hindu-Muslim unity, removing untouchability, boycott of foreign cloth and liquor, and for flood relief.

(iv) The constructive workers served as the backbone of civil disobedience as active organisers.

A Critique of Constructive Work

National education benefited the urban lower middle classes and the rich peasants only. Enthusiasm for national education surfaced in the excitement of the movement only. In passivity, the lure of degrees and jobs took the students to official schools and colleges.

Popularisation of khadi was an uphill task since it was costlier than the imported cloth.

While campaigning about the social aspect of untouchability, no emphasis was laid on the economic grievances of the landless and agricultural labourers comprising mostly the untouchables.

Although the Swarajists and the No-Changers worked in their separate ways, they kept on best of terms with one another and were able to unite whenever the time was ripe for a new political struggle.

Emergence of New Forces: Socialistic Ideas, Youth Power, Trade Unionism

The third decade of the 20th century is a watershed in modern Indian history in more ways than one. While, on the one hand,

this period marked the entry of Indian masses into the national movement, on the other hand, this period saw the basic crystallisation of the main political currents on the national scene. These diverse political currents owed their origin partly to the coming on the scene of the Gandhian philosophy of satyagraha based on truth and non-violence, as they embodied a positive or negative reaction to it. The international influence on Indian political thinkers during this phase was also more pronounced than before.

The new forces to emerge during the 1920s included the following ideas and movements.

Spread of Marxist and Socialist Ideas

Ideas of Marx and Socialist thinkers inspired many groups to come into existence as socialists and communists. These ideas also resulted in the rise of a left wing within the Congress, represented by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. These young nationalists, inspired by the Soviet Revolution and dissatisfied with Gandhian ideas and political programme, began advocating radical solutions for economic, political, and social ills of the country. These younger nationalists—

- were critical of both Swarajists and No-Changers;
- advocated a more consistent anti-imperialist line in the form of a slogan for *purna swarajya* (complete independence);
- were influenced by an awareness, though still vague, of international currents;
- stressed the need to combine nationalism and anti-imperialism with social justice and simultaneously raised the question of internal class oppression by capitalists and landlords.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) was formed in 1920 in Tashkent (now, the capital of Uzbekistan) by M.N. Roy, Abani Mukherji, and others after the second Congress of Commintern. M.N. Roy was also the first to be elected to the leadership of Commintern.

In 1924, many communists—S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, Shaukat Usmani, Nalini Gupta—were jailed in the Kanpur Bolshevik Conspiracy Case.

In 1925, the Indian Communist Conference at Kanpur formalised the foundation of the CPI.

In 1929, the government crackdown on communists resulted in the arrest and trial of 31 leading communists, trade unionists, and left-wing leaders; they were tried at Meerut in the famous **Meerut conspiracy case**.

Workers' and peasants' parties were organised all over the country, and they propagated Marxist and communist ideas.

All these communist groups and workers' and peasants' parties remained an integral part of the national movement and worked along with the Congress.

Activism of Indian Youth

All over, students' leagues were being established and students' conferences were being held. In 1928, Jawaharlal Nehru presided over the All Bengal Students' Conference.

Peasants' Agitations

In the United Provinces peasant agitations were for revision of tenancy laws, lower rents, protection against eviction, and relief from indebtedness. Similar peasant agitations took place in the Rampa region of Andhra, in Rajasthan, in ryotwari areas of Bombay and Madras. In Gujarat, the Bardoli Satyagraha was led by Vallabhbhai Patel (1928).

Growth of Trade Unionism

The trade union movement was led by All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) founded in 1920. Lala Lajpat Rai was its first president and Dewan Chaman Lal its general secretary. Tilak was also one of the moving spirits. The major strikes during the 1920s included those in Kharagpur Railway Workshops,Tata Iron and Steel Works (Jamshedpur), Bombay Textile Mills (this involved 1,50,000 workers and went on for 5 months), and Buckingham Carnatic Mills. In 1928, there were a number of strikes involving 5 lakh workers. In 1923, the first May Day was celebrated in India in Madras.

Caste Movements

As in earlier periods, the varied contradictions of the Indian society found expression in caste associations and movements. These movements could be divisive, conservative, and at times potentially radical, and included:

- Justice Party (Madras)
- Self-respect movement (1925) under "Periyar"—E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Madras)
- Satyashodhak activists in Satara (Maharashtra)
- Bhaskar Rao Jadhav (Maharashtra)
- Mahars under Ambedkar (Maharashtra)
- Radical Ezhavas under K. Aiyappan and C. Kesavan in Kerala
- Yadavs in Bihar for improvement in social status
- Unionist Party under Fazl-i-Hussain (Punjab)

Revolutionary Activity with a Turn towards Socialism

This line was adopted by those dissatisfied with the nationalist strategy of the political struggle with its emphasis on non-violence. Here, too, two strands developed:

- Hindustan Republican Association (H.R.A.)—in Punjab-UP-Bihar
- *Yugantar,* Anushilan groups, and later Chittagong Revolt Group under Surya Sen—in Bengal

Revolutionary Activity During the 1920s

Why Attraction for Revolutionary Activity after Non-Cooperation Movement

The revolutionaries had faced severe repression during the First World War. But in early 1920, many were released by the government under a general amnesty to create a harmonious environment for the Montford Reforms to work. Soon, Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement. Under the persuasion of Gandhi and C.R. Das, many revolutionary groups either agreed to join the non-cooperation programme or suspended their activities to give the non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement a chance.

The sudden withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, however, left many of them disillusioned; they began to question the basic strategy of nationalist leadership and its emphasis on non-violence and began to look for alternatives. But since these younger nationalists were not

attracted to the parliamentary work of the Swarajists or to the patient, undramatic, constructive work of the No-Changers, they were drawn to the idea that violent methods alone would free India. Thus, revolutionary activity was revived.

Nearly all major leaders of revolutionary policies had been enthusiastic participants in the Non-Cooperation Movement and included Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, Surya Sen, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Chandrasekhar Azad, Shiv Verma, Bhagwati Charan Vohra, Jaidev Kapur, and Jatin Das. Two separate strands of revolutionary groups emerged during this period—one operating in Punjab-UP-Bihar and the other in Bengal.

Major Influences

(i) Upsurge of working class trade unionism after the War; the revolutionaries wanted to harness the revolutionary potential of the new emergent class for nationalist revolution.

(ii) Russian Revolution (1917) and the success of the young Soviet state in consolidating itself.

(iii) Newly sprouting communist groups with their emphasis on Marxism, socialism, and the proletariat.

(iv) Journals publishing memoirs and articles extolling the self-sacrifice of revolutionaries, such as *Atmasakti, Sarathi,* and *Bijoli*.

(v) Novels and books such as *Bandi Jiwan* by Sachin Sanyal and *Pather Dabi* by Sharatchandra Chatterjee (or Chattopadhyay), a government ban on which only enhanced its popularity.

In Punjab-United Provinces-Bihar

The revolutionary activity in this region was dominated by the **Hindustan Republican Association/Army** or HRA (later renamed **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association** or HSRA). The HRA was founded in October 1924 in Kanpur by Ramprasad Bismil, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, and Sachin Sanyal, with an aim to organise an armed revolution to overthrow the colonial government and establish in its place the Federal Republic of United States of India whose basic principle would be adult franchise.

Kakori Robbery (August 1925)

The most important action of the HRA was the Kakori robbery. The men held up the 8-Down train at Kakori, an

obscure village near Lucknow, and looted its official railway cash. Government crackdown after the Kakori robbery led to arrests of many, of whom 17 were jailed, 4 transported for life and 4—Bismil, Ashfaqullah, Roshan Singh, and Rajendra Lahiri—were hanged. Kakori proved to be a setback.

The HSRA

Determined to overcome the Kakori setback, the younger revolutionaries, inspired by socialist ideas, set out to reorganise Hindustan Republic Association at a historic meeting in the ruins of Ferozshah Kotla in Delhi (September 1928). Under the leadership of Chandrashekhar Azad, the name of HRA was changed to Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA). The participants included Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar (who was always known as Sukhdev), Bhagwati Charan Vohra from Punjab and Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Verma, and Jaidev Kapur from the United Provinces. The HSRA decided to work under a collective leadership and adopted socialism as its official goal.

Saunders' Murder (Lahore, December 1928)

Just when the HSRA revolutionaries had begun to move away from individual heroic action, the death of Sher-i-Punjab Lala Lajpat Rai due to lathi blows received during a lathi charge on an anti-Simon Commission procession (October 1928) led them once again to take to individual assassination. Bhagat Singh and Shivram Rajguru shot dead John P. Saunders. They had mistaken Saunders for Superintendent of Police James Scott, who was actually responsible for the lathi charge against Lala Lajpat Rai and his followers. Chandrashekhar Azad shot dead an Indian constable when he tried to pursue Bhagat Singh and Rajguru as they fled. The assassination was, however, justified with these words: "The murder of a leader respected by millions of people at the unworthy hands of an ordinary police officer...was an insult to the nation. It was the bounden duty of young men of India to efface it... We regret to have had to kill a person but he was part and parcel of that inhuman and unjust order which has to be destroyed."

Bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly (April 1929)

The HSRA leadership now decided to let the people know about its changed objectives and the need for a revolution

by the masses. Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt were asked to throw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly on April 8, 1929 to protest against the passage of the Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill aimed at curtailing civil liberties of citizens in general and workers in particular. The bombs had been deliberately made harmless and were aimed at making 'the deaf hear'. The objective was to get arrested and to use the trial court as a forum for propaganda so that people would become familiar with their movement and ideology.

"Force when aggressively applied is 'violence' and is, therefore, morally unjustifiable, but when it is used in the furtherance of a legitimate cause, it has its moral justification," said Bhagat Singh.

Action against the Revolutionaries

Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru were tried in the Lahore conspiracy case. Many other revolutionaries were tried in a series of other cases. In jail, these revolutionaries protested against the horrible conditions through fasting, and demanded honourable and decent treatment as political prisoners. Jatin Das became the first martyr on the 63rd day of his fast. The defence of these young revolutionaries was organised by Congress leaders. Bhagat Singh became a household name.

Azad was involved in a bid to blow up Viceroy Irwin's train near Delhi in December 1929. During 1930, there were a series of violent actions in Punjab and towns of United Provinces (26 incidents in 1930 in Punjab alone).

Chandrasekhar Azad arranged a meeting with fellow revolutionaries on February 27, 1931 at the Alfred Park (now Chandrashekhar Azad Park) in Allahabad. Betrayed by one of his associates, he and other revolutionaries were besieged by the British police. Azad put up a brave resistance but was injured in the fight with the police. Seeing no other way to escape, he shot himself dead and, thus, fulfilled his pledge of not being captured alive by the British. (The Colt pistol used by him is displayed at the Allahabad Museum.

Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged on March 23, 1931 for the assassination of Saunders. (March 23 is now observed as Shaheed Diwas and Sarvodaya Day.) It is said that the three young men proceeded quite cheerfully

towards the gallows all the while chanting their favourite slogans like 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Down with British Imperialism'.

In Bengal

During the 1920s many revolutionary groups reorganised their underground activities, while many continued working under the Congress, thus getting access to the masses and providing an organisational base to the Congress in towns and villages. Many cooperated with C.R. Das in his Swarajist work. After Das's death (1925), the Bengal Congress broke up into two factions—one led by J.M. Sengupta (Anushilan group joined forces with him) and the other led by Subhash Bose (Yugantar group backed him).

The actions of the reorganised groups included an assassination attempt on the notorious Calcutta Police Commissioner, Charles Tegart (another man named Day got killed) by Gopinath Saha in 1924. The government, armed with a new ordinance, came down heavily on revolutionaries. Many, including Subhash Bose, were arrested. Gopinath Saha was hanged.

Because of government repression and factionalism among the revolutionaries, revolutionary activity suffered a setback, but soon many of revolutionaries started regrouping. Among the new 'Revolt Groups', the most active and famous was the Chittagong group under Surya Sen.

Chittagong Armoury Raid (April 1930)

Surya Sen had participated in the Non-Cooperation Movement and had become a teacher in the national school in Chittagong. He was imprisoned from 1926 to 1928 for revolutionary activity and afterwards continued working in the Congress. He was the secretary of the Chittagong District Congress Committee. He used to say "Humanism is a special virtue of a revolutionary". He was a lover of poetry and an admirer of Tagore and Qazi Nazrul Islam.

Surya Sen decided to organise an armed rebellion along with his associates—Anant Singh, Ganesh Ghosh, and Lokenath Baul—to show that it was possible to challenge the armed might of the mighty British Empire. They had planned to

occupy two main armouries in Chittagong to seize and supply arms to the revolutionaries to destroy telephone and telegraph lines and to dislocate the railway link of Chittagong with the rest of Bengal. The raid was conducted in April 1930 and involved 65 activists under the banner of **Indian Republican Army—Chittagong Branch**. The raid was quite successful; Sen hoisted the national flag, took salute, and proclaimed a provisional revolutionary government. Later, they dispersed into neighbouring villages and raided government targets.

Surya Sen was arrested in February 1933 and hanged in January 1934, but the Chittagong raid fired the imagination of the revolutionary-minded youth and recruits poured into the revolutionary groups in a steady stream.

Aspects of the New Phase of Revolutionary Movement in Bengal

Some noteworthy aspects were as follows:

- There was a large-scale participation of young women, especially under Surya Sen. These women provided shelter, carried messages, and fought with guns in hand. Prominent women revolutionaries in Bengal during this phase included **Pritilata Waddedar**, who died conducting a raid; **Kalpana Dutt** who was arrested and tried along with Surya Sen and given a life sentence; **Santi Ghosh** and **Suniti Chandheri**, school girls of Comilla, who shot dead the district magistrate. (December 1931); and **Bina Das** who fired point blank at the governor while receiving her degree at the convocation (February 1932).
- There was an emphasis on group action aimed at organs of the colonial State, instead of individual action. The objective was to set an example before the youth and to demoralise the bureaucracy.
- Some of the earlier tendency towards Hindu religiosity was shed, and there were no more rituals like oath-taking, and this facilitated participation by Muslims. Surya Sen had Muslims such as Satar, Mir Ahmed, Fakir Ahmed Mian, and Tunu Mian in his group.

There were some drawbacks too:

- The movement retained some conservative elements.
- It failed to evolve broader socio-economic goals.
- Those working with Swarajists failed to support the cause of Muslim peasantry against zamindars in Bengal.

Official Reaction

There was panic at first and then severe government repression. Armed with 20 repressive acts, the government let loose the police on the revolutionaries. In Chittagong, several villages were burned and punitive fines imposed on many others. In 1933, Jawaharlal Nehru was arrested for sedition and given two years' sentence because he had condemned imperialism and praised the heroism of the revolutionaries.

Ideological Rethinking

A real breakthrough was made by Bhagat Singh and his comrades in terms of revolutionary ideology, forms of revolutionary struggle, and the goals of revolution. The rethinking had begun in the mid-1920s. The Founding Council of HRA had decided to preach revolutionary and communist principles, and the HRA Manifesto (1925) declared that the "HRA stood for abolition of all systems which made exploitation of man by man possible". The HRA's main organ *Revolutionary* had proposed nationalisation of railways and other means of transport and of heavy industries such as ship building and steel. The HRA had also decided to start labour and peasant organisations and work for an "organised and armed revolution". During their last days (late 1920s), these revolutionaries had started moving away from individual heroic action and violence towards mass politics.

Bismil, during his last days, appealed to the youth to give up pistols and revolvers, not to work in revolutionary conspiracies and instead work in an open movement. He urged the youth to strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity, unite all political groups under the leadership of the Congress. Bismil affirmed faith in communism and the principle that "every human being has equal rights over the products of nature".

The famous statement of the revolutionary position is

contained in the book *The Philosophy of the Bomb* written by Bhagwati Charan Vohra.

Even before his arrest, Bhagat Singh had moved away from a belief in violent and individual heroic action to Marxism and the belief that a popular broad-based movement alone could lead to a successful revolution. In other words, revolution could only be "by the masses, for the masses". That is why Bhagat Singh helped establish the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha (1926) as an open wing of revolutionaries to carry out political work among the youth, peasants, and workers, and it was to open branches in villages.

Bhagat and Sukhdev also organised the Lahore Students' Union for open, legal work among students. Bhagat and his comrades also realised that a revolution meant organisation and development of a mass movement of the exploited and the suppressed sections by the revolutionary intelligentsia. Bhagat used to say, "...real revolutionary armies are in villages and factories."

What then was the need for individual heroic action? Firstly, effective acquisition of new ideology is a prolonged and historical process whereas the need of the time was a quick change in the way of thinking. Secondly, these young intellectuals faced the classic dilemma of how to mobilise people and recruit them. Here, they decided to opt for propaganda by deed, i.e., through individual heroic action and by using courts as a forum for revolutionary propaganda.

Redefining Revolution

Revolution was no longer equated with militancy and violence. Its objective was to be national liberation—imperialism was to be overthrown but beyond that a new socialist order was to be achieved, ending "exploitation of man by man". As Bhagat Singh said in the court, "Revolution does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife, nor is there a place in it for personal vendetta. It is not the cult of bomb and pistol. By revolution we mean the present order of things, which is based on manifest injustice, must change."

Bhagat fully accepted Marxism and the class approach

to society—"Peasants have to free themselves not only from the foreign yoke, but also from the yoke of landlords and capitalists." He also said, "The struggle in India will continue, so long as a handful of exploiters continue to exploit labour of common people to further their own interests. It matters little whether these exploiters are British capitalists, British and Indian capitalists in alliance, or even purely Indians." He defined socialism scientifically as abolition of capitalism and class domination.

Bhagat was fully and consciously secular—two of the six rules drafted by Bhagat for the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha were that its members would have nothing to do with communal bodies and that they would propagate a general feeling of tolerance among people, considering religion to be a matter of personal belief. Bhagat Singh also saw the importance of freeing people from the mental bondage of religion and superstition—"to be a revolutionary, one required immense moral strength, but one also required criticism and independent thinking".

Summary

- **Swarajists and No-Changers**
  Swarajists advocated council entry after withdrawal of Non-Cooperation Movement with an aim to end or mend the councils.
  No-Changers advocated constructive work during the transition period.
- **Emergence of New Forces during 1920s**
  1. Spread of Marxism and socialist ideas
  2. Activism of Indian youth
  3. Peasants' agitations
  4. Growth of trade unionism
  5. Caste movements
  6. Revolutionary terrorism with a tilt towards socialism
- **Activities of HRA/HSRA**
  Established—1924
  Kakori robbery—1925
  Reorganised—1928

Saunders' murder—1928
Bomb in Central Legislative Assembly—1929
Bid to blow up viceroy's train—1929
Azad killed in police encounter—1931
Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev hanged—1931

- **Broadened View of HSRA**
  In later years, ideology moved away from individual action towards socialistic ideals.
- **Revolutionaries in Bengal**
  Attempt on life of Calcutta police commissioner—1924
  Surya Sen's Chittagong Revolt Group and Chittagong robberies—1930

CHAPTER 18

Simon Commission and the Nehru Report

Appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission

The Government of India Act, 1919 had a provision that a commission would be appointed 10 years from date to study the progress of the governance scheme and suggest new steps. An all-white, seven-member Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as the Simon Commission (after the name of its chairman, Sir John Simon), was set up by the British government under Stanley Baldwin's prime ministership on November 8, 1927. The members were formed from four Conservatives, two Labourites, and one Liberal. (The commission was actually under the joint chairmanship of Sir John Simon and Clement Attlee, who was to be Britain's prime minister in the future.) The commission was to recommend to the British government whether India was ready for further constitutional reforms and along what lines.

Although constitutional reforms were due only in 1929, the Conservative government, then in power in Britain, feared defeat by the Labour Party and thus did not want to leave the question of the future of Britain's most priced colony in "irresponsible Labour hands". Also by the mid-1920s, the failure of the 1919 Act to create a stable imperial power

had led to several parliamentary reports and enquiries. The **Lee Commission** was appointed in 1923 to look into the organisation and general conditions of service as well as the methods of recruitment for Europeans and Indians in the civil services. Being concerned only with the superior civil services, it came to be known as the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India. The commission suggested that the statutory public service commission, as put forward by the Government of India Act 1919, needed to be established without delay. The **Muddiman Committee**, officially known as the Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee, was set up in 1924, mainly to look into the working of the Constitution as set up in 1921 under the Act of 1919. Its report was not unanimous: while the majority suggested some minor changes in the structure of the Constitution, the minority, consisting of non-official Indians, strongly criticised the system of dyarchy and wanted it to be abolished immediately and the Constitution made democratic. In 1926, the **Linlithgow Commission**, officially the Royal Commission of Agriculture was set up to examine and report the condition of India's agricultural and rural economy. The commission submitted its report in 1928 and made comprehensive recommendations for the improvement of the agrarian economy as the foundation for the welfare and prosperity of India's rural population. Among other things, the commission recommended that the quality of Indian cattle should be improved and that this should be done by importing foreign bulls of better quality and using them to breed with Indian cows.

The Conservative Secretary of State for India, Lord Birkenhead, who had constantly talked of the inability of Indians to formulate a concrete scheme of constitutional reforms which had the support of wide sections of Indian political opinion, was responsible for the appointment of the Simon Commission.

Indian Response

The Indian response to the Simon Commission was immediate and nearly unanimous. What angered the Indians most was the exclusion of Indians from the commission and the basic notion behind the exclusion that foreigners would discuss and decide upon India's fitness for self-government. This notion

was seen as a violation of the principle of self-determination, and as a deliberate insult to the self-respect of Indians.

Congress Response

The Congress session in Madras (December 1927) meeting under the presidency of M.A. Ansari decided to boycott the commission "at every stage and in every form". Meanwhile, Nehru succeeded in getting a snap resolution passed at the session, declaring complete independence as the goal of the Congress.

Other Groups

Those who decided to support the Congress call of boycott of the Simon Commission included the liberals of the Hindu Mahasabha and the majority faction of the Muslim League under Jinnah. The Muslim league had two sessions in 1927—one under Jinnah at Calcutta where it was decided to oppose the Simon Commission, and another at Lahore under Muhammad Shafi, who supported the government. Some others, such as the Unionists in Punjab and the Justice Party in the south, decided not to boycott the commission.

Public Response

The commission landed in Bombay on February 3, 1928. On that day, a countrywide *hartal* was organised and mass rallies held. Wherever the commission went, there were black flag demonstrations, *hartals,* and slogans of 'Simon Go Back'. (As to who coined the catchy slogan, it is widely believed the Indian freedom fighter and member of Congress Socialist Party, and Mayor of Bombay, Yusuf Meharally did so. Some also believe it was Lala Lajpat Rai who came up with the slogan.)

A significant feature of this upsurge was that a new generation of youth got their first taste of political action. They played the most active part in the protest, giving it a militant flavour. The youth leagues and conferences got a real fillip.

Nehru and Subhas Bose emerged as leaders of this new wave of youth and students. Both travelled extensively, addressed and presided over conferences.

This upsurge among the youth also provided a fertile ground for the germination and spread of new radical ideas

Dr Ambedkar and the Simon Commission

Dr Ambedkar was appointed by the Bombay Legislative Council to work with the Simon Commission. In October 1928, Ambedkar went before the commission.

He argued for 'universal adult franchise' for both male and female alike; for provincial autonomy in the provinces and dyrarchy at Centre. (Significantly, universal adult franchise was at the time yet to be guaranteed in most of European countries.)

On behalf of the *Bahishkrita Hitakarini Sabha*, he submitted a memorandum on the rights and safeguards he felt were required for the depressed classes.

Ambedkar said that there was no link between the depressed classes and the Hindu community, and stated that the depressed classes should be regarded as a distinct and independent minority.

He asserted that the depressed classes as a minority needed far greater political protection than any other minority in British India because of its educational backwardness, its economically poor condition, its social enslavement, and for the reason that it suffered from certain grave political disabilities, from which no other community suffered.

In the circumstances, Dr Ambedkar demanded, for the political protection of the depressed classes, representation on the same basis as the Mohammedan minority. He wanted reserved seats for the depressed classes if universal adult franchise was granted. In case universal franchise was not granted, Ambedkar said he would campaign for a separate electorate for the depressed classes.

He also expressed the need to have certain safeguards either in the constitution, if it was possible, or else "in the way of advice in the instrument to the governor regarding the education of the depressed classes and their entry into the public services".

[The report of the Simon Commission did grant reserved seats to the depressed classes, but the condition was that candidates who would take part in the elections would have, first of all, to get their competence endorsed by the governor of the province. Ambedkar was most displeased with this, but, in any case, this report remained a dead letter.]

of socialism reflected in the emergence of groups such as the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, Workers' and Peasants' Parties and Hindustani Sewa Dal (Karnataka).

Police Repression

The police came down heavily on demonstrators; there were lathicharges not sparing even the senior leaders. Jawaharlal

Nehru and G.B. Pant were beaten up in Lucknow. Lala Lajpat Rai received severe blows on his chest in October 1928, which proved fatal and he died on November 17, 1928.

View

The blows, which fell on me today, are the last nails driven into the coffin of British Imperialism.

—Lala Lajpat Rai

Impact of Appointment of Simon Commission on the National Movement

The impact of the appointment of the Simon Commission on Indian politics was two-fold:

(i) It gave a stimulus to radical forces demanding not just complete independence but major socio-economic reforms on socialist lines. When the Simon Commission was announced, the Congress, which did not have any active programme in hand, got an issue on which it could once again forge mass action.

(ii) The challenge of Lord Birkenhead to Indian politicians to produce an agreed constitution was accepted by various political sections, and thus prospects for Indian unity seemed bright at that point of time.

The Simon Commission Recommendations

The Simon Commission published a two-volume report in May 1930. It proposed the abolition of dyarchy and the establishment of representative government in the provinces which should be given autonomy. It said that the governor should have discretionary power in relation to internal security and administrative powers to protect the different communities. The number of members of provincial legislative council should be increased.

The report rejected parliamentary responsibility at the centre. The governor general was to have complete power to appoint the members of the cabinet. And the Government of India would have complete control over the high court.

It also recommended that separate communal electorates be retained (and extended such electorates to other communities) but only until tensions between Hindus and Muslims had died down. There was to be no universal franchise.

It accepted the idea of federalism but not in the near future; it suggested that a Consultative Council of Greater India should be established, which should include representatives of both the British provinces as well as princely states.

It suggested that the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan should get local legislatures, and both NWFP and Baluchistan should have the right to be represented at the centre.

It recommended that Sindh should be separated from Bombay, and Burma should be separated from India because it was not a natural part of the Indian subcontinent.

It also suggested that the Indian army should be Indianised though British forces must be retained. India got fully equipped.

But by the time the report came out, it was no longer relevant because several events overtook the importance of its recommendations.

Nehru Report

As an answer to Lord Birkenhead's challenge, an All Parties Conference met in February 1928 and appointed a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru to draft a constitution. This was the first major attempt by the Indians to draft a constitutional framework for the country. The committee included Tej Bahadur Sapru, Subhas Chandra Bose, M.S. Aney, Mangal Singh, Ali Imam, Shuaib Qureshi, and G.R. Pradhan as its members. The report was finalised by August 1928. The recommendations of the Nehru Committee were unanimous except in one respect—while the majority favoured the "dominion status" as the basis of the Constitution, a section of it wanted "complete independence" as the basis, with the majority section giving the latter section liberty of action.

Main Recommendations

The Nehru Report confined itself to British India, as it envisaged the future link-up of British India with the princely states on a federal basis. For the dominion it recommended:

(i) Dominion status on lines of self-governing dominions as the form of government desired by Indians (much to the chagrin of younger, militant section—Nehru being prominent among them).

(ii) Rejection of separate electorates which had been the basis of constitutional reforms so far; instead, a demand for joint electorates with reservation of seats for Muslims at the Centre and in provinces where they were in minority (and not in those where Muslims were in majority, such as Punjab and Bengal) in proportion to the Muslim population there with right to contest additional seats.

(iii) Linguistic provinces.

(iv) Nineteen fundamental rights including equal rights for women, right to form unions, and universal adult suffrage.

(v) Responsible government at the Centre and in provinces—

(a) The Indian Parliament at the Centre to consist of a 500-member House of Representatives elected on the basis of adult suffrage, a 200-member Senate to be elected by provincial councils; the House of Representatives to have a tenure of 5 years and the Senate, one of 7 years; the central government to be headed by a governor general, appointed by the British government but paid out of Indian revenues, who would act on the advice of the central executive council responsible to the Parliament.

(b) Provincial councils to have a 5-year tenure, headed by a governor acting on the advice of the provincial executive council.

(vi) Full protection to cultural and religious interests of Muslims.

(vii) Complete dissociation of State from religion.

The Muslim and Hindu Communal Responses

Though the process of drafting a constitutional framework was begun enthusiastically and unitedly by political leaders, communal differences crept in and the Nehru Report got

involved in controversies over the issue of communal representation.

Delhi Proposals of Muslim League

Earlier, in December 1927, a large number of Muslim leaders had met at Delhi at the Muslim League session and evolved four proposals for their demands to be incorporated into the draft constitution. These proposals, which were accepted by the Madras session of the Congress (December 1927), came to be known as the '**Delhi Proposals'**. These were:

- joint electorates in place of separate electorates with reserved seats for Muslims;
- one-third representation to Muslims in Central Legislative Assembly;
- representation to Muslims in Punjab and Bengal in proportion to their population;
- formation of three new Muslim majority provinces—Sindh, Baluchistan, and North-West Frontier Province.

Hindu Mahasabha Demands

The Hindu Mahasabha was vehemently opposed to the proposals for creating new Muslim-majority provinces and reservation of seats for Muslims majorities in Punjab and Bengal (which would ensure Muslim control over legislatures in both). It also demanded a strictly unitary structure. This attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha complicated matters.

Compromises

In the course of the deliberations of the All Parties Conference, the Muslim League dissociated itself and stuck to its demand for reservation of seats for Muslims, especially in the central legislature and in Muslim majority provinces. Thus, Motilal Nehru and other leaders drafting the report found themselves in a dilemma: if the demands of the Muslim communal opinion were accepted, the Hindu communalists would withdraw their support, if the latter were satisfied, the Muslim leaders would get estranged.

The concessions made in the Nehru Report to Hindu communalists included the following:

- Joint electorates proposed everywhere but reservation for Muslims only where in minority;
- Sindh to be detached from Bombay only after

dominion status was granted and subject to weightage given to Hindu minority in Sindh;

- Political structure proposed broadly unitary, as residual powers rested with the centre.

Amendments Proposed by Jinnah

At the All Parties Conference held at Calcutta in December 1928 to consider the Nehru Report, Jinnah, on behalf of the Muslim League, proposed three amendments to the report:

(i) one-third representation to Muslims in the central legislature;

(ii) reservation to Muslims in Bengal and Punjab legislatures proportionate to their population, till adult suffrage was established; and

(iii) residual powers to provinces.

These demands were not accommodated.

Jinnah's Fourteen Points

Jinnah went back to the Shafi faction of the Muslim League and in March 1929 gave 14 points which were to become the basis of all future propaganda of the Muslim League. The 14 points were as follows.

1. Federal Constitution with residual powers to provinces.
2. Provincial autonomy.
3. No constitutional amendment by the centre without the concurrence of the states constituting the Indian federation.
4. All legislatures and elected bodies to have adequate representation of Muslims in every province without reducing a majority of Muslims in a province to a minority or equality.
5. Adequate representation to Muslims in the services and in self-governing bodies.
6. One-third Muslim representation in the central legislature.
7. In any cabinet at the centre or in the provinces, one-third to be Muslims.
8. Separate electorates.
9. No bill or resolution in any legislature to be passed if three-fourths of a minority community consider such a bill or resolution to be against their interests.
10. Any territorial redistribution not to affect the Muslim majority in Punjab, Bengal, and NWFP.

11. Separation of Sindh from Bombay.
12. Constitutional reforms in the NWFP and Baluchistan.
13. Full religious freedom to all communities.
14. Protection of Muslim rights in religion, culture, education, and language.

Nehru Report Found Unsatisfactory

Not only were the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Sikh communalists unhappy about the Nehru Report, but the younger section of the Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were also angered. The younger section regarded the idea of dominion status in the report as a step backward, and the developments at the All Parties Conference strengthened their criticism of the dominion status idea. Nehru and Subhas Bose rejected the Congress' modified goal and jointly set up the **Independence for India League**.

Summary

- **Simon Commission**
  Came in 1928 to explore possibility of further constitutional advance
  Boycotted by Indians because no Indian represented in the commission
  Responses of Various Groups/ Ambedkar's Memorandum
  Impact of Simon Commission
- **Nehru Report (1928)**
  First Indian effort to draft constitutional scheme.
  Recommended—
  * dominion status
  * not separate electorates, but joint electorates with reserved seats for minorities.
  * linguistic provinces
  * 19 fundamental rights
  * responsible government at centre and in provinces.
  * responses of various groups

CHAPTER 19

Civil Disobedience Movement and Round Table Conferences

The Run-up to Civil Disobedience Movement

Calcutta Session of Congress

It was at the Calcutta session of the Congress in December 1928 that the Nehru Report was approved but the younger elements led by Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and Satyamurthy expressed their dissatisfaction with dominion status as the goal of Congress. Instead, they demanded that the Congress adopt *purna swaraj* or complete independence as its goal. The older leaders like Gandhi and Motilal Nehru wished that the dominion status demand not be dropped in haste, as consensus over it had been developed with great difficulty over the years. They suggested that a two-year grace period be given to the government to accept the demand for a dominion status. Later, under pressure from the younger elements, this period was reduced to one year. Now, the Congress decided that if the government did not accept a constitution based on dominion status by the end of the year, the Congress would not only demand complete independence but would also launch a civil disobedience movement to attain its goal.

Political Activity during 1929

Gandhi travelled incessantly during 1929, preparing people for direct political action—telling the youth to prepare for the fiery ordeal, helping to organise constructive work in villages, and redressing specific grievances (on lines of the Bardoli agitation of 1928).

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) organised a Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee to propagate an aggressive programme of boycotting foreign cloth and public burning of foreign cloth. Gandhi initiated the campaign in March 1929 in Calcutta and was arrested. This was followed by bonfires of foreign cloth all over the country.

Other developments which kept the political temperature high during 1929 included the Meerut Conspiracy Case (March), bomb explosion in Central Legislative Assembly by Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt (April), and the coming to power of the minority Labour government led by Ramsay MacDonald in England in May. And Wedgewood Benn became the Secretary of State for India.

Irwin's Declaration (October 31, 1929)

Before the Simon Commission report came out, the declaration by Lord Irwin was made. It was the combined effort of the Labour government (always more sympathetic to Indian aspirations than the Conservatives) and a Conservative viceroy. The purpose behind the declaration was to "restore faith in the ultimate purpose of British policy". The declaration was made in the form of an official communique in the Indian Gazette on October 31, 1929. It said:

"In view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Great Britain and in India regarding the interpretations to be placed on the intentions of the British government in enacting the statute of 1919, I am authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgement it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as they contemplated is the attainment of Dominion status."

However, there was no time scale. The dominion status promised by Irwin would not be available for a long time to come. There was in reality nothing new or revolutionary in the declaration.

Lord Irwin also promised a Round Table Conference after the Simon Commission submitted its report.

Delhi Manifesto

On November 2, 1929, a conference of prominent national leaders issued a 'Delhi Manifesto', which put forward certain conditions for attending the Round Table Conference:

1. that the purpose of the Round Table Conference should be not to determine whether or when dominion status was to be reached but to formulate a constitution for implementation of the dominion status (thus acting as a constituent assembly) and the basic principle of dominion status should be immediately accepted;
2. that the Congress should have majority representation at the conference; and
3. there should be a general amnesty for political prisoners and a policy of conciliation;

Gandhi along with Motilal Nehru and other political leaders met Lord Irwin in December 1929 (after the viceroy had narrowly escaped after a bomb was detonated meaning to hit the train he was travelling in). They asked the viceroy for assurance that the purpose of the round table conference was to draft a constitutional scheme for dominion status. That was not the purpose of the conference, said Irwin. Viceroy Irwin rejected the demands put forward in the Delhi Manifesto. The stage for confrontation was to begin now.

Lahore Congress and Purna Swaraj

Jawaharlal Nehru, who had done more than anyone else to popularise the concept of *purna swaraj*, was nominated the president for the Lahore session of the Congress (December 1929) mainly due to Gandhi's backing (15 out of 18 Provincial Congress Committees had opposed Nehru). Nehru was chosen

— because of the appositeness of the occasion (Congress' acceptance of complete independence as its goal), and
— to acknowledge the upsurge of youth which had made the anti-Simon campaign a huge success.

Nehru declared in his presidential address: "We have

now an open conspiracy to free this country from foreign rule and you, comrades, and all our countrymen and country-women are invited to join it."

Further explaining that liberation did not mean only throwing off the foreign yoke, he said: "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes, or in the order which produces the modern kings of industry, who have greater power of the lives and fortunes of men than even the kings of old, and whose methods are as predatory as those of the old feudal aristocracy."

Spelling out the methods of struggle, he said, "Any great movement for liberation today must necessarily be a mass movement, and mass movements must essentially be peaceful, except in times of organised revolt..."

The following major decisions were taken at the Lahore session:

- The Round Table Conference was to be boycotted.
- Complete independence was declared as the aim of the Congress.
- Congress Working Committee was authorised to launch a programme of civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, and all members of legislatures were asked to resign their seats.
- January 26, 1930 was fixed as the first Independence (*Swarajya*) Day, to be celebrated everywhere.

December 31, 1929

At midnight on the banks of River Ravi, the newly adopted tricolour flag of freedom was hoisted by Jawaharlal Nehru amidst slogans of *Inquilab Zindabad.*

January 26, 1930: the Independence Pledge

Public meetings were organised all over the country in villages and towns and the independence pledge was read out in local languages and the national flag was hoisted. This pledge, which is supposed to have been drafted by Gandhi, made the following points:

- It is the inalienable right of Indians to have freedom.
- The British Government in India has not only deprived

us of freedom and exploited us, but has also ruined us economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. India must, therefore, sever the British connection and attain *purna swaraj* or complete independence.

- We are being economically ruined by high revenue, destruction of village industries with no substitutions made, while customs, currency and exchange rate are manipulated to our disadvantage.
- No real political powers are given—rights of free association are denied to us and all administrative talent in us is killed.
- Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings.
- Spiritually, compulsory disarmament has made us unmanly.
- We hold it a crime against man and God to submit any longer to British rule.
- We will prepare for complete independence by withdrawing, as far as possible, all voluntary association from the British government and will prepare for civil disobedience through non-payment of taxes. By this an end of this inhuman rule is assured.
- We will carry out the Congress instructions for purpose of establishing *purna swaraj*.

Civil Disobedience Movement—the Salt Satyagraha and Other Upsurges

Gandhi's Eleven Demands

To carry forward the mandate given by the Lahore Congress, Gandhi presented 11 demands to the government and gave an ultimatum of January 31, 1930 to accept or reject these demands. The demands were as follows:

Issues of General Interest

1. Reduce expenditure on army and civil services by 50 per cent.
2. Introduce total prohibition.

3. Carry out reforms in Criminal Investigation Department (CID).
4. Change Arms Act allowing popular control of issue of firearms licences.
5. Release political prisoners.
6. Accept Postal Reservation Bill.

Specific Bourgeois Demands

7. Reduce rupee-sterling exchange ratio to 1s 4d
8. Introduce textile protection.
9. Reserve coastal shipping for Indians.

Specific Peasant Demands

10. Reduce land revenue by 50 per cent.
11. Abolish salt tax and government's salt monopoly.

With no positive response forthcoming from the government on these demands, the Congress Working Committee invested Gandhi with full powers to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement at a time and place of his choice. By February-end, Gandhi had decided to make salt the central formula for the movement

Why Salt was Chosen as the Important Theme

As Gandhi said, "There is no other article like salt, outside water, by taxing which the government can reach the starving millions, the sick, the maimed and the utterly helpless... it is the most inhuman poll tax the ingenuity of man can devise."

Salt in a flash linked the ideal of swaraj with a most concrete and universal grievance of the rural poor (and with no socially divisive implications like a no-rent campaign).

Salt afforded a very small but psychologically important income, like khadi, for the poor through self-help.

Like khadi, again, it offered to the urban populace the opportunity of a symbolic identification with mass suffering.

Dandi March (March 12–April 6, 1930)

On March 2, 1930, Gandhi informed the viceroy of his plan of action. According to this plan (few realised its significance when it was first announced), Gandhi, along with a band of 78 members of Sabarmati Ashram, was to march from his

headquarters in Ahmedabad through the villages of Gujarat for 240 miles. On reaching the coast at Dandi, the salt law was to be violated by collecting salt from the beach.

Even before the proposed march began, thousands thronged to the ashram. Gandhi gave the following directions for future action.

- Wherever possible, civil disobedience of the salt law should be started.
- Foreign liquor and cloth shops can be picketed.
- We can refuse to pay taxes if we have the requisite strength.
- Lawyers can give up practice.
- Public can boycott law courts by refraining from litigation.
- Government servants can resign from their posts.
- All these should be subject to one condition—truth and non-violence as means to attain swaraj should be faithfully adhered to.
- Local leaders should be obeyed after Gandhi's arrest.

The historic march, marking the launch of the Civil Disobedience Movement, began on March 12, and Gandhi broke the salt law by picking up a lump of salt at Dandi on April 6. The violation of the law was seen as a symbol of the Indian people's resolve not to live under British-made laws and, therefore, under British rule. Gandhi openly asked the people to make salt from sea water in their homes and violate the salt law. The march, its progress and its impact on the people was well covered by newspapers. In Gujarat, 300 village officials resigned in answer to Gandhi's appeal. Congress workers engaged themselves in grassroot-level organisational tasks.

Spread of Salt Law Disobedience

Once the way was cleared by Gandhi's ritual at Dandi, defiance of the salt laws started all over the country. Nehru's arrest in April 1930 for defiance of the salt law evoked huge demonstrations in Madras, Calcutta, and Karachi. Gandhi's arrest came on May 4, 1930 when he had announced that he would lead a raid on Dharasana Salt Works on the west

coast. Gandhi's arrest was followed by massive protests in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, and in Sholapur, where the response was the most fierce. After Gandhi's arrest, the CWC sanctioned:

- non-payment of revenue in ryotwari areas;
- no-chowkidara-tax campaign in zamindari areas; and
- violation of forest laws in the Central Provinces.

Satyagraha at Different Places

A brief survey of the nature of Civil Disobedience Movement in different parts of the subcontinent is given below.

- **Tamil Nadu** In April 1930, C. Rajagopalachari organised a march from Thiruchirapalli (Trichinapoly as it was called by the British) to Vedaranniyam on the Tanjore (or Thanjavur) coast to break the salt law. The event was followed by widespread picketing of foreign cloth shops; the anti-liquor campaign gathered forceful support in interior regions of Coimbatore, Madura, Virdhanagar, etc. Although, Rajaji tried to keep the movement non-violent, violent eruptions of masses and the violent repressions of the police began. To break the Choolai Mills strike, police force was used. Unemployed weavers attacked liquor shops and police pickets at Gudiyattam, while the peasants, suffering from falling prices, rioted at Bodinayakanur in Madura.
- **Malabar** K. Kelappan, a Nair Congress leader famed for the *Vaikom Satyagraha*, organised salt marches. P. Krishna Pillai, the future founder of the Kerala Communist movement, heroically defended the national flag in the face of police lathi-charge on Calicut beach in November 1930.
- **Andhra Region** District salt marches were organised in east and west Godavari, Krishna, and Guntur. A number of *sibirams* (military style camps) were set up to serve as the headquarters of the Salt Satyagraha. The merchants contributed to Congress funds, and the dominant caste Kamma and Raju cultivators defied repressive measures. But the mass support like that in the non-cooperation movement (1921–22) was missing in the region.
- **Orissa** Under Gopalbandhu Choudhuri, a Gandhian leader, salt satyagraha proved effective in the coastal regions of Balasore, Cuttack, and Puri districts.

● **Assam** The civil disobedience failed to regain the heights attained in 1921–22 due to divisive issues: the growing conflicts between Assamese and Bengalis, Hindus and Muslims, and the tensions developing from the inflow of Muslim peasants from the densely populated east Bengal. However, a successful student strike against the Cunningham Circular, which banned students' participation in politics, was seen in May 1930. Chandraprabha Saikiani, in December 1930, incited the aboriginal Kachari villages to break forest laws, which was, however, denied by the Assam Congress leadership.

● **Bengal** The Bengal Congress, divided into two factions led by Subhas Chandra Bose and J.M. Sengupta, was involved in the Calcutta Corporation election. This resulted in alienation of most of Calcutta *bhadralok* leaders from the rural masses. Also, communal riots were seen in Dacca (now Dhakha) and Kishoreganj, and there was little participation of Muslims in the movements. Despite this, Bengal provided the largest number of arrests as well as the highest amount of violence. Midnapur, Arambagh, and several rural pockets witnessed powerful movements developed around salt satyagraha and chaukidari tax. During the same period, Surya Sen's Chittagong revolt group carried out a raid on two armouries and declared the establishment of a provisional government.

● **Bihar** Champaran and Saran were the first two districts to start salt satyagraha. In landlocked Bihar, manufacture of salt on a large scale was not practicable, and at most places it was a mere gesture. In Patna, Nakhas Pond was chosen as a site to make salt and break the salt law under Ambika Kant Sinha. However, very soon, a very powerful no-chaukidari tax agitation replaced the salt satyagraha (owing to physical constraints in making salt). By November 1930, sale of foreign cloth and liquor dramatically declined, and administration collapsed in several parts like the Barhee region of Munger.

The tribal belt of Chhotanagpur (now in Jharkhand), saw instances of lower-class militancy. Bonga Majhi and Somra Majhi, influenced by Gandhism, led a movement in Hazaribagh,

which combined socio-religious reform along 'sanskritising' lines, in which followers were asked to give up meat and liquor, and use khadi. However, the Santhals were reported to be taking up illegal distillation of liquor on a large scale under the banner of Gandhi! It was observed that while most big zamindars remained loyal to the government, small landlords and better-off tenants participated in the movement. But several times, increased lower-class-militancy lowered the enthusiasm of the small landlords and better-off tenants.

Peshawar Here, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan's educational and social reform work among the Pathans had politicised them. Gaffar Khan, also called **Badshah Khan** and **Frontier Gandhi**, had started the first Pushto political monthly *Pukhtoon* and had organised a volunteer brigade 'Khudai Khidmatgars', popularly known as the 'Red-Shirts', who were pledged to the freedom struggle and non-violence.

On April 23, 1930, the arrest of Congress leaders in the NWFP led to mass demonstrations in Peshawar, which was virtually in the hands of the crowds for more than a week till order was restored on May 4. This was followed by a reign of terror and martial law. It was here that a section of Garhwal Rifles soldiers refused to fire on an unarmed crowd. This upsurge in a province with 92 per cent Muslim population left the British government nervous.

Sholapur This industrial town of southern Maharashtra saw the fiercest response to Gandhi's arrest. Textile workers went on a strike from May 7 and along with other residents burnt liquor shops and other symbols of government authority such as railway stations, police stations, municipal buildings, law courts, etc. The activists established a virtual parallel government which could only be dislodged with martial law after May 16.

Dharasana On May 21, 1930, Sarojini Naidu, Imam Sahib, and Manilal (Gandhi's son) took up the unfinished task of leading a raid on the Dharasana Salt Works. The unarmed and peaceful crowd was met with a brutal lathi-charge which left 2 dead and 320 injured. This new form of salt satyagraha was eagerly adopted by people in Wadala (Bombay), Karnataka (Sanikatta Salt Works), Andhra, Midnapore, Balasore, Puri, and Cuttack.

Gujarat The impact was felt in Anand, Borsad, and Nadiad areas in Kheda district, Bardoli in Surat district, and Jambusar in Bharuch district. A determined no-tax movement was organised here, which included refusal to pay land revenue. Villagers crossed the border into neighbouring princely states (such as Baroda) with their families and belongings and camped in the open for months to evade police repression. The police retaliated by destroying their property and confiscating their land.

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Central Provinces These areas saw defiance of forest laws such as grazing and timber restrictions and public sale of illegally acquired forest produce.

United Provinces A no-revenue campaign was organised; a call was given to zamindars to refuse to pay revenue to the government. Under a no-rent campaign, a call was given to tenants against zamindars. Since most of the zamindars were loyalists, the campaign became virtually a no-rent campaign. The activity picked up speed in October 1930, especially in Agra and Rai Bareilly.

Manipur and Nagaland These areas took a brave part in the movement. At the young age of 13, **Rani Gaidinliu**, a Naga spiritual leader, who followed her cousin Haipou Jadonang, born in what is now the state of Manipur, raised the banner of revolt against foreign rule. "We are free people, the white men should not rule over us," she declared. She urged the people not to pay taxes or work for the British—in the tradition established by the freedom struggle in the

Views

Gandhiji's body is in jail but his soul is with you. India's prestige is now in your hands. You must not use any violence under any circumstances. You will be beaten but you must not resist, you must not even raise a hand to ward off blows.

—**Sarojini Naidu**, *on the eve of Dharasana Salt Satyagraha*

Although everyone knew that within a few minutes he would be beaten down, and perhaps killed, I could detect no signs of wavering or fear. They marched steadily with heads up….

—**Web Miller**, *an American journalist, reporting on Dharasana Salt Satyagraha*

rest of India. As the reformist religious movement steadily turned political, the British authorities caught Haipou Jadonang and hanged him on charges of treason in 1931. A manhunt was launched for Rani Gaidinliu. She outwitted the British till October 1932 when she was finally captured. She was later sentenced to life imprisonment. [It was the Interim Government of India set up in 1946 that finally ordered her release from Tura jail.]

Forms of Mobilisation

Mobilisation of masses was also carried out through *prabhat pheries, vanar senas, manjari senas,* secret *patrikas,* and magic lantern shows.

Impact of Agitation

1. Imports of foreign cloth and other items fell.
2. Government suffered a loss of income from liquor, excise, and land revenue.
3. Elections to Legislative Assembly were largely boycotted.

Extent of Mass Participation

Several sections of the population participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Women Gandhi had specially asked women to play a leading part in the movement. Soon, they became a familiar sight, picketing outside liquor shops, opium dens, and shops selling foreign cloth. For Indian women, the movement was the most liberating experience and can truly be said to have marked their entry into the public sphere.

Students Along with women, students and youth played the most prominent part in the boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.

Muslims The Muslim participation was nowhere near the 1920–22 level because of appeals by Muslim leaders to stay away from the movement and because of active government encouragement to communal dissension. Still, some areas such as the NWFP saw an overwhelming participation. Middle-class Muslim participation was quite significant in Senhatta, Tripura, Gaibandha, Bagura, and Noakhali. In Dacca, Muslim leaders, shopkeepers, lower class people, and upper class women were active. The Muslim

weaving community in Bihar, Delhi, and Lucknow were also effectively mobilised.

Merchants and Petty Traders They were very enthusiastic. Traders' associations and commercial bodies were active in implementing the boycott, especially in Tamil Nadu and Punjab.

Tribals Tribals were active participants in Central Provinces, Maharashtra, and Karnataka.

Workers The workers participated in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Sholapur, etc.

Peasants were active in the United Provinces, Bihar, and Gujarat.

Government Response—Efforts for Truce

The government's attitude throughout 1930 was ambivalent as it was puzzled and perplexed. It faced the classic dilemma of 'damned if you do, damned if you don't', if force was applied, the Congress cried 'repression', and if little action taken, the Congress cried 'victory'. Either way, the government suffered an erosion of power. Even Gandhi's arrest came after much vacillation. But once the repression began, the ordinances banning civil liberties were freely used, including the press being gagged. Provincial governments were given freedom to ban civil disobedience organisations. The Congress Working Committee was, however, not declared illegal till June. There were lathi-charges and firing on unarmed crowds which left several killed and wounded, while thousands of satyagrahis besides Gandhi and other Congress leaders were imprisoned.

The government repression and publication of the Simon Commission Report, which contained no mention of dominion status and was in other ways also a regressive document, further upset even moderate political opinion.

In **July 1930,** the viceroy, Lord Irwin, suggested a round table conference and reiterated the goal of dominion status. He also accepted the suggestion that Tej Bahadur Sapru and M.R. Jayakar be allowed to explore the possibility of peace between the Congress and the government.

In **August 1930,** Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru were taken to Yerawada Jail to meet Gandhi and discuss the

possibility of a settlement. The Nehrus and Gandhi unequivocally reiterated the demands of:

1. right of secession from Britain;
2. complete national government with control over defence and finance; and
3. an independent tribunal to settle Britain's financial claims.

Talks broke down at this point.

Gandhi-Irwin Pact

On January 25, 1931, Gandhi and all other members of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) were released unconditionally. The CWC authorised Gandhi to initiate discussions with the viceroy. As a result of these discussions, a pact was signed between the viceroy, representing the British Indian Government, and Gandhi, representing the Indian people, in Delhi on March 5, 1931**.** This **Delhi Pact**, also known as the **Gandhi-Irwin Pact**, placed the Congress on an equal footing with the government.

Irwin on behalf of the government agreed on:

1. immediate release of all political prisoners not convicted of violence;
2. remission of all fines not yet collected;
3. return of all lands not yet sold to third parties;
4. lenient treatment to those government servants who had resigned;
5. right to make salt in coastal villages for personal consumption (not for sale);
6. right to peaceful and non-aggressive picketing; and
7. withdrawal of emergency ordinances.

The viceroy, however, turned down two of Gandhi's demands.

(i) public enquiry into police excesses, and
(ii) commutation of Bhagat Singh and his comrades' death sentence to life sentence.

Gandhi on behalf of the Congress agreed:

(i) to suspend the civil disobedience movement, and
(ii) to participate in the next Round Table Conference on the constitutional question around the three linchpins of federation, Indian responsibility, and

reservations and safeguards that may be necessary in India's interests (covering such areas as defence, external affairs, position of minorities, financial credit of India, and discharge of other obligations).

Evaluation of Civil Disobedience Movement

Was Gandhi-Irwin Pact a Retreat?

Gandhi's decision to suspend the civil disobedience movement as agreed under the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was not a retreat, because:

(i) mass movements are necessarily short-lived;
(ii) capacity of the masses to make sacrifices, unlike that of the activists, is limited; and
(iii) there were signs of exhaustion after September 1930, especially among shopkeepers and merchants, who had participated so enthusiastically.

No doubt, youth were disappointed: they had participated enthusiastically and wanted the world to end with a bang and not with a whimper. Peasants of Gujarat were disappointed because their lands were not restored immediately (indeed, they were restored only during the rule of the Congress ministry in the province). But many people were jubilant that the government had been made to regard their movement as significant and treat their leader as an equal, and sign a pact with him. The political prisoners, when released from jails, were given a hero's welcome.

Comparison to Non-Cooperation Movement

There were certain aspects in which the Civil Disobedience Movement differed from the Non-Cooperation Movement.

1. The stated objective this time was complete independence and not just remedying two specific wrongs and a vaguely worded swaraj.
2. The methods involved violation of law from the very beginning and not just non-cooperation with foreign rule.
3. There was a decline in forms of protests involving the intelligentsia, such as lawyers giving up practice, students giving up government schools to join national schools and colleges.
4. Muslim participation was nowhere near that in the Non-Cooperation Movement level.

Views

India is one vast prison-house. I repudiate this law.

M.K. Gandhi to Lord Irwin

Gandhi was the best policeman the British had in India.

Ellen Wilkinson

Dandi March is the 'kindergarten stage of revolution'..... based on the notion that King Emperor can be unseated by boiling sea-water in a kettle.

Brailsford, an English journalist

5. No major labour upsurge coincided with the movement.

6. The massive participation of peasants and business groups compensated for decline of other features.

7. The number of those imprisoned was about three times more this time.

8. The Congress was organisationally stronger.

Karachi Congress Session—1931

In March 1931, a special session of the Congress was held at Karachi to endorse the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Six days before the session (which was held on March 29) Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru were executed. Throughout Gandhi's route to Karachi, he was greeted with black flag demonstrations by the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, in protest against his failure to secure commutation of the death sentence for Bhagat and his comrades.

Congress Resolutions at Karachi

- While disapproving of and dissociating itself from political violence, the Congress admired the 'bravery' and 'sacrifice' of the three martyrs.
- The Delhi Pact or Gandhi-Irwin Pact was endorsed.
- The goal of purna swaraj was reiterated.
- Two resolutions were adopted—one on Fundamental Rights and the other on National Economic Programme—which made the session particularly memorable. The **Resolution on Fundamental Rights** guaranteed:

* free speech and free press

* right to form associations

* right to assemble
* universal adult franchise
* equal legal rights irrespective of caste, creed, and sex
* neutrality of state in religious matters
* free and compulsory primary education
* protection to culture, language, script of minorities and linguistic groups

The **Resolution on National Economic Programme** included:

* substantial reduction in rent and revenue in the case of landholders and peasants
* exemption from rent for uneconomic holdings
* relief from agricultural indebtedness
* control of usury
* better conditions of work including a living wage, limited hours of work and protection of women workers in the industrial sector
* right to workers and peasants to form unions
* state ownership and control of key industries, mines, and means of transport

This was the first time the Congress spelt out what swaraj would mean for the masses—"in order to end exploitation of masses, political freedom must include economic freedom of starving millions."

The Karachi Resolution was to remain, in essence, the basic political and economic programme of the Congress in later years.

The Round Table Conferences

The Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, and the Prime Minister of Britain, Ramsay MacDonald, agreed that a round table conference should be held, as the recommendations of the Simon Commission report were clearly inadequate.

First Round Table Conference

The first Round Table Conference was held in London between November 1930 and January 1931. It was opened officially by King George V on November 12, 1930 and chaired by Ramsay MacDonald.

This was the first conference arranged between the British and the Indians as equals.

The Congress and some prominent business leaders refused to attend, but many other groups of Indians were represented at the conference.

The **Indian princely states** were represented by the Maharaja of Alwar, Maharaja of Baroda, Nawab of Bhopal, Maharaja of Bikaner, Rana of Dholpur, Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja of Nawanagar, Maharaja of Patiala (Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes), Maharaja of Rewa, Chief Sahib of Sangli, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani (Bhavnagar), Manubhai Mehta (Baroda), Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan (Gwalior), Akbar Hydari (Hyderabad), Mirza Ismail (Mysore), Col. Kailas Narain Haksar (Jammu and Kashmir). The **Muslim League** sent Aga Khan III (leader of British-Indian delegation), Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar, Muhammad Shafi, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, A.K. Fazlul Huq, Hafiz Ghulam Hussain Hidayat Ullah, Dr.Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Raja Sher Muhammad Khan of Domeli, and A.H. Ghuznavi. The **Hindu Mahasabha and its sympathisers** were represented by B.S. Moonje, M.R. Jayakar, and Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath. The **Sikhs** were represented by Sardar Ujjal Singh and Sardar Sampuran Singh. For the **Parsis**, Phiroze Sethna, Cowasji Jehangir, and Homi Mody attended. Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz and Radhabai Subbarayan represented **Women**. The **Liberals** were represented by J.N. Basu, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C.Y. Chintamani, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, and Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad. The **Depressed Classes** were represented by B.R. Ambedkar and Rettamalai Srinivasan. The **Justice Party** sent Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Bhaskarrao Vithojirao Jadhav, and Sir A.P. Patro. **Labour** was represented by N.M. Joshi and B. Shiva Rao. K.T. Paul represented the **Indian Christians**, while Henry Gidney represented the **Anglo-Indians**, and the **Europeans** were represented by Sir Hubert Carr, Sir Oscar de Glanville (Burma), T.F. Gavin Jones, C.E. Wood (Madras). There were also representatives of the **landlords** (from Bihar, the United Pronvinces, and Orissa), the **universities**, Burma, the Sindh, and some other provinces.

The **Government of India** was represented by Narendra

Nath Law, Bhupendra Nath Mitra, C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, and M. Ramachandra Rao.

Outcome Nothing much was achieved at the conference. It was generally agreed that India was to develop into a federation, there were to be safeguards regarding defence and finance, while other departments were to be transferred. But little was done to implement these recommendations and civil disobedience continued in India.

The British government realised that the participation of the Indian National Congress was necessary in any discussion on the future of constitutional government in India.

Second Round Table Conference

Members of the Indian Liberal Party such as Tej Bahadur Sapru, C.Y. Chintamani, and Srinivasa Sastri appealed to Gandhi to talk with the Viceroy. Gandhi and Irwin reached a compromise which came to be called the Gandhi-Irwin Pact (the Delhi Pact).

The second Round Table Conference was held in London from September 7, 1931 to December 1, 1931.

The **Indian National Congress** nominated Gandhi as its sole representative. A. Rangaswami Iyengar and Madan Mohan Malaviya were also there.

There were a large number of Indian participants, besides the Congress.

The **princely states** were represented by Maharaja of Alwar, Maharaja of Baroda, Nawab of Bhopal, Maharaja of Bikaner, Maharao of Kutch, Rana of Dholpur, Maharaja of Indore, Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja of Kapurthala, Maharaja of Nawanagar, Maharaja of Patiala, Maharaja of Rewa, Chief Sahib of Sangli, Raja of Sarila, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani (Bhavnagar), Manubhai Mehta (Baroda), Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan (Gwalior), Sir Muhammad Akbar Hydari (Hyderabad), Mirza Ismail (Mysore), Col. K.N. Haksar (Jammu and Kashmir), T. Raghavaiah (Travancore), Liaqat Hayat Khan (Patiala). The **Muslims** were represented by Aga Khan III, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, A.K. Fazlul Huq, Muhammad Iqbal, Muhammad Shafi, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan, Syed Ali Imam, Maulvi

Muhammad Shafi Daudi, Raja Sher Muhammad Khan of Domeli, A.H. Ghuznavi, Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Sayed Muhammad Padshah Saheb Bahadur, Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Jamal Muhammad, and Nawab Sahibzada Sayed Muhammad Mehr Shah. **Hindu groups** were represented by M.R. Jayakar, B.S. Moonje and Diwan Bahadur Raja Narendra Nath. The **Liberals** at the conference were J. N. Basu, C.Y. Chintamani, Tej Bahadur Sapru, V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, and Chimanlal Harilal Setalvad. The **Justice Party** sent Raja of Bobbili, Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Sir A.P. Patro, and Bhaskarrao Vithojirao Jadhav. The **Depressed Classes** were represented by B.R. Ambedkar and Rettamalai Srinivasan. Sardar Ujjal Singh and Sardar Sampuran Singh represented the **Sikhs**. The **Parsis** were represented by Cowasji Jehangir, Homi Mody, and Phiroze Sethna. **Indian Christians** were represented by Surendra Kumar Datta and A.T. Pannirselvam. **Industry** was represented by Ghanshyam Das Birla, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, and Maneckji Dadabhoy. **Labour** was represented by N. M. Joshi, B. Shiva Rao, and V. V. Giri. The representatives for **Indian women** were Sarojini Naidu, Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, and Radhabai Subbarayan. The **universities** were represented by Syed Sultan Ahmed and Bisheshwar Dayal Seth. Representatives of **Burma** and from the provinces of **Sindh**, **Assam, Central Provinces,** and the NWFP also attended.

The **Government of India** was represented by C.P. Ramaswami Iyer, Narendra Nath Law, and M. Ramachandra Rao. Not much was expected from the conference because of the following reasons:

- By this time, Lord Irwin had been replaced by Lord Willingdon as viceroy in India. Just before the conference began, the Labour government in England had been replaced by a National Government which was an uneasy coalition between Labour and Conservatives. The British were also angered by the increased revolutionary activities which had claimed many European lives in India.
- The Right Wing or Conservatives in Britain led by Churchill strongly objected to the British government negotiating with the Congress on an equal basis. They,

instead, demanded a strong government in India. The Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald headed the Conservative-dominated cabinet with a weak and reactionary secretary of state for India, Samuel Hoare.

- At the conference, Gandhi (and therefore the Congress) claimed to represent all people of India against imperialism. The other delegates, however, did not share this view. Historians point out that many of the delegates were conservative, government loyalists, and communalists, and these groups were used by the colonial government to neutralise the efforts of Gandhi. Because of the participation of a large number of groups, the British government claimed that the Congress did not represent the interests of all of India.
- Gandhi pointed out that there was a need of a partnership between Britain and India on the basis of equality. He put forward the demand for the immediate establishment of a responsible government at the centre as well as in the provinces. He also reiterated that the Congress alone represented political India. Saying that the untouchables were Hindus, and thus not to be treated as a minority, he discarded the idea of a separate electorate for them. He also said there was no need for separate electorates or special safeguards for Muslims or other minorities. Many of the other delegates disagreed with Gandhi.
- The session soon got deadlocked on the question of the minorities. Separate electorates were being demanded by the Muslims, depressed classes, Christians, and Anglo-Indians. All these came together in a 'Minorities' Pact'. Gandhi fought desperately against this concerted move to make all constitutional progress conditional on the solving of this issue.
- The princes were also not too enthusiastic about a federation, especially after the possibility of the formation of a Congress government at the centre had receded after the suspension of civil disobedience movement.

Outcome The lack of agreement among the many delegate groups meant that no substantial results regarding India's constitutional future would come out of the conference. The session ended with MacDonald's announcement of:

(i) two Muslim majority provinces—North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Sindh;
(ii) the setting up of an Indian Consultative Committee;
(iii) setting up of three expert committees—finance, franchise, and states; and
(iv) the prospect of a unilateral British Communal Award if Indians failed to agree.

The government refused to concede the basic Indian demand of freedom. Gandhi returned to India on December 28, 1931.

Third Round Table Conference

The third Round Table Conference, held between November 17, 1932 and December 24, 1932, was not attended by the Indian National Congress and Gandhi. It was ignored by most other Indian leaders.

The Indian States were represented by Akbar Hydari (Dewan of Hyderabad), Mirza Ismail (Dewan of Mysore), V.T. Krishnamachari (Dewan of Baroda), Wajahat Hussain (Jammu and Kashmir), Sir Sukhdeo Prasad (Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur), J.A. Surve (Kolhapur), Raja Oudh Narain Bisarya (Bhopal), Manubhai Mehta (Bikaner), Nawab Liaqat Hayat Khan (Patiala), Fateh Naseeb Khan (Alwar State), L.F. Rushbrook Williams (Nawanagar), and Raja of Sarila (small states). Other Indian representatives were Aga Khan III, B.R. Ambedkar, Ramakrishna Ranga Rao of Bobbili, Sir Hubert Carr, Nanak Chand Pandit, A.H. Ghuznavi, Henry Gidney, Hafiz Hidayat Hussain, Muhammad Iqbal, M.R. Jayakar, Cowasji Jehangir, N.M. Joshi, Narasimha Chintaman Kelkar, Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar, Begum Jahanara Shahnawaz, A.P. Patro, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr.Shafa'at Ahmad Khan, Sir Shadi Lal, Tara Singh Malhotra, Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan.

Again, like in the two previous conferences, little was achieved. The recommendations were published in a White Paper in March 1933 and debated in the British Parliament afterwards. A Joint Select Committee was formed to analyse the recommendations and formulate a new Act for India, and that committee produced a draft Bill in February 1935, which was enforced as the Government of India Act of 1935 in July 1935.

Civil Disobedience Resumed

On the failure of the second Round Table Conference, the Congress Working Committee decided on December 29, 1931 to resume the civil disobedience movement.

During Truce Period (March–December 1931)

Some activity during the period March to December 1931 kept alive the spirit of defiance. In the United Provinces, the Congress had been leading a movement for rent reduction and against summary evictions. In the NWFP, severe repression had been unleashed against the Khudai Khidmatgars and the peasants led by them who were agitating against the brutal methods of tax-collection by the government. In Bengal, draconian ordinances and mass detentions had been used in the name of fighting terrorism. In September 1931, there was a firing incident on political prisoners in Hijli Jail.

Changed Government Attitude After Second RTC

The higher British officials had drawn their own lessons from the Delhi Pact which they thought had raised the political prestige of the Congress and the political morale of the people and had undermined British prestige. After the second Round Table Conference, the British were determined to reverse this trend. There were three main considerations in British policy:

1. Gandhi would not be permitted to build up the tempo for a mass movement again.

2. Goodwill of the Congress was not required, but the confidence of those who supported the British against the Congress—government functionaries, loyalists, etc.—was very essential.

3. The national movement would not be allowed to consolidate itself in rural areas.

After the CWC decided to resume the civil disobedience movement, Viceroy Willingdon refused a meeting with Gandhi on December 31. On January 4, 1932, Gandhi was arrested.

Government Action

A series of repressive ordinances were issued which ushered in a virtual martial law, though under civilian control, or a 'Civil Martial Law'. Congress organisations at all levels were banned; arrests were made of activists, leaders, sympathisers; properties were confiscated; Gandhi ashrams were occupied. Repression was particularly harsh on women. Press was gagged and nationalist literature, banned.

Popular Response

People responded with anger. Though unprepared, the response was massive. In the first four months alone, about 80,000 satyagrahis, mostly urban and rural poor, were jailed. Other forms of protest included picketing of shops selling liquor and foreign cloth, illegal gatherings, non-violent demonstrations, celebrations of national days, symbolic hoistings of national flag, non-payment of chowkidara tax, salt satyagraha, forest law violations, and installation of a secret radio transmitter near Bombay. This phase of the civil disobedience movement coincided with upsurges in two princely states—Kashmir and Alwar. But this phase of the movement could not be sustained for long because:

(i) Gandhi and other leaders had no time to build up the tempo; and

(ii) the masses were not prepared.

Finally, in April 1934, Gandhi decided to withdraw the civil disobedience movement. Though people had been cowed down by a superior force, they had not lost political faith in the Congress—they had won freedom in their hearts.

Communal Award and Poona Pact

The Communal Award was announced by the British prime minister, Ramsay MacDonald, on August 16, 1932. The Communal Award, based on the findings of the Indian Franchise Committee (also called the Lothian Committee), established separate electorates and reserved seats for minorities, including the depressed classes, which were granted 78 reserved seats. Thus, this award accorded separate

electorates for Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, depressed classes, and even to the Marathas for some seats in Bombay. The award was perceived by the national leaders led by the Congress as another manifestation of the British policy of divide and rule.

It should be noted here that Dr B.R. Ambedkar in the past, in his testimony to the Simon Commission, had stressed that the depressed classes should be treated as a distinct, independent minority separate from the caste Hindus. Even, the Bengal Depressed Classes Association had lobbied for separate electorates with seats reserved according to the proportion of depressed class members to the total population as well as for adult franchise. But the Simon Commission rejected the proposal of separate electorate for the depressed classes; however, it retained the concept of reserving seats.

In the second Round Table Conference held in London, Ambedkar again raised the issue of separate electorate for the depressed classes. Earlier in the conference, Ambedkar had attempted to compromise with Gandhi on reserved seats in a common electorate, but Gandhi, who had declared himself the sole representative of India's oppressed masses, rejected Ambedkar's proposal, and denounced the other delegates as unrepresentative. Further, Gandhi attempted to strike a deal with Muslims, promising to support their demands as long as the Muslims voted against separate electorates for the depressed classes. It is argued that political considerations might have motivated Gandhi to adopt such a stand. But despite such efforts, a consensus on the minority representation could not be worked out among the Indian delegates. In the wake of such a situation, Ramsay MacDonald, who had chaired the committee on minorities, offered to mediate on the condition that the other members of the committee supported his decision. And, the outcome of this mediation was the Communal Award.

Main Provisions of the Communal Award

- Muslims, Europeans, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, depressed classes, women, and even the Marathas were to get separate electorates. Such an arrangement for the depressed classes was to be made for a period of 20 years.

- In the provincial legislatures, the seats were to be distributed on communal basis.
- The existing seats of the provincial legislatures were to be doubled.
- The Muslims, wherever they were in minority, were to be granted a weightage.
- Except in the North West Frontier Province, 3 per cent seats were to be reserved for women in all provinces.
- The depressed classes were to be declared/accorded the status of minority.
- The depressed classes were to get 'double vote', one to be used through separate electorates and the other to be used in the general electorates.
- Allocation of seats were to be made for labourers, landlords, traders, and industrialists.
- In the province of Bombay, 7 seats were to be allocated for the Marathas.

Congress Stand

Though opposed to separate electorates, the Congress was not in favour of changing the Communal Award without the consent of the minorities. Thus, while strongly disagreeing with the Communal Award, the Congress decided neither to accept it nor to reject it.

The effort to separate the depressed classes from the rest of the Hindus by treating them as separate political entities was vehemently opposed by all the nationalists.

Gandhi's Response

Gandhi saw the Communal Award as an attack on Indian unity and nationalism. He thought it was harmful to both Hinduism and to the depressed classes since it provided no answer to the socially degraded position of the depressed classes. Once the depressed classes were treated as a separate political entity, he argued, the question of abolishing untouchability would get undermined, while separate electorates would ensure that the untouchables remained untouchables in perpetuity. He said that what was required was not protection of the so-called interests of the depressed classes but root and branch eradication of untouchability.

Gandhi demanded that the depressed classes be elected

through joint and if possible a wider electorate through universal franchise, while expressing no objection to the demand for a larger number of reserved seats. And to press his demands, he went on an indefinite fast on September 20, 1932. Now leaders of various persuasions, including B.R. Ambedkar, M.C. Rajah, and Madan Mohan Malaviya got together to hammer out a compromise contained in the Poona Pact.

Poona Pact

Signed by B.R. Ambedkar on behalf of the depressed classes on September 24, 1932, the Poona Pact abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes. But the seats reserved for the depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18 per cent of the total in the Central Legislature.

The Poona Pact was accepted by the government as an amendment to the Communal Award.

Impact of Poona Pact on Dalits

The Poona Pact, despite giving certain political rights to the depressed classes, could not achieve the desired goal of emancipation of the depressed class. It enabled the same old Hindu social order to continue and gave birth to many problems.

- The Pact made the depressed classes political tools which could be used by the majoritarian caste Hindu organisations.
- It made the depressed classes leaderless as the true representatives of the classes were unable to win against the stooges who were chosen and supported by the caste Hindu organisations.
- This led to the depressed classes to submit to the status quo in political, ideological, and cultural fields and not being able to develop independent and genuine leadership to fight the Brahminical order.
- It subordinated the depressed classes into being part of the Hindu social order by denying them a separate and distinct existence.
- The Poona Pact perhaps put obstructions in the way of an ideal society based on equality, liberty, fraternity, and justice.

● By denying to recognise the Dalits as a separate and distinct element in the national life, it pre-empted the rights and safeguards for the Dalits in the Constitution of independent India.

Joint Electorates and Its Impact on Depressed Classes

The Working Committee of the All India Scheduled Caste Federation alleged that in the last elections held under the Government of India Act, 1935, the system of joint electorates deprived the scheduled castes of the right to send true and effective representatives to the legislatures. The committee, further, said that the provisions of the joint electorate gave the Hindu majority the virtual right to nominate members of the scheduled castes who were prepared to be the tools of the Hindu majority. The working committee of the federation, thus, demanded for the restoration of the system of separate electorates, and nullification of the system of joint electorates and reserved seats. Even after signing the Poona Pact, Dr B.R. Ambedkar continued to denounce the Poona Pact till 1947.

Gandhi's Harijan Campaign and thoughts on Caste

Determined to undo the divisive intentions of the government's divide and rule policy, Gandhi gave up all his other preoccupations and launched a whirlwind campaign against untouchability—first from jail and then, after his release in August 1933, from outside jail.

While in jail, he set up the All India Anti-Untouchability League in September 1932 and started the weekly *Harijan* in January 1933. After his release, he shifted to the Satyagraha Ashram in Wardha as he had vowed in 1930 not to return to Sabarmati Ashram unless swaraj was won.

Starting from Wardha, he conducted a Harijan tour of the country in the period from November 1933 to July 1934, covering 20,000 km, collecting money for his newly set up Harijan Sevak Sangh, and propagating removal of untouchability in all its forms. He urged political workers to go to villages

and work for social, economic, political, and cultural upliftment of the Harijans. He undertook two fasts—on May 8 and August 16, 1934—to convince his followers of the seriousness of his effort and the importance of the issue. These fasts created consternation in nationalist ranks throwing many into an emotional crisis.

Throughout his campaign, Gandhi was attacked by orthodox and reactionary elements. These elements disrupted his meetings, held black flag demonstrations against him and accused him of attacking Hinduism. They also offered support to the government against the Congress and the Civil Disobedience Movement. The government obliged them by defeating the Temple Entry Bill in August 1934. Orthodox Hindu opinion in Bengal was against the acceptance of permanent caste Hindu minority status by the Poona Pact.

Throughout his Harijan tour, social work and fasts, Gandhi stressed on certain themes:

- He put forward a damning indictment of Hindu society for the kind of oppression practised on Harijans.
- He called for total eradication of untouchability symbolised by his plea to throw open temples to the untouchables.
- He stressed the need for caste Hindus to do 'penance' for untold miseries inflicted on Harijans. For this reason, he was not hostile to his critics such as Ambedkar. He said, "Hinduism dies if untouchability lives, untouchability has to die if Hinduism is to live."
- His entire campaign was based on principles of humanism and reason. He said that the *Shastras* do not sanction untouchability, and if they did, they should be ignored as it was against human dignity.

Gandhi was not in favour of mixing up the issue of removal of untouchability with that of inter-caste marriages and inter-dining because he felt that such restrictions existed among caste Hindus and among Harijans themselves, and because the all-India campaign at the time was directed against disabilities specific to Harijans.

Similarly, he distinguished between abolition of untouchability and abolition of caste system as such. On this

point he differed from Ambedkar who advocated annihilation of the caste system to remove untouchability. Gandhi felt that whatever the limitations and defects of the *varnashram* system, there was nothing sinful about it, as there was about untouchability. Untouchability, Gandhi felt, was a product of distinctions of high and low and not of the caste system itself. If it could be purged of this distinction, the *varnashram* could function in such a manner that each caste would be complementary to the other rather than being higher or lower. Anyway, he hoped that believers and critics of the caste system would come together in the fight against untouchability.

He believed that the removal of untouchability would have a positive impact on communal and other questions since opposition to untouchability meant opposing the notion of highness and lowness. He was opposed to using compulsion against the orthodox Hindus whom he called 'sanatanis'. They were to be won over by persuasion, by appealing to "their reason and their hearts". His fasts were aimed at inspiring friends and followers to redouble their work to abolish untouchability.

Gandhi's Harijan campaign included a programme of internal reform by Harijans covering education, cleanliness, hygiene, giving up eating of beef and carrion and consumption of liquor, and removing untouchability among themselves.

Impact of the Campaign Gandhi repeatedly described the campaign as not a political movement but as being primarily meant to purify Hinduism and Hindu society. Gradually, the campaign carried the message of nationalism to Harijans who also happened to be the agricultural labourers in most parts of the country, leading to their increasing participation in the national and peasant movements.

Ideological Differences and Similarities between Gandhi and Ambedkar

Gandhi, the principal architect of the Indian freedom struggle, and B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Constitution of independent India, shared many ideas, though in many ways

they held different beliefs. There is a striking similarity in the symbolisim involved in some of the actions of both individuals. The burning of foreign cloth by Gandhi and the burning of *Manusmriti* by Ambedkar are not to be seen as mere acts of sentiment. Rather, foreign cloth and *Manusmriti* represented the bondage and slavery for India. So too, a pinch of salt from the ocean, and a drop of water from the Mahad tank were acts of political catharsis and social philosophy.

Gandhi believed that freedom was never to be bestowed but to be wrested from the authority by the people who desire it, whereas Ambedkar expected bestowing of freedom by the imperial rulers.

The two leaders differed over the nature and scope of democracy as a method of government. Ambedkar advocated parliamentary system of government for independent India, but Gandhi had very little respect for the parliamentary system of governance. Gandhi believed that democracy tends to get converted into mass democracy with a propensity for domination by leaders. Ambedkar was inclined towards mass democracy as it could act as a pressure on the government with the advancement of the oppressed people.

As a political and social activist, Ambedkar had certain principles which were very rigid, while Gandhi had no rigidities of ideology or principles except the uncompromising notion of non-violence. Gandhi tried to put forward simple practical alternatives to the political streams of the 20th century like liberalism, communism, and fascism. Ambedkar, on the other hand, had a natural inclination for liberal ideology and desired institutional framework and structures. Ambedkar's politics tended to highlight the aspect of Indian disunity, whereas the Gandhian politics tried to show the aspect of Indian unity. In '*Hind Swaraj*', Gandhi tries to prove that India has always been a nation prior to the beginning of the imperial rule and it was the British rule who broke this cultural unity. Ambedkar, on the other hand, believed in the notion that Indian unity was the by-product of the legal system introduced by the imperial state.

For Gandhi, *'Gramraj'* was *'Ramraj'* and real independence for Indians. But for Ambedkar, the status-quoist nature of the Indian villages denied equality and fraternity and also liberty. As the scourge of casteism and untouchability

was most dominant in the rural areas of India, Ambedkar believed that '*Gramraj*' would continue the social hierarchy based on discrimination and inequality. So, he vehemently propagated that there was nothing to be proud of the Indian village system.

The idea of the use of compulsion or force for social integration as well as social reforms was negated by Ambedkar. But the idea of proper education to make the individual desire for change, reform, and integration was the stance where the views of two leaders were the same.

The two leaders also differed in their views and approaches in respect of the context of development for deprived classes. For instance, when Gandhi named the depressed classes and the untouchables as '*Harijan*', Ambedkar denounced it as a clever scheme. Thus, when the Depressed Classes League was renamed as Harijan Sevak Sangh (by Gandhi), Ambedkar left the organisation by claiming that for Gandhi removal of untouchability was only a platform, not a sincere programme.

Ambedkar held that the centre of religion must be between man and man, and not between man and God alone, as preached by Gandhi. In the beginning, Ambedkar too wanted to cast away the evil practices prevalent in Hinduism in an attempt to reform and reconstruct, rather than destroy it fully. But in the later phase of his life, he left Hinduism, denouncing it as an entity which couldn't be reformed.

Ambedkar denounced the *Vedas* and other Hindu scriptures. He believed that the Hindu scriptures do not lend themselves to a unified and coherent understanding, and reflect strong contradictions within and across sects. And the caste system and untouchability were the manifestations of the Hindu religious scriptures. On the contrary, Gandhi held that caste system in Hinduism has nothing to do with religious precepts and spirituality. For Gandhi, caste and varna are different, and caste is perversive degeneration.

In political precepts, Ambedkar believed in freedom of religion, free citizenship, and separation of State and religion. Gandhi also endorsed the idea of freedom of religion, but never approved a separation of politics and religion. But religion as an agent of social change was well accepted by both leaders. Both denounced in theory and thinking anything

that either decried or diminished the role of religion in the life of an individual or in the life of society.

Ambedkar envisaged limited sovereign power of the State and, following from that, limited authority for the government. According to him, legal sovereign power should be limited and people should be the ultimate sovereign. Gandhi too believed in limited sovereign power of the State. According to him, absolute sovereign power of the State would annihilate the spirit and personality of an individual. Gandhi, in fact, believed in least governance being the best governance.

The notions of violence and non-violence got differing explanations from Gandhi and Ambedkar. Ambedkar held absolute non-violence as an end and relative violence as a means, whereas Gandhi never made such a distinction and was an avowed opponent of violence of any kind.

Ambedkar believed in purity of ends and justified means as just when the ends were just. Whereas in Gandhian perception it was purity of means that determined the end.

Gandhi and Ambedkar differed greatly in their views concerning mechanisation of production and utilisation of heavy machinery. Gandhi was apprehensive about the de-humanising impact of mechanisation and held it responsible for the creation as well as sustaining of exploitative socio-economic orders in the world. Ambedkar, on the other hand, attributed the evil effect of machinery to wrong social organisations that gave sanctity to private property and the pursuit of personal gains. Ambedkar was of the firm belief that machinery and modern civilisation were of benefit to all, and held that the slogan of a democratic society must be machinery and more machinery, civilisation and more civilisation.

The idea of social transformation through democratic and peaceful means got support from Ambedkar as well as

View

It would thus appear that Ambedkar and Gandhi had common allergy for social evil and imperial injustice. But a fundamental difference, more apparent than real, demarcated the two minds.

—Justice Krishna Iyer

Gandhi. They never sought a violent overthrow of any kind. Ambedkar desisted from pleading a blunt destruction of the social order, however, evil it was. And like Gandhi, he wanted to solve the problem of social disharmony and disintegration through peaceful rehabilitation of the oppressed classes.

The target groups of Ambedkar and Gandhi were different, even though they converged at certain points. The methods and skills of communication and mobilisation of both were different. Gandhi spoke in plain local vernacular, whereas Ambedkar spoke in English.

To disobey the law to make the law more just was a Gandhian principle; its outward manifestations were non-cooperation, *hartal,* satyagraha, and civil disobedience. Ambedkar was more inclined towards the observance of law and constitutionality in the political process.

Gandhi viewed the *untouchables* as an integral part of the Hindu whole, whereas Ambedkar had an ambivalent stand on the issue. Ambedkar regarded the untouchables as a religious minority and not a part of the Hindu community, and preferred to call them a 'political minority' or 'minority by force'. To Gandhi, untouchability was one of the many problems confronted by Indian society. To Ambedkar, untouchability was the major problem that captured his sole attention. Ambedkar made an exhaustive study of the problem from its the historical angle, while Gandhi was more concerned with the problem in its contemporary situation. Ambedkar wanted to solve the problem of untouchability through laws and constitutional methods, whereas Gandhi treated untouchability as a moral stigma and wanted it to be erased by acts of atonement. Gandhi had little use of legal/ constitutional modes; he looked to morality and thus supported conscience to remedy the evil.

Summary

- **Calcutta Congress Session (December 1928)**
  One year ultimatum to government to accept dominion status or else civil disobedience to be launched for complete independence

- **Lahore Congress Session (December 1929)**
  Congress adopted complete independence as its goal.
  Congress decided to launch a civil disobedience movement.
  January 26, 1930 was celebrated as the first Independence Day all over the country.
- **Dandi March (March 12–April 6, 1930)**
  Led by Gandhi; resulted in spread of salt satyagraha to Tamil Nadu, Malabar, Andhra, Assam, Bengal.
- **Spread of the movement with additional avenues of protest**
  Khudai Khidmatgars active in NWFP
  Textile workers active in Sholapur
  Salt satyagraha in Dharasana
  No-chowkidara tax campaign in Bihar
  Anti-chowkidara and anti-union-board tax in Bengal
  No-tax movement in Gujarat
  Civil disobedience of forest laws in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Central Provinces
  Agitation against 'Cunningham Circular' in Assam
  No rent campaign in UP
  Mass participation of women, students, some sections of Muslims, merchants and petty traders, tribals, workers, and peasants
- **Gandhi-Irwin Pact (March 1931)**
  Congress agreed to attend Second RTC and to withdraw CDM.
- **Karachi Congress Session (March 1931)**
  Endorsed Delhi Pact between Gandhi and Irwin.
  Passed resolutions on economic programme and fundamental rights.
- **The Round Table Conference**
  The Second RTC Right wing in Britain against concessions to Indians.
  Session got deadlocked on question of safeguards to minorities.
- **December 1931–April 1934:** Second phase of Civil Disobedience Movement
- **Communal Award (1932) and Poona Pact**
  Provided separate electorates to depressed classes
  Nationalists felt this to be a threat to national unity.
  Gandhi's fast unto death (September 1932) led to Poona Pact, which abandoned separate electorates for depressed classes in favour of increased reserved seats for them.
- **Impact of Poona Pact on depressed classes**
- **Joint electorate and its Impact on depressed classes**
- **Differences and similarities between thoughts of Gandhi and Ambedkar**

CHAPTER 20

Debates on the Future Strategy after Civil Disobedience Movement

Following the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement, there was a two-stage debate on the future strategy of the nationalists: the first stage was on what course the national movement should take in the immediate future, i.e., during the phase of non-mass struggle (1934–35); and the second stage, in 1937, considered the question of office acceptance in the context of provincial elections held under the autonomy provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

The First Stage Debate

Three perspectives were put forward on what the nationalists should work on immediately after the end of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The first two were traditional responses, while the third one represented the rise of a strong leftist trend within the Congress. The three perspectives were as follows:

1. There should be constructive work on Gandhian lines.

2.There should be a constitutional struggle and participation in elections to the Central Legislature (due in 1934) as advocated by M.A. Ansari, Asaf Ali, Bhulabhai Desai, S. Satyamurthy, and B.C. Roy among others. They argued that:

- in a period of political apathy, elections and council work could be utilised to keep up the political interest and morale of the people;
- participation in elections and council work did not amount to faith in constitutional politics;
- another political front would help build up Congress and prepare the masses for the next phase;
- this approach would give the Congress a certain amount of prestige and confidence, and a strong presence in councils would serve as an equivalent to the movement.

3. A strong leftist trend within the Congress, represented by Nehru, was critical of both constructive work and council entry in place of the suspended civil disobedience movement as that would sidetrack political mass action and divert attention from the main issue of the struggle against colonialism. Instead, this section favoured resumption and continuation of non-constitutionalist mass struggle because the situation was still revolutionary owing to continued economic crisis and the readiness of the masses to fight.

Nehru's Vision

Nehru said, "The basic goal before Indian people as before people of the world is abolition of capitalism and establishment of socialism." He considered the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement and council entry "a spiritual defeat", "a surrender of ideals", and "a retreat from revolutionary to reformist mentality".

He suggested that the vested interests be revised in favour of the masses by taking up the economic and class demands of peasants and workers, and landlords and capitalists, organising masses in their class organisations—kisan sabhas and trade unions. He argued that these class organisations should be allowed to affiliate with the Congress, thus influencing its policies and activities. There could be no genuine anti-imperialist struggle, he said, without incorporating the class struggle of the masses.

Nehru's Opposition to Struggle-Truce-Struggle Strategy

A large number of Congressmen led by Gandhi believed that a mass phase of movement (struggle phase) had to be

followed by a phase of reprieve (truce phase) before the next stage of mass struggle could be taken up. The truce period, it was argued, would enable the masses to recoup their strength to fight and also give the government a chance to respond to the demands of the nationalists. The masses could not go on sacrificing indefinitely. If the government did not respond positively, the movement could be resumed again with the participation of the masses. This was the struggle-truce-struggle or S-T-S strategy.

Criticising the S-T-S strategy, Nehru argued that the Indian national movement had reached a stage, after the Lahore Congress call for purna swaraj programme, in which there should be a continuous confrontation and conflict with imperialism till it was overthrown. He advocated maintenance of a "continuous direct action" policy by the Congress and without the interposition of a constitutionalist phase. Real power, he said, cannot be won by two *annas* and four *annas*. Against an S-T-S strategy, he suggested a Struggle-Victory (S-V) strategy.

Finally, Yes to Council Entry

Nationalists with apprehension and British officials with hope expected a split in the Congress on Surat lines sooner or later, but Gandhi conciliated the proponents of council entry by acceding to their basic demand of permission to enter the legislatures. He said, "Parliamentary politics cannot lead to freedom but those Congressmen who could not, for some reason, offer satyagraha or devote themselves to constructive work should not remain unoccupied and could express their patriotic energies through council work provided they are not sucked into constitutionalism or self-serving." Assuring the leftists, Gandhi said that the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement did not mean bowing down before opportunists or compromising with imperialism.

In May 1934, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) met at Patna to set up a Parliamentary Board to fight elections under the aegis of the Congress itself.

Gandhi was aware that he was out of tune with powerful trends in the Congress. A large section of the intelligentsia favoured parliamentary politics with which he was in

fundamental disagreement. Another section was estranged from the Congress because of Gandhi's emphasis on the spinning wheel as the "second lung of the nation". The socialists led by Nehru also had differences with Gandhi. In October 1934, Gandhi announced his resignation from the Congress to serve it better in thought, word, and deed. Nehru and the socialists thought that the British must first be expelled before the struggle for socialism could be waged, and in an anti-imperialist struggle unity around the Congress, still the only anti-imperialist mass organisation, was indispensable. Thus it was better, they felt, to gradually radicalise the Congress than to get isolated from the masses. The right wing was no less accommodating. In the elections to the Central Legislative Assembly held in November 1934, the Congress captured 45 out of 75 seats reserved for Indians.

Government of India Act, 1935

Amidst the struggle of 1932, the Third RTC was held in November, again without Congress participation. The discussions led to the formulation of the Act of 1935.

Main Features

The Government of India Act was passed by the British Parliament in August 1935. Its main provisions were as follows:

1. An All India Federation It was to comprise all British Indian provinces, all chief commissioner's provinces, and the Indian states (princely states). The federation's formation was conditional on the fulfilment of: (i) states with allotment of 52 seats in the proposed Council of States should agree to join the federation; and (ii) aggregate population of states in the above category should be 50 per cent of the total population of all Indian states.

Since these conditions were not fulfilled, the proposed federation never came up. The central government carried on up to 1946 as per the provisions of Government of India Act, 1919.

2. Federal Level: ***Executive*** • The governor general was the pivot of the entire Constitution.

● Subjects to be administered were divided into reserved and transferred subjects. Reserved subjects—foreign affairs, defence, tribal areas, and ecclesiastical affairs—were to be exclusively administered by the governor general on the advice of executive councillors. Executive councillors were not to be responsible to the central legislature. Transferred subjects included all other subjects and were to be administered by the governor general on the advice of ministers elected by the legislature. These ministers were to be responsible to the federal legislature and were to resign on losing the confidence of the body.

● Governor general could act in his individual judgement in the discharge of his special responsibilities for the security and tranquillity of India.

Legislature ● The bicameral legislature was to have an upper house (Council of States) and a lower house (Federal Assembly). The Council of States was to be a 260-member house, partly directly elected from British Indian provinces and partly (40 per cent) nominated by the princes. The Federal Assembly was to be a 375-member house, partly indirectly elected from British Indian provinces and partly (one-third) nominated by the princes.

● Oddly enough, election to the Council of States was direct and that to the Federal Assembly, indirect.

● Council of States was to be a permanent body with one-third members retiring every third year. The duration of the assembly was to be 5 years.

● The three lists for legislation purposes were to be federal, provincial, and concurrent.

● Members of Federal Assembly could move a vote of no-confidence against ministers. Council of States could not move a vote of no-confidence.

● The system of religion-based and class-based electorates was further extended.

● 80 per cent of the budget was non-votable.

● Governor general had residuary powers. He could (a) restore cuts in grants; (b) certify bills rejected by the legislature; (c) issue ordinances; and (d) exercise his veto.

3. Provincial Autonomy ● Provincial autonomy replaced dyarchy.

- Provinces were granted autonomy and separate legal identity.
- Provinces were freed from "the superintendence, direction" of the secretary of state and governor general. Provinces henceforth derived their legal authority directly from the British Crown.
- Provinces were given independent financial powers and resources. Provincial governments could borrow money on their own security.

Executive ● Governor was to be the Crown's nominee and representative to exercise authority on the king's behalf in a province.

- Governor was to have special powers regarding minorities, rights of civil servants, law and order, British business interests, partially excluded areas, princely states, etc.
- Governor could take over and indefinitely run administration.

Legislature ● Separate electorates based on Communal Award were to be made operational.

- All members were to be directly elected. Franchise was extended; women got the right on the same basis as men.
- Ministers were to administer all provincial subjects in a council of ministers headed by a premier.
- Ministers were made answerable to and removable by the adverse vote of the legislature.
- Provincial legislature could legislate on subjects in provincial and concurrent lists.
- 40 per cent of the budget was still not votable.
- Governor could (a) refuse assent to a bill; (b) promulgate ordinances; and (c) enact governor's Acts.

Evaluation of the Act

- Numerous 'safeguards' and 'special responsibilities' of the governor general worked as brakes in the proper functioning of the act.
- In provinces, the governor still had extensive powers.
- The act enfranchised 14 per cent of British Indian population.
- The extension of the system of communal electorates

Views

We framed the Act of 1935 because we thought that was the best way...of maintaining British influence in India.

Lord Linlithgow, viceroy (1936–43)

We are provided with a car, all brakes and no engine.

Jawaharlal Nehru

The process of constitutional advance in India is determined by the need to attract Indian collaborators to the Raj.

B.R. Tomlinson

and representation of various interests promoted separatist tendencies which culminated in partition of India.

● The act provided a rigid constitution with no possibility of internal growth. Right of amendment was reserved with the British Parliament.

The Long-Term British Strategy ● Suppression could only be a short-term tactic. In the long run, the strategy was to weaken the national movement and integrate large segments of the movement into colonial, constitutional, and administrative structure.

● Reforms would revive the political standing of constitutionalist liberals and moderates who had lost public support during the Civil Disobedience Movement.

● Repression earlier and reforms now would convince a large section of Congressmen of the ineffectiveness of an extra-legal struggle.

● Once Congressmen tasted power, they would be reluctant to go back to politics of sacrifice.

● Reforms could be used to create dissensions within Congress—right wing to be placated through constitutional concessions and radical leftists to be crushed through police measures.

● Provincial autonomy would create powerful provincial leaders who would gradually become autonomous centres of political power. Congress would thus be provincialised and the central leadership would get weakened.

Nationalists' Response

The 1935 Act was condemned by nearly all sections and unanimously rejected by the Congress. The Hindu Mahasabha

and the National Liberal Foundation, however, declared themselves in favour of the working of the 1935 Act in the central as well as at the provincial level. The Congress demanded, instead, the convening of a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise to frame a constitution for independent India.

The Second Stage Debate

In early 1937, elections to provincial assemblies were announced, and, once again, the debate on the future strategy to be adopted by the nationalists began.

Everyone in the Congress agreed that the 1935 Act was to be opposed root and branch, but it was not clear how it was to be done in a period when a mass movement was not yet possible. There was full agreement that the Congress should fight these elections on the basis of a detailed political and economic programme, thus deepening the anti-imperialist consciousness of the people. But what to do after the elections was not yet clear. If the Congress got majority in a province, was it to agree to form a government?

There were sharp differences over these questions among the nationalists. The two sides of the debate soon got identified with the emerging ideological divide along the left and right lines.

Divided Opinion

Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhash Bose, and Congress socialists and communists were opposed to office acceptance and thereby in the working of the 1935 Act because they argued that it would negate the rejection of the act by the nationalists. It would be like assuming responsibility without power. Also, it would take away the revolutionary character of the movement as constitutional work would sidetrack the main issues of freedom, economic and social justice, and removal of poverty.

As a counter-strategy, the leftists proposed entry into the councils with an aim to create deadlocks, thus making the working of the act impossible (older Swarajist strategy). And, as a long-term strategy, they advocated an increased reliance on workers and peasants, integration of their class organisations into the Congress, thus imparting a socialist

direction to the Congress and preparing for the resumption of a mass movement.

The **proponents of office acceptance** argued that they were equally committed to combating the 1935 Act, but work in legislatures was to be only a short-term tactic since option of a mass movement was not available at the time, and mass struggle alone was capable of winning independence. Capture or rejection of office was not a matter of socialism but of strategy. They agreed that there was a danger of being sucked in by wrong tendencies, but the answer was to fight these tendencies and not to abandon office. The administrative field should not be left open to pro-government reactionary forces. Despite limited powers, provincial ministries could be used to promote constructive work.

Gandhi's Position

Gandhi opposed office acceptance in the CWC meetings, but by the beginning of 1936, he was willing to give a trial to the formation of Congress ministries.

In its sessions at Lucknow in early 1936 and Faizpur in late 1937, the Congress decided to fight elections and postpone the decision on office acceptance to the post-election phase. The Congress resolution was "not to submit to this constitution or to cooperate with it, but to combat it both inside and outside the legislatures so that it can be ended". In February 1937, elections to the provincial assemblies were held. Elections were held in 11 provinces—Madras, Central Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, United Provinces, Bombay Presidency, Assam, NWFP, Bengal, Punjab, and Sindh.

These elections were the first in which a larger number of Indians than ever before were eligible to participate. An estimated 30.1 million persons, including 4.25 million women, had been enfranchised (14 per cent of the total population), and 15.5 million of these, including 917,000 women, actually exercised their franchise, according to reports.

Congress Manifesto for Elections

The Congress manifesto reaffirmed total rejection of the 1935 Act, and promised release of prisoners, removal of

disabilities on the basis of gender and caste, radical transformation of the agrarian system, substantial reduction of rent and revenue, scaling down of rural debts, cheap credit, and right to form trade unions and to strike.

Gandhi did not attend a single election meeting.

Congress' Performance

The Congress won 716 out of 1,161 seats it contested. (There were 1,585 seats in the legislative assemblies of the 11 provinces.) It got a majority in all provinces, except in Bengal, Assam, Punjab, Sindh, and the NWFP, and emerged as the largest party in Bengal, Assam, and the NWFP. Because of this performance, the prestige of the Congress rose and Nehru was reconciled to the dominant strategy of S-T-S.

Summary

- **First Stage Debate on**
  (i) Constructive work on Gandhian lines.
  (ii) Constitutional struggle and participation in elections.
  (iii) Rejection of constructive work and constitutional struggle—continuation of CDM.
- **Government of India Act, 1935**
  Proposed—an All India Federation; bicameral legislature at the centre; provincial autonomy; three lists for legislation—federal, provincial, and concurrent.
  At centre, subjects to be administered divided into reserved and transferred categories.
  Provincial, legislators to be directly elected.
  Early 1937—elections to provincial assemblies held. Congress ministries formed in Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces, United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, and NWFP.
- **Second Stage Debate**
  Nehru, Subhas, Congress, and socialists opposed office acceptance.
  Leftists proposed entry into the councils with an aim to crease deadlocks.
  Gandhi, in the beginning opposed for office acceptance, but later gave his approval.
  Congress sessions at Lucknow (1936) and Faizpur (1937) decided to contest elections.

CHAPTER 21

Congress Rule in Provinces

Congress ministries were formed in Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces, Orissa, United Provinces, Bihar, and later in the NWFP and Assam also.

Gandhi's Advice

Gandhi advised Congressmen to hold these offices lightly and not tightly. The offices were to be seen as 'crowns of thorns' which had been accepted to see if they quickened the pace towards the nationalist goal. Gandhi advised that these offices should be used in a way not expected or intended by the British.

Gandhi urged Congressmen to prove that the Congress could rule with least assistance from the police and the Army.

Work under Congress Ministries

There was great enthusiasm among the people; suppressed mass energy had got released. There was an increase in the prestige of the Congress as it had showed that it could not only lead people but could also use State power for their benefit. But the Congress ministries had some basic limitations: they could not, through their administration, change the basic imperialist character of the system and could not introduce a radical era.

In the 28 months of Congress rule in the provinces, there were some efforts made for people's welfare.

Civil Liberties

The Congress ministries did much to ease curbs on civil liberties:

- Laws giving emergency powers were repealed.
- Ban on illegal organisations, such as the Hindustan Seva Dal and Youth Leagues, and on certain books and journals was lifted.
- Press restrictions were lifted.
- Newspapers were taken out of black lists.
- Confiscated arms and arms licences were restored.
- Police powers were curbed and the CID stopped shadowing politicians.
- Political prisoners and revolutionaries were released, and deportation and internment orders were revoked.
- In Bombay, lands confiscated by the government during the Civil Disobedience Movement were restored.
- Pensions of officials associated with the Civil Disobedience Movement were restored.

But there were certain blemishes in the performance of the Congress ministries regarding civil liberties. Yusuf Maherally, a socialist, was arrested by the Madras government for inflammatory speeches and later released. S.S. Batliwala, a socialist, was arrested by the Madras government for seditious speech and given a six months' sentence. Then, K.M. Munshi, the Bombay home minister, used the CID against communists and leftists.

Agrarian Reforms

There were certain basic constraints due to which the Congress ministries could not undertake a complete overhaul of the agrarian structure by completely abolishing zamindari. These constraints were:

(i) The ministries did not have adequate powers.

(ii) There were inadequate financial resources as a lion's share was appropriated by the Government of India.

(iii) Strategy of class adjustments was another hurdle since zamindars, etc., had to be conciliated and neutralised.

(iv) There was constraint of time since the logic of

Congress politics was confrontation and not cooperation with colonialism.

(v) War clouds had started hovering around 1938.

(vi) The reactionary second chamber (Legislative Council) dominated by landlords, moneylenders, and capitalists in United Provinces, Bihar, Bombay, Madras, and Assam had to be conciliated as its support was necessary for legislations.

(vii) The agrarian structure was too complex.

In spite of these constraints, the Congress ministries managed to legislate a number of laws relating to land reforms, debt relief, forest grazing fee, arrears of rent, land tenures, etc.

But most of these benefits went to statutory and occupancy tenants while sub-tenants did not gain much. Agricultural labourers did not benefit as they had not been mobilised.

Attitude Towards Labour

The basic approach was to advance workers' interests while promoting industrial peace. This was sought to be achieved by reducing strikes as far as possible and by advocating compulsory arbitration prior to striking before the established conciliation machinery. Goodwill was sought to be created between labour and capital with mediation of ministries, while at the same time efforts were made to improve workers' condition and secure wage increases for them.

The ministries treated militant trade union protests as law and order problems, and acted as mediators as far as possible. This approach was largely successful but not so in Bombay. Also, leftist critics were not satisfied by this approach. Generally, the ministries took recourse to Section 144 and arrested the leaders.

Nehru was unhappy about these repressive measures, but in public supported the ministries to protect them from petty and petulant criticism. Although Gandhi was against militant and violent methods, he stood for political education of the masses. He felt that the popular base of the Congress should not erode. He appealed to Congressmen against frequent resort to colonial laws and machinery.

Social Welfare Reforms

These included the following:

- Prohibition imposed in certain areas
- Measures for welfare of Harijans taken—temple entry, use of public facilities, scholarships, an increase in their numbers in government service and police, etc.
- Attention given to primary, technical, and higher education and to public health and sanitation
- Encouragement given to khadi through subsidies and other measures
- Prison reforms undertaken
- Encouragement given to indigenous enterprises
- Efforts taken to develop planning through National Planning Committee set up under Congress president Subhas Chandra Bose in 1938

Extra-Parliamentary Mass Activity of Congress

Such activities included:

- Launching of mass literacy campaigns
- Setting up of Congress police stations and panchayats
- Congress Grievance Committees presenting mass petitions to government
- States peoples' movements

Evaluation

Though by 1939 internal strifes, opportunism, and hunger for power had started surfacing among Congressmen, yet they were able to utilise council work to their advantage to a great extent. The 28-month Congress rule was also significant for the following reasons:

- The contention that Indian self-government was necessary for radical social transformation got confirmed.
- Congressmen demonstrated that a movement could use state power to further its ends without being co-opted.
- The ministries were able to control communal riots.
- The morale of the bureaucracy came down.
- Council work helped neutralise many erstwhile hostile elements (landlords, etc).
- People were able to perceive the shape of things to come if independence was won.

● Administrative work by Indians further weakened the myth that Indians were not fit to rule.

The Congress ministries resigned in October, 1939 after the outbreak of the Second World War.

The huge Congress victory in the elections had aroused the hopes of the industrial working class; there was increased militancy and industrial unrest in Bombay, Gujarat, the United Provinces, and Bengal at a time when the Congress was drawn into a closer friendship with Indian capitalists. This resulted in what appeared to be an anti-labour shift in Congress attitudes that led to the Bombay Traders Disputes Act in 1938. The Congress leadership was also faced with another dilemma: how to react to the situation in the princely states—should the Congress support the Praja Mandal movement for greater democracy or not.

In the meanwhile, the All India Muslim League, annoyed with the Congress for not sharing power with them established the Pirpur Committee in 1938 to prepare a detailed report on the atrocities supposedly committed by the Congress ministries. In its report the committee charged the Congress with interference in the religious rites, suppression of Urdu in favour of Hindi, denial of proper representation and of the oppression of Muslims in the economic sphere.

The Congress was forced to realise that being in power and actually running the administration was not easy, and all sections of populations had such high expectations as could not be fulfilled all at once.

Summary

- **Gandhi's Advice to Office Bearers**
  Offices should be used in a way not expected or intended by the British.
  Hold offices lightly, not tightly.
- **Work Under Congress Ministries**
  Eased curbs on civil liberties
  Restrictions on press lifted
  Political prisoners and revolutionaries released
  Lifted ban from several illegal organisations, books, and journals
  Restoration of pensions of officials associated with the CDM

UNIT 8

Towards Freedom and Partition (1939–1947)

Chapters 22 to 25

CHAPTER 22

Nationalist Response in the Wake of World War II

Congress Crisis on Method of Struggle

In the aftermath of the civil disobedience movement, there was some disarray within the Congress. In Gandhi's perception there was rising corruption and indiscipline in the organisation. He was also unhappy with the rivalries and petty squabbles among the Congress leaders. There were issues of bogus membership and unethical means employed in trying to getting into the Congress committees and controlling them. Gandhi firmly believed that the Congress should first put its house in order before the movement could again be launched;

besides, he also felt the masses were not in the mood for a struggle. There were others who felt that the struggle should continue.

Haripura and Tripuri Sessions: Subhash Bose's Views

Subhas Chandra Bose was president of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. His main area of work lay in the organisation of the youth and promoting the trade union movement. Bose did not agree with Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress on many aspects of the struggle for freedom. He, along with Jawaharlal Nehru, opposed the Motilal Nehru Report which spoke for dominion status for India. Bose was all for full independence; he also announced the formation of the Independence League. When the Lahore Congress session under Jawaharlal Nehru's presidency adopted a resolution that the Congress goal would be 'Poorna Swaraj', Bose fully endorsed the decision. He was again fully active in the Salt Satyagraha Movement in 1930, forcing the government to arrest him. He was vehemently against the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement and the signing of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in 1931, especially as the government refused to negotiate on the death sentence for Bhagat Singh and his associates. From all this we get a clear idea that Bose was a man of action and radical ideas.

Haripura

At the Congress meeting in Haripura, Gujarat, in February 1938, Bose was unanimously elected president of the session. He was firm in his belief that the Congress ministries in the provinces had immense revolutionary potential, as he said in his presidential address. Bose also talked of economic development of the country through planning and was instrumental in setting up a National Planning Committee later.

The session adopted a resolution that the Congress would give moral support to those who were agitating against the governance in the princely states.

In the following months, the international situation was highly disturbed; there were clear signs that Europe was going to be embroiled in war.

1939: Subhas Bose Wins but Congress Faces Internal Strife

In January 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose decided to stand again for the president's post in the Congress. Gandhi was not happy with Bose's candidature. Bose said he represented the "new ideas, ideologies, problems, and programmes" that had come out of the "the progressive sharpening of the anti-imperialist struggle in India". However, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, J.B. Kripalani, and some other members of the Congress Working Committee pointed out that it was in the various Congress bodies, such as the working committee, that ideologies and programmes were developed; moreover, the position of the Congress president was more of a constitutional one, representative and symbolic of the unity of the nation. They favoured the candidate supported by Gandhi, namely, Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Bose won the election by 1580 votes against 1377; he got the full support of the Congress Socialist Party and the communists. Gandhi congratulated Bose on his victory but also declared that "Pattabhi's defeat is my defeat". Now it became a Gandhi versus Bose issue.

Tripuri

In March 1939, the Congress session took place at Tripuri, in the Central Provinces (near Jabalpur in present Madhya Pradesh). It was obvious that all was not well within the Congress. The working committee, the ruling body of the Congress, is not elected, but nominated by the president; the election of the president is thus a constitutional opportunity through which the membership expressed the nature of the leadership of the Congress. With Bose's victory, the polarisation in terms of ideology and method of future struggle was clear. Thus, the election of Bose, in the face of the opposition of the official machine, led to a sharp inner crisis.

Subhas Chandra Bose had accused the working committee leaders of being ready to reach a compromise with the government on the matter of federation. Now, those leaders felt they could not work with a president who had publicly cast doubts on their nationalistic principles and resigned from the working committee.

Bose was ill when the Tripuri session took place, but he attended it and in his presidential speech he prophesied that an imperialist war was about to take place in Europe. He declared: "In the first place, we must give clear and unequivocal expression to what I have been feeling for some time past, namely, that the time has come for us to raise the issue of Swaraj and submit our national demand to the British government in the form of an ultimatum..." He was in favour of giving a six-month ultimatum to Britain to grant the national demand of independence; if the ultimatum was rejected, he said, a mass civil disobedience movement should be launched.

In his opinion, as Bose was to write later, the Congress was strong enough just as the masses were ready for such a struggle. He felt that advantage should be taken of the international crisis to strive for independence.

Gandhi, on the other hand, was firm in the belief that it was not the time for such ultimatums as neither the Congress nor the masses were yet ready for struggle. He was also aware that there were communal discord and class strife and a lack of unified vision and that this would undermine any movement.

A resolution was moved by Govind Ballabh Pant, reaffirming faith in Gandhian policies and asking Bose to nominate the working committee "in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji", and it was passed without opposition from the socialists or the communists. Apparently, the Left was not keen on discarding Gandhi's leadership. However, Gandhi said that he would not like to impose a working committee on the president and that, since Bose was the president, he should choose the members of the working committee and lead the Congress.

Bose continued his effort to win Gandhi's confidence but did not succeed. Bose refused to nominate a new working committee. Bose wanted an immediate struggle led by Gandhi, whereas Gandhi was firm in his belief that the time was not ripe for struggle. The problem was that ideologically Gandhi and Bose were on different platforms. Gandhi was not willing to lead a Congress struggle based on the radical lines preferred by Bose, even as Bose was not willing to

compromise on his ideas. Gandhi was of the view that he would either lead the Congress on the basis of his own strategy and style of politics or surrender the position of the leader. In his reply to a letter from Bose, Gandhi wrote: "The views you express seem to be so diametrically opposed to those of the others and my own that I do not see any possibility of bridging them."

Bose had misjudged the support he had got in his election. Even the socialists and the communists for the most part were not keen on a split in the Congress. They realised that a split would reduce the Left (which was not very consolidated at the time) to a splinter group. They preferred a united Congress led by Gandhi, as the national struggle was of utmost importance and the Congress was at the time the main organ of this struggle.

In the circumstances, Bose saw no option but to resign. He resigned from the president's post in April 1939. This led to the election of Rajendra Prasad as president of the Congress. The crisis in the Congress had been overcome for the present.

In May, Bose and his followers formed the Forward Bloc (at Makur, Unnao) as a new party within the Congress. But when he gave a call for an all-India protest on July 9 against an AICC resolution, the Congress Working Committee took disciplinary action against Bose: in August 1939, he was removed from the post of president of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee besides being debarred from holding any elective office in the Congress for a period of three years.

Among the resolutions at Tripuri was an interesting one relating to China: "The Congress sends its greetings to the people of China and its deepest sympathy in their trials and privations in their struggle against ruthless and inhuman imperialism. It congratulates them on their heroic resistance.

"The Congress expresses its approval of the sending of a Medical Mission on its behalf to the people of China and trusts that this Mission will continue to receive full support, so that it may carry on its work of succour effectively and be a worthy symbol of Indian solidarity with China."

Gandhi and Bose: Ideological Differences

Gandhi and Bose had a deep respect for one another despite their hugely differing ideologies. Each appreciated the work done by the other in the national struggle for freedom.

In 1942, Gandhi called Bose the "Prince among the Patriots". When the death of Bose was reported, Gandhi said that Netaji's "patriotism is second to none... His bravery shines through all his actions. He aimed high and failed. But who has not failed." On another occasion Gandhi said, "Netaji will remain immortal for all time to come for his service to India."

Bose was fully aware of Gandhi's importance as a symbol of Indian nationalism and called him "The Father of Our Nation" in a radio broadcast from Rangoon in 1944 even though in the same speech he expressed his own conviction that force was the only way to win freedom from the British. When forced to resign at the Tripuri session, Bose said he would "yield to none in my respect for his (Gandhi's) personality", adding that "it will be a tragic thing for me if I succeed in winning the confidence of other people but fail to win the confidence of India's greatest man." Later, Bose said that the "service which Mahatma Gandhi has rendered to India and to the cause of India's freedom is so unique and unparalleled that his name will be written in letters of gold in our National History—for all time".

Incidentally, both men considered socialism to be the way forward in India, though in slightly different ways. Gandhi did not subscribe to the Western form of socialism which he associated with industrialisation, but agreed with the kind of socialism advocated by Jayaprakash Narayan. Both Gandhi and Bose were religious men and disliked communism. Both worked against untouchability and spoke for women's emancipation. But they differed widely in their ways and methods and in their political and economic ideologies.

Non-Violence versus Militant Approach

Gandhi was a firm believer in ahimsa and satyagraha, the non-violent way to gain any goal. He believed that it was the way

in which the masses could be involved. He objected to violence firstly because an unarmed masses had little chance of success in an armed rebellion, and then because he considered violence a clumsy weapon which created more problems than it solved, and left behind hatred and bitterness which could not be overcome through reconciliation.

Bose believed that Gandhi's strategy based on the ideology of non-violence would be inadequate for securing India's independence. To his mind, violent resistance alone could oust the alien imperialist rule from India. He considered the Gandhian civil disobedience campaign as an effective means of paralysing the administration, but did not think it to be efficacious unless accompanied by a movement aimed at total revolution that was prepared, if necessary, to use violence.

Means and Ends

Bose had his eye on the result of the action. When war clouds hung over Europe, he saw the situation as an opportunity to take advantage of the British weakness. He believed in seizing whatever opportunity was available to carry forward the struggle for freedom. He openly criticised the British for professing to fight for the freedom of the European nations under Nazi control but refusing to grant independence to its own colonies, including India. He had no compunction in taking the help of the Nazis or the Fascists and later of Imperial Japan—the 'Axis powers' as they came to be called when the war broke out—even though he believed in freedom and equality and other liberal ideals and disapproved of the arrogant racialism of the Nazis and the suppression of democratic institutions in Nazi Germany (as his writings show). However, he admired the Nazis and the Fascists for their discipline. Bose's supporters point out that his association with Germany and Japan was dictated by revolutionary strategy and not by ideological kinship. In other words, he was just a pragmatist; he was against the Fascist theory of racial superiority and the Fascist acceptance of capitalism.

Gandhi felt that the non-violent way of protest that he propagated could not be practised unless the means and ends

were equally good. One could not just use any means to achieve an end however desirable that end may be. It would be against the truth that should guide one in all actions. Besides, he had a deep dislike for the ideas of the Fascists and the Nazis and would not think of using them to ally against the British, especially when the latter were in a difficult situation. He saw Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan not just as aggressors but as dangerous powers. Gandhi himself said: "The difference of outlook between him (Bose) and me as to the means is too well known for comment."

Bose acknowledged that Gandhi's methods had their importance when he said in his speech from Tokyo: "Though personally I believe that this method will not succeed in bringing us complete independence, there is no doubt that it has greatly helped to rouse and unify the Indian people and also to keep up a movement of resistance against the foreign government."

Form of Government

In his early writings, Bose expressed the opinion that democracy was the acceptable political system for India. But later, he seemed to have veered towards the idea that, at least in the beginning, a democratic system would not be adequate for the process of nation rebuilding and the eradication of poverty and social inequality. In an address to students in Tokyo University in 1944, Bose is quoted as saying: "You cannot have a so-called democratic system, if that system has to put through economic reforms on a socialistic basis. Therefore we must have a political system—a State—of an authoritarian character...."

[When Bose proclaimed, on October 21, 1943, the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India), he held on to his post as Supreme Commander of the Indian National Army, and also named himself head of state, prime minister, and minister for war and foreign affairs. He anticipated retaining the position of head of state in a free India. This, say some scholars, indicated the authoritative streak in Bose.]

As early as 1930, Bose expressed the opinion that in India there should be "a synthesis of what modern Europe

calls Socialism and Fascism. We have here the justice, the equality, the love, which is the basis of Socialism, and combined with that we have the efficiency and the discipline of Fascism as it stands in Europe today." He called this '*samyavada*'. Bose admired discipline and orderly approach to anything. He admired these qualities in the Fascists of Italy and in the Nazis of Germany. Indeed, it is clear from his letters that, despite his dislike of colonial power and his desire to oust the alien British rule from India, he was impressed by the methodical and systematic approach of the British and their disciplined way of life.

Bose, however, was not a Nazi or a Fascist, for he supported empowerment of women, secularism, and other liberal ideas. Neither was Bose a communist: he considered himself "a socialist, but that was a very different thing from being a communist". He laughed at the idea of internationalism as espoused by the communists; he said nationalism was important before going on to internationalism. He also felt that the theoretical ideals found in Marx's writings could not be applied in India without a lot of modification. Nor did he discard religion which was important to him. Bose was a leftist in the sense that he was an anti-imperialist and believed in attaining complete independence. After the achievement of independence, Bose considered leftism would mean socialism; the reconstruction of national life would have to be on a socialist basis. Indeed, it would appear from many of his writings that, after an initial stage of authoritarian rule, there could be formed "a new India and a happy India on the basis of the eternal principles of liberty, democracy and socialism".

Gandhi's ideas on government can be found in the *Hind Swaraj* (1909); it was "the nearest he came to producing a sustained work of political theory". Gandhi's idealised state, his *Ramrajya*—a utopia, in fact—did not need a representative government, a constitution, an army or a police force. Capitalism, communism, exploitation, and religious violence would be absent. Instead, the country was to be modelled on the India of the past. In many ways, Gandhi's writings call for a pre-modern, morally enlightened, and apolitical Indian state. Swaraj lays stress on self-governance through individuals

and community building. "At the individual level Swaraj is vitally connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment, ceaseless self-purification and growing self-reliance."

Gandhi said: "I look upon an increase in the power of the state with greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which is at the root of progress." He was sceptical of the party system and sure that representative democracy could not provide people with justice. He advocated a stateless society in which life becomes perfect.

Gandhi was opposed to centralisation. He believed in decentralisation of political as well as economic power, and this could come about only by beginning from the basic unit. In his vision of swaraj, society would be composed of "innumerable… ever-widening, never-ascending" village republics. The basic unit would be the village whose people will always abide by the ideals of truth and non-violence. Every village would be a self-sufficient republic or panchayat. (Self-sufficiency did not mean that in times of need help could not be taken from other villages.) The panchayat, the unit of local self-government, will consist of five persons—male and female—elected annually. It would represent the village community and be the custodian of all authority. Moreover, it would be an autonomous political institution in the context of village administration.

Significantly, Gandhi said: "In the ideal State. . . there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realised in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that the government is best which governs the least—is worthy of consideration." As Judith Brown writes, Gandhi "seems to have visualised a loose linkage of independent village republics as the ideal form of the State… he can therefore properly be called an anarchist." In Gandhi's view, democracy would not be possible without high morality. It is morality that develops a sense of responsibility in human beings, and the strength of this sense of responsibility would help them to respect and protect the rights of each other. Gandhi laid more emphasis on duties than on rights.

Militarism

Subhas Bose was deeply attracted to military discipline and was thankful for the basic training he received in the University Unit of the India Defence Force. He volunteered to form a guard of honour during the ceremonial functions at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1930. And it was done on a massive and grand scale. Bose, in full dress uniform, reviewed his 'troops'. Gandhi and most of his supporters were uneasy with this display.

Gandhi was against the military on the whole. His *Ramrajya*, being built on the concept of truth and non-violence and self-regulation, would be a perfect place and would not require either police or grandiose armies. All effort must be made to arrive at peace rather than go to war. "War", said Gandhi, "demoralises those who are trained for it. It brutalises men of naturally gentle nature." The main causes of war, according to Gandhi, were racialism, imperialism, and fascism (in the context of the Second World War). He also listed economic inequality and exploitation as additional causes of war and instability in the international system. If these were eradicated, there need not be any war. He was not against defensive war: if the innocent were attacked, there was no option but to defend oneself. So, of course, the military was required for self-defence, but it was to be on a minimal scale.

Ideas on Economy

Gandhi's concept of Swaraj had its own brand of economic vision. He wanted a decentralised economy without state control. Gandhi dismissed both capitalism and Western socialism—the former for its exploitative excesses and the latter for its connection to industrialisation**.** Both, he believed, led human beings to crave for luxury and self-indulgence. Gandhi wanted people to get rid of greed and make do with just the bare necessities of life. He developed the idea of village *Sarvodaya*. He advocated a "back to the roots" vision when production was "simultaneous with consumption and distribution and the vicious circle of money economy was absent. Production was for immediate use and not for distant markets". What he wanted was the revival of ancient village

communities in which agriculture prospered and industry was a decentralised business through small-scale cooperative organisations. He also wanted the participation of people at all levels. In a letter he wrote to Henry Polak in 1909, Gandhi expressed the view that India's salvation lay in unlearning what had been learnt; he wanted the railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and other modern trappings to be discarded, and the so-called upper classes to learn to live the simple life of the peasant.

He was against large-scale industrialisation. He had strong objections to labour-saving machinery. "Men go on saving labour, till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation." He was not against instruments and machinery that saved individual labour. He wrote that "mechanisation is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India".

The capitalist who amassed wealth was a thief, according to Gandhi. In his opinion, if a person had inherited wealth or had made a lot of money through trade and industry, the amount was to be shared with the entire society and must be spent on the welfare of all. He put forward his theory of trusteeship under which he wanted the capitalists to be trustees, and as such would take care of not only themselves but also of others. The workers would consider the capitalists as their benefactors and would keep faith in them. So, there would be mutual trust and confidence, and, as a consequence, the ideal of economic equality could be achieved.

Bose considered economic freedom to be the essence of social and political freedom. He was all in favour of modernisation, which was necessarily to be brought about by industrialisation. He believed that India's downfall in the political and material sphere had been brought about by the people's inordinate belief in fate and the supernatural accompanied by an indifference to modern scientific developments, especially in the field of war weapons. He felt that backward agriculture had to be modernised. The labour that was ousted from the agricultural sector as a result of such modernisation could be helped only with the development

of industry, which could absorb the surplus labour from agriculture.

In his speech at the Haripura Congress session, Bose expressed his opinion that, for India to progress, a comprehensive scheme of industrial development under state-ownership and state-control would be indispensable. And he spoke about the need to set up a planning commission to advise the national government. He also spoke about abolition of landlordism and liquidation of agricultural indebtedness. He was much impressed by the success attained by the Soviet Union in economic development through rapid industrialisation within a short period of time.

Bose had his reasons for demanding industrialisation for India. It would solve the problem of unemployment. Socialism, he said, was to be the basis of national reconstruction and socialism presupposed industrialisation. Moreover, industrialisation was necessary if India were to compete with foreign countries. Industrialisation was also necessary for improving the standard of living of the people at large. Bose classified industry into three categories: heavy, medium, and cottage. Heavy industries, he said, form the backbone of the national economy. But he was fully aware of the great importance of cottage industries. "Industrialisation does not ... mean that we turn our back on cottage industries. . . . It only means that we shall have to decide which industries should be developed on a cottage basis and which on a large-scale basis."

Religion

Gandhi said "God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these, God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live."

Gandhi was primarily a man of religion. He had a steadfast view on religion, and his religion was the basis of all his other ideas. Truth and non-violence were the two principles that helped Gandhi in evolving a comprehensive view of religion that went beyond narrow sectarianism. For Gandhi there is no higher way of worshipping God than serving the poor and identifying God in them.

He considered different religions to be merely the different paths towards the same destination. Gandhi, out of his own experiences and readings, came to the conclusion that all religions are based on the same principles, namely, truth and love. He claimed that religion is a binding force and not a dividing force. He said that each person should follow his or her own religion freely. He would not conceive of a state without religion, for the basic tenets of his religion were at the base of his idea of state too.

Subhas Bose believed in Upanishadic teachings. He revered the Bhagavad Gita and was inspired by Vivekananda. He was also inspired by the India of the past as reinterpreted by thinkers. According to many scholars, Hindu spirituality formed the essential part of his political and social thought throughout his adult life. However, he was free of bigotry or orthodoxy. He was for total non-discrimination on the basis of religion and in context he took up the Hindus' cause when he demanded that Hindu prisoners be given the right to do Durga Puja just as Muslims and Christians were allowed to celebrate their festivals. Bose motivated Indians towards freedom struggle through Hindu symbolisms as appropriate for the audience. On December 9, 1930, he called upon the women to participate in the liberation struggle, invoking the imagery of Durga, a form of Shakti, ready to vanquish evil. However, he was not a sectarian. He named his force Azad Hind Fauz, and there were many non-Hindus in that army and who were close to him. The INA was to be a mixture of various religions, races, and castes with total social equality of all soldiers. They were served food cooked in the common kitchen and shared space in common barracks breaking the age old caste bonds and practices. Common celebrations of all religious festivals took place in the INA.

Bose was a secularist with an impartial attitude to all religions. He said that Free India must have an absolutely neutral and impartial attitude towards all religions and leave it to the choice of individuals to profess or follow a particular religion of his faith. Religion is a private matter; the State has nothing to do with it. He opined that economic issues cut across communal divisions and barriers.

Caste and Untouchability

Gandhi's goals for society were mainly three: eradicating untouchability, maintaining the varna distinctions of the caste system, and strengthening tolerance, modesty, and religiosity in India.

Gandhi believed that one way of reinvigorating India was to wipe out untouchability, which he considered to be a pernicious practice preventing millions of peasants from realising their dreams and aspirations. It was incompatible with Swaraj. He said that if any Shastra propounded untouchability that Shastra should be abandoned. He, however, supported the varna system; he believed that the laws of caste were eternal, and were the base for social harmony. In the India that Gandhi visualised, each village would be organised around the four-fold divisions, with every member of society doing his or her own duty. As there would be a complete system of reciprocity, according to Gandhi, no one would be subject to feelings of differences in status.

Bose looked forward to an India changed by a socialist revolution that would bring to an end the traditional social hierarchy with its caste system; in its place would come an egalitarian, casteless, and classless society. Subhas Bose completely rejected social inequality and the caste system. He spoke in favour of inter-caste marriages. In his public speeches, Bose spoke vehemently against untouchability. He was inspired by Vivekananda in his belief that the progress of India would be possible only with uplift of the downtrodden and the so-called untouchables.

Women

In Gandhi's words, "To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to women." Gandhi played an important role in uplifting the status of women in India.

Gandhi was instrumental in bringing women out of their homes to take part in the struggle for freedom. It was, as scholars point out, the most radical of his ideas. It involved bringing women out of the purdah—a system that was prevalent among Hindus as well as Muslims of the time. It involved the possibility of being jailed and thus being separated from their families. These were steps that were revolutionary for those times.

Apart from bringing women into the struggle for swaraj, he vehemently opposed various social ills affecting women like child marriage, the dowry system and female infanticide, and the treatment of widows.

He considered men and women to be equal and declared that men should treat women with respect and consideration. However, in the matter of the roles of men and women, Gandhi would be regarded as patriarchal and traditional by present standards. He wrote in 1937: "I do believe that woman will not make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with man. She can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man. She has to be the complement of man." Again, in 1940, he wrote: "Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence, the vocations of the two must also be different. Her duty of motherhood….requires qualities which man need not possess. She is passive, he is active. She is essentially mistress of the house. He is the bread winner, she is the keeper and the distributor of the bread. She is the caretaker in every sense of the term. The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care, the race must become extinct."

Gandhi considered women to be the presiding deities of the home. It was their *dharma* to take care of the home. "If they do not follow *dharma*, the people would be totally destroyed," said Gandhi. However, Gandhi also said that *dharma* did not imply brutish behaviour from men treating women as chattel. Women should not tolerate ill-treatment from their husbands. But he did not ask women to walk out of their homes and launch agitations, personal or public, against their plight or a satyagraha within their exploitative domestic environments. He did say in 1940 that domestic slavery of woman is a symbol of our barbarism, and she should be "freed from this incubus". He also wrote: "Women may not look for protection to men. They must rely on their own strength and purity of character and on God, as did Draupadi of old."

Clearly, his ideal woman, as Judith Brown observes, was

not the 'modern woman', free of the restraints imposed on her physically, socially, and economically by virtue of her being born female. He drew his symbol of his ideal woman from the figure of Sita who bore patiently and bravely all the injustices heaped on her by Rama. "Gandhi preached female virtues of bravery and independence, and a capacity to bear suffering; the model he offered to Indian women was the virtuous and faithful wife," says Judith Brown.

Subhas Bose had a more robust view of women. Differing from the German National Socialists (Nazis) and the Italian Fascists, who stressed the masculine in almost all spheres of social and political activity, Bose considered women to be the equals of men, and thus they should be prepared to fight and sacrifice for the freedom of India. He arduously campaigned to bring women more fully into the life of the nation. In his presidential address at the Maharashtra Provincial Conference in May 1928, he declared: "The status of women should be raised and women should be trained to take a larger and more intelligent interest in public affairs… it is impossible for one half of the nation to win freedom without the active sympathy and support of the other half."

When, as Congress President in 1938, Bose set up the Planning Commission, he insisted that there should be a separate planning commission for women. This commission was chaired by Rani Lakshmi Bhai Rajawade and was to deal with the role of women in planned economy in future India.

Later, in 1943, he called on women to serve as soldiers in the Indian National Army. This was a most radical view. He formed a women's regiment in the INA in 1943, named the Rani of Jhansi Regiment. Many women were enthused to join the regiment commanded by Captain Lakshmi Swaminathan (Sahgal after marriage). While those less suited to combat duties were employed as nurses and in other support roles, the majority were trained as soldiers. They were given the same treatment as the men and received no special privileges.

In Bose's view, women should be given a high position in the family as well as in society. He believed in female emancipation, in liberating women from age-old bondage to customs and man-made disabilities—social, economic, and

political. He wanted women to get all-round education including not only literacy, but physical and vocational training. He was all for abolition of purdah and also supported widow remarriage. Women, he said, should also be made conscious of their social and legal rights as well as their duties as citizens.

Education

Gandhi was against the English system of education as also against the use of English as a medium of instruction. He wanted education to be in the vernacular. He advocated free and compulsory education for all boys and girls between 7 and 14 years.

In Gandhi's view, education should be an integrated approach to the full development of the personality; it should include physical training and high moral principles along with intellectual and cognitive development. He differentiated between learning and education, knowledge and wisdom, literacy and lessons of life. According to him, "Literacy in itself is no education."

To Gandhi, morality had to be a part of education. Taking a leaf from Plato, Gandhi said that education should be a means of attaining knowledge and wisdom that ultimately place the seeker on the spiritual path. The end of education was not merely a means to make a career and achieve social status. Education should be a means to enlightenment. Gandhi also wanted the Hindu scriptures to be a part of education as they propounded discipline and self-restraint.

He conceived his Nai Talim or basic education for all in 1937. Nai Talim aimed to impart education that would lead to freedom from ignorance, illiteracy, superstition, psyche of servitude, and many more taboos that inhibited free thinking of a free India. This scheme of education was to emphasise on holistic training of mind and body, so along with academics, there was to be purposeful manual labour. Handicrafts, art, and drawing were the most fundamental teaching tools in Nai Talim. As Gandhi wanted to make Indian villages self-sufficient units, he emphasised on vocational education which increases the efficiency of students in undertaking tasks in those villages and make the village a self-sufficient unit.

Subhas Bose was for higher education, especially in the technical and scientific fields, as he wanted an industrial India. He said, "National Reconstruction will be possible only with the aid of science and our scientists." He wanted Indian students to be sent abroad for "training in accordance with a clear and definite plan so that as soon as they returned home, they may proceed straight away to build up new industries".

Second World War and Nationalistic Response

On September 1, 1939, Germany attacked Poland—the action that led to the Second World War. On September 3, 1939, Britain declared war against Germany and the British Government of India declared India's support for the war without consulting Indian opinion.

Congress Offer to Viceroy

Though the Congress did not like the unilateral action of the British of drawing India into the war without consulting the Indians, it decided to support the war effort conditionally. The hostility of the Congress to Fascism, Nazism, militarism, and imperialism had been much more consistent than the British record. The Indian offer to cooperate in the war effort had two basic conditions:

1. After the war, a constituent assembly should be convened to determine political structure of a free India.
2. Immediately, some form of a genuinely responsible government should be established at the Centre.

The offer was rejected by Linlithgow, the viceroy. The Congress argued that these conditions were necessary to win public opinion for war.

CWC Meeting at Wardha

The official Congress position was adopted at the Wardha session of the Congress Working Committee, but before that different opinions were voiced on the question of Indian support to British war efforts.

Gandhi, who had all sympathy for Britain in this war

because of his total dislike of the fascist ideology, advocated an unconditional support to the Allied powers. He made a clear distinction between the democratic nations of western Europe and the totalitarian Nazis and fascists. He said that he was not willing to embarrass the British government during the war.

Subhas Bose and other socialists, such as Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan, who had been invited by the Congress to attend the Wardha meeting so that different opinions could be discussed, had no sympathy for either side in the war. In their opinion, the war was being fought by imperialists on both sides; each side wanted to protect its colonial possessions and gain more territories to colonise, so neither side should be supported by the nationalists. In fact, they thought it was the ideal time to launch a civil disobedience movement, to thus take advantage of the situation and snatch freedom from Britain.

Jawaharlal Nehru was not ready to accept the opinion of either Gandhi or of the socialists. He was clear in his mind about the difference between democratic values and fascism.

He believed that justice was on the side of Britain, France, and Poland, but he also believed that Britain and France were imperialist powers, and that "the war was the result of the inner contradictions of capitalism maturing since the end of World War I". He, therefore, advocated no Indian participation till India itself was free. However, at the same time, no advantage was to be taken of Britain's difficulty by starting an immediate civil disobedience movement.

Gandhi was more or less isolated in his stand. In the end, he decided to go with Nehru's position, which was adopted by the Congress Working Committee.

The CWC resolution condemned Fascist aggression. It said that (i) India could not be party to a war being fought, on the face of it, for democratic freedom, while that freedom was being denied to India; (ii) if Britain was fighting for democracy and freedom, it should be proved by ending imperialism in its colonies and establishing full democracy in India; (iii) the government should declare its war aims soon

and, also, as to how the principles of democracy were to be applied to India after the war.

The Congress leadership wanted "to give every chance to the viceroy and the British Government".

Government Attitude and Congress Ministries' Resignation

The government's response was entirely negative. Viceroy Linlithgow, in his statement, made on October 17, 1939, tried to use the Muslim League and the princes against the Congress. The government:

- refused to define British war aims beyond stating that Britain was resisting aggression;
- said it would, as part of future arrangement, consult "representatives of several communities, parties and interests in India, and the Indian princes" as to how the Act of 1935 might be modified;
- said it would immediately set up a "consultative committee" whose advice could be sought whenever required.

Government's Hidden Agenda

Linlithgow's statement was not an aberration, but a part of general British policy—"to take advantage of the war to regain the lost ground from the Congress" by provoking the Congress into a confrontation with the government and then using the extraordinary situation to acquire draconian powers. Even before the declaration of the War, emergency powers had been acquired for the Centre in respect of provincial subjects by amending the 1935 Act. Defence of India ordinance had been enforced the day the War was declared, thus restricting civil liberties. In May 1940, a top secret Draft Revolutionary Movement Ordinance had been prepared, aimed at launching crippling pre-emptive strikes on the Congress. The government could then call upon the Allied troops stationed in India. It could also win an unusual amount of liberal and leftist sympathy all over the world by painting an aggressive Congress as being pro-Japan and pro-Germany.

British Indian reactionary policies received full support from the Prime Minister of Britain, Winston Churchill, and the Secretary of State, Zetland, who branded the Congress as a purely Hindu organisation.

It became clear that the British government had no intention of loosening its hold, during or after the war, and was willing to treat the Congress as an enemy.

Gandhi reacted sharply to the government's insensitivity to Indian public opinion—"... there is to be no democracy for India if Britain can prevent it." Referring to the minorities and other special interests, Gandhi said, "Congress will safeguard minority rights provided they do not advance claims inconsistent with India's independence."

Congress Ministries Decide to Resign

On October 23, 1939, the CWC meeting:

- rejected the viceregal statement as a reiteration of the old imperialist policy;
- decided not to support the war; and
- called upon the Congress ministries to resign in the provinces.

Debate on the Question of Immediate Mass Satyagraha

After Linlithgow's statement of October 1939, the debate on the question of immediate mass struggle began once again. Gandhi and his supporters were not in favour of an immediate struggle because they felt that the:

- allied cause was just;
- communal sensitiveness and lack of Hindu-Muslim unity could result in communal riots;
- Congress organisation was in shambles and the atmosphere was not conducive for a mass struggle; and
- masses were not ready for a struggle.

They instead advocated toning up the Congress organisation, carrying on political work among the masses, and negotiating till all possibilities of a negotiated settlement were exhausted. Only then would the struggle be begun.

In January 1940, Linlithgow stated, "Dominion status of Westminster variety, after the war, is the goal of British policy in India."

In its meeting in Allahabad in November 1939, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution observing that "the course of the war and the policy pursued by the British and the French governments and in particular the declarations made on behalf of the British government in regard to India, seem to demonstrate that the present war, like the World War of 1914–18, is being carried on for imperialist ends, and the British imperialism is to remain entrenched in India. With such a war and with this policy the Congress cannot associate itself, and it cannot countenance the exploitation of India's resources to this end". It was reiterated that India's independence and of the right of Indians to frame their constitution through a constituent assembly should be recognised and that it was only through such a constituent assembly that communal and other problems could be tackled.

The **Ramgarh session** of the Congress was held in March 1940 with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the president's chair. All agreed that a battle must be waged but there was disagreement over the form. It was decided to leave the form and timing to Gandhi. But even now, Gandhi was in favour of continued cooperation at the provincial level. He said that he would offer the British moral support during the war but on a non-violent basis. However, Jawaharlal Nehru reiterated that complete independence for India must be a precondition for Congress support to the British war effort. Subhas Bose continued with his strong militant stand of direct action against the colonial government forcing it to agree to the grant of freedom. Once again he pointed out that Britain's difficulty was to be seized as India's opportunity.

The Congress finally declared at the session that the people of India would accept nothing short of complete independence. Indian freedom could not be in the form of dominion or any other status within the imperial structure. Sovereignty, said the Congress resolution, must rest with the people, whether in the States (the princely states) or the provinces. It was also decided that "Congress would resort to civil disobedience as soon as the Congress organisation is considered fit enough or if circumstances precipitate a crisis".

Pakistan Resolution—Lahore (March 1940)
The Muslim League passed a resolution calling for "grouping of geographically contiguous areas where Muslims are in majority (North-West, East) into independent states in which constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign and adequate safeguards to Muslims where they are in minority".

August Offer

Hitler's astounding success and the fall of Belgium, Holland, and France put England in a conciliatory mood. As the war in Europe had undertaken a new turn, the dominant Congress leadership was again in a dilemma. Both Gandhi and Nehru strongly opposed the idea of taking advantage of Britain's position.

The Congress was ready to compromise, asking the British government to let it form an interim government during the war period but the government was not interested.

The government came up with its own offer to get the cooperation of India in the war effort. Linlithgow announced the August Offer (August 1940) which proposed:

- dominion status as the objective for India;
- expansion of viceroy's executive council which would have a majority of Indians (who would be drawn from major political parties);
- setting up of a constituent assembly after the war where mainly Indians would decide the constitution according to their social, economic, and political conceptions, subject to fulfilment of the obligation of the government regarding defence, minority rights, treaties with States, all India services; and
- no future constitution to be adopted without the consent of minorities.

Responses

The Congress rejected the August Offer. Nehru said, "Dominion status concept is dead as a doornail." Gandhi said that the declaration had widened the gulf between the nationalists and the British rulers.

The Muslim League welcomed the veto assurance given to the League, and reiterated its position that partition was the only solution to the deadlock.

Evaluation

For the first time, the inherent right of Indians to frame their constitution was recognised and the Congress demand for a constituent assembly was conceded. Dominion status was explicitly offered.

In July 1941, the viceroy's executive council was enlarged to give the Indians a majority of 8 out of 12 for the first time, but the British remained in charge of defence, finance, and home. Also, a National Defence Council was set up with purely advisory functions.

Individual Satyagraha

The government had taken the adamant position that no constitutional advance could be made till the Congress came to an agreement with the Muslim leaders. It issued ordinance after ordinance taking away the freedom of speech and that of the press and the right to organise associations.

Towards the end of 1940, the Congress once again asked Gandhi to take command. Gandhi now began taking steps which would lead to a mass struggle within his broad strategic perspective. He decided to initiate a limited satyagraha on an individual basis by a few selected individuals in every locality.

The aims of launching individual satyagraha were: (i) to show that nationalist patience was not due to weakness; (ii) to express people's feeling that they were not interested in the war and that they made no distinction between Nazism and the double autocracy that ruled India; and (iii) to give another opportunity to the government to accept Congress' demands peacefully.

The demand of the satyagrahi would be the freedom of speech against the war through an anti-war declaration. If the government did not arrest the satyagrahi, he or she would

June 1941: Germany attacks Russia and Russia is dragged into the War.
December 1941: Japan attacks Pearl Harbour.
March 1942: After having overrun almost the whole of South-East Asia, Japan occupies Rangoon.

not only repeat it but move into villages and start a march towards Delhi, thus precipitating a movement which came to be known as the 'Delhi Chalo Movement'.

Vinoba Bhave was the first to offer the satyagraha and Nehru, the second. By May 1941, 25,000 people had been convicted for individual civil disobedience.

Gandhi Designates Nehru as his Successor

The Congress leaders, released in December 1941, in the midst of Japan's aggressive actions, were anxious to defend Indian territory and go to the aid of the Allies. The CWC overrode Gandhi's and Nehru's objections and passed a resolution offering to cooperate with the government in the defence of India, if:

(i) full independence was given after the war, and

(ii) substance of power was transferred immediately.

It was at this time that Gandhi designated Nehru as his chosen successor.

Nehru and Gandhi differed in temperament and attitudes towards modernity, religion, God, State, and industrialisation. Nehru was indifferent to religion, Gandhi believed deeply in his own version of God; Nehru believed that industrialisation was the only solution to the acute and widespread poverty of India, while Gandhi called for the reviving of the rural economy. Nehru believed in the powers of the modern State to elevate and reform society, while Gandhi was sceptical of State power, trusting instead to the conscience and willingness of individuals and communities. Despite having so many differences, Nehru revered Gandhi, and Gandhi, in turn, believed in Nehru more than his own sons. Both teacher and disciple had fundamental similarities—patriotism in an inclusive sense, i.e., they identified with India as a whole rather than with a particular caste, language, region, or religion. Both believed in non-violence and democratic form of government.

Rajmohan Gandhi, in his book, *The Good Boatman,* writes that Gandhi preferred Nehru to the alternatives because

he most reliably reflected the pluralist, inclusive idea of India that the Mahatma himself stood for. The alternatives—Patel, Rajaji, Azad, Kripalani, Rajendra Prasad—had somewhat sectional interests and affiliations. But Nehru was a Hindu who could be trusted by Muslims, a north-Indian who was respected in south India, and a man who was admired by women. Like Gandhi, Nehru was genuinely an all-India leader, who gave Indians hope—that they could build a more prosperous and peaceful society.

Cripps Mission

In March 1942, a mission headed by Stafford Cripps was sent to India with constitutional proposals to seek Indian support for the war. Stafford Cripps was a left-wing Labourite, the leader of the House of Commons, and a member of the British War Cabinet who had actively supported the Indian national movement.

Why Cripps Mission Was Sent

- Because of the reverses suffered by Britain in South-East Asia, the Japanese threat to invade India seemed real now and Indian support became crucial.
- There was pressure on Britain from the Allies (USA, USSR, China) to seek Indian cooperation.
- Indian nationalists had agreed to support the Allied cause if substantial power was transferred immediately and complete independence given after the war.

Main Proposals

The main proposals of the mission were as follows:

1. An Indian Union with a dominion status would be set up; it would be free to decide its relations with the Commonwealth and free to participate in the United Nations and other international bodies.
2. After the end of the war, a constituent assembly would be convened to frame a new constitution. Members of this assembly would be partly elected by the provincial assemblies through proportional representation and partly nominated by the princes.
3. The British government would accept the new

constitution subject to two conditions: (i) any province not willing to join the Union could have a separate constitution and form a separate Union, and (ii) the new constitution-making body and the British government would negotiate a treaty to effect the transfer of power and to safeguard racial and religious minorities.

4. In the meantime, defence of India would remain in British hands and the governor general's powers would remain intact.

Departures from the Past and Implications

The proposals differed from those offered in the past in many respects:

- The making of the constitution was to be solely in Indian hands now (and not 'mainly' in Indian hands—as contained in the August Offer).
- A concrete plan was provided for the constituent assembly.
- Option was available to any province to have a separate constitution—a blueprint for India's partition.
- Free India could withdraw from the Commonwealth.
- Indians were allowed a large share in the administration in the interim period.

Why Cripps Mission Failed

The Cripps Mission proposals failed to satisfy Indian nationalists and turned out to be merely a propaganda device for the consumption of the US and the Chinese. Various parties and groups had objections to the proposals on different points:

The Congress objected to:

(i) the offer of dominion status instead of a provision for complete independence;
(ii) representation of the princely states by nominees and not by elected representatives;
(iii) right to provinces to secede as this went against the principle of national unity; and
(iv) absence of any plan for immediate transfer of power and absence of any real share in defence; the governor general's supremacy had been retained, and the demand that the governor general be only the constitutional head had not been accepted.

Nehru and Maulana Azad were the official negotiators for the Congress.

The Muslim League:

(i) criticised the idea of a single Indian Union;

(ii) did not like the machinery for the creation of a constituent assembly and the procedure to decide on the accession of provinces to the Union; and

(iii) thought that the proposals denied the Muslims the right to self-determination and the creation of Pakistan.

Other groups also objected to the provinces' right to secede. The Liberals considered the secession proposals to be against the unity and security of India. The Hindu Mahasabha criticised the basis of the right to secede. The depressed classes thought that partition would leave them at the mercy of the caste Hindus. The Sikhs objected that partition would take away Punjab from them.

The explanation that the proposals were meant not to supersede the August Offer but to clothe general provisions with precision cast doubts on the British intentions.

The incapacity of Cripps to go beyond the Draft Declaration and the adoption of a rigid "take it or leave it" attitude added to the deadlock. Cripps had earlier talked of "cabinet" and "national government", but later he said that he had only meant an expansion of the executive council.

The procedure of accession was not well-defined. The decision on secession was to be taken by a resolution in the legislature by a 60 per cent majority. If less than 60 per cent

Views

I have not become His Majesty's first Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.

Winston Churchill

The offer of Cripps really gave us nothing. If we accepted his offer, we might have cause to rue it in future. In case the British went back on their word, we should not even have the justification for launching a fresh struggle. War had given India an opportunity for achieving her freedom. We must not lose it by depending upon a mere promise.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

of members supported it, the decision was to be taken by a plebiscite of adult males of that province by a simple majority. This scheme weighed against the Hindus in Punjab and Bengal if they wanted accession to the Indian Union.

It was not clear as to who would implement and interpret the treaty effecting the transfer of power.

Churchill (the British prime minister), Amery (the secretary of state), Linlithgow (the viceroy), and Ward (the commander-in-chief) consistently torpedoed Cripps' efforts.

Talks broke down on the question of the viceroy's veto.

Gandhi described the scheme as "a post-dated cheque"; Nehru pointed out that the "existing structure and autocratic powers would remain and a few of us will become the viceroy's liveried camp followers and look after canteens and the like".

Stafford Cripps returned home leaving behind a frustrated and embittered Indian people, who, though still sympathising with the victims of Fascist aggression, felt that the existing situation in the country had become intolerable and that the time had come for a final assault on imperialism.

Summary

- **Congress Stand on World War II:**

  It would cooperate in the war effort if:

  (i) freedom was given after the War.

  (ii) some form of genuinely responsible government was immediately set up.

  September 1, 1939: World War-II broke out and Britain declared India's support for war.

  September 10–14, 1939: At CWC meeting at Wardha:

  — Gandhi was for unconditional support to Britain's war efforts.

  — Subhash Bose and Leftists were for taking advantage of Britain's difficulties and starting a mass movement to dislodge colonialism.

  — Nehru recognised the imperialist nature of the war, but was against taking advantage of Britain's difficulties, even as he was against Indian participation in the war.

  — The CWC resolved—No Indian participation unless freedom is granted; Government should declare its war aims soon.

- **Linlithgow's Statement (October 17, 1939)**
  Britain's war aim is to resist aggression.
  All interest groups are to be consulted to modify 1935 Act for future.
  Immediately a "consultative committee" is to be formed for advising functions.
- **Congress Response**
  No Indian support to the war
  Congress ministries in provinces to resign
  But no immediate mass struggle to be launched
- **March 1940**
  'Pakistan Resolution' passed at Lahore session of Muslim League
- **August Offer (August 1940)**
  Dominion status to be the long-term objective
  After the war, constituent assembly to be formed comprising mainly Indians
  Minorities' consent to be essential for any future settlement.
  Congress rejects the Offer
- **October 1940**
  Congress launches individual satyagraha; 25,000 satyagrahis court arrest
- **March 1942**
  Japan reaches Rangoon after having overrun almost the whole of South-East Asia.
- **Cripps Mission (March 1942)**
  It offers:
  * an Indian Union with dominion status, with right to withdraw from Commonwealth.
  * after war, a constituent assembly elected by provincial assemblies to frame the constitution.
  * freedom to any province unwilling to join the Union to have a separate agreement with Britain.

  Meanwhile, defence of India to remain in British hands.
  The Congress objects to*:*
  * dominion status
  * right of provinces to secede
  * no immediate transfer of power
  * retention of governor-general's supremacy.

  The Muslim League objects to—
  * Pakistan not being explicitly offered
  * the machinery for creation of Constituent Assembly.

CHAPTER 23

Quit India Movement, Demand for Pakistan, and the INA

Quit India Movement

After Cripps' departure, Gandhi framed a resolution calling for British withdrawal and a non-violent non-cooperation movement against any Japanese invasion. The CWC meeting at Wardha (July 14, 1942) accepted the idea of a struggle.

Why Start a Struggle Now

The reasons were several:

1. The failure of the Cripps Mission to solve the constitutional deadlock exposed Britain's unchanged attitude on constitutional advance and made it clear that any more silence would be tantamount to accepting the British right to decide the fate of Indians without consulting them.

2. There was popular discontent because of rising prices and shortage of rice, salt, etc., and because of factors such as commandeering of boats in Bengal and Orissa. There were fears of Britain following a scorched earth policy in Assam, Bengal, and Orissa against possible Japanese advance.

3. News of reverses suffered by the British in South-East Asia and an imminent British collapse enhanced popular willingness to give expression to discontent. The Japanese troops were approaching the borders of India. Popular faith

in the stability of British rule was so low that people were withdrawing deposits from banks and post offices.

4. The manner in which the British evacuated from South-East Asia leaving the subjects to their fate (two roads were provided—Black Road for Indian refugees and White Road exclusively for European refugees), and the rout of a European power by an Asian power shattered white prestige and the British behaviour towards the Indian subjects in South-East Asia exposed the racist attitude of the rulers.

5. The leadership wanted to condition the masses for a possible Japanese invasion.

The 'Quit India' Resolution

In July 1942, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and resolved that it would authorise Gandhi to take charge of the non-violent mass movement. The resolution generally referred to as the 'Quit India' resolution. Proposed by Jawaharlal Nehru and seconded by Sardar Patel, it was to be approved by the All India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay in August.

The Quit India Resolution was ratified at the Congress meeting at Gowalia Tank, Bombay, on August 8, 1942. The meeting also resolved to:

- demand an immediate end to British rule in India.
- declare commitment of free India to defend itself against all types of Fascism and imperialism.
- form a provisional Government of India after British withdrawal.
- sanction a civil disobedience movement against British rule.

Gandhi was named the leader of the struggle.

Gandhi's General Instructions to Different Sections

Gandhi's special instructions were spelt out at the Gowalia Tank meeting but not actually issued. They were directed at various sections of society.

- **Government servants**: Do not resign but declare your allegiance to the Congress.
- **Soldiers**: Do not leave the army but do not fire on compatriots.

- **Students**: If confident, leave studies.
- **Peasants**: If zamindars are anti-government, pay mutually agreed rent, and if zamindars are pro-government, do not pay rent.
- **Princes**: Support the masses and accept sovereignty of your people.
- **Princely states' people**: Support the ruler only if he is anti-government and declare yourselves to be a part of the Indian nation.

Gandhi followed up with the now-famous exhortation: "Here is a *mantra,* a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is: '**Do or Die**'. We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery."

Spread of the Movement

Gandhi had carefully built the tempo through individual civil disobedience movements or satyagraha, organisational revamping, and a consistent propaganda campaign. The government, however, was in no mood to either negotiate with the Congress or wait for the movement to be formally launched.

In the early hours of August 9, 1942, in a single sweep, all the top leaders of the Congress were arrested and taken to unknown destinations. The Congress Working Committee, the All India Congress Committee, and the Provincial Congress Committees were declared unlawful associations under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908. The assembly of public meetings was prohibited under rule 56 of the Defence of India Rules. The removal of established leaders left the younger and militant elements to their own initiative. With the major leaders out of the picture, young Aruna Asaf Ali, till then relatively unknown, presided over the Congress committee session on August 9, and hoisted the flag.

Public on Rampage

The general public attacked symbols of authority and hoisted national flags forcibly on public buildings. Satyagrahis offered themselves up to arrest, bridges were blown up, railway tracks were removed, and telegraph lines were cut. This kind of

activity was most intense in eastern United Provinces and Bihar. Students responded by going on strike in schools and colleges, participating in processions, writing and distributing illegal news sheets (*patrikas*), and acting as couriers for underground networks. Workers went on strike in Ahmedabad, Bombay, Jamshedpur, Ahmednagar, and Poona.

Underground Activity

Many nationalists went underground and took to subversive activities. The participants in these activities were the Socialists, Forward Bloc members, Gandhi ashramites, revolutionary nationalists, and local organisations in Bombay, Poona, Satara, Baroda, and other parts of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra, United Provinces, Bihar, and Delhi. The main personalities taking up underground activity were Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta, Biju Patnaik, Chhotubhai Puranik, Achyut Patwardhan, Sucheta Kripalani, and R.P. Goenka. Usha Mehta started an underground radio in Bombay. This phase of underground activity was meant to keep up popular morale by continuing to provide a line of command and guidance to distribute arms and ammunition.

View

. . . though the need for non-violence was always reiterated, Gandhi's mantra of Do or Die represents the militant mood of Gandhi.

—Sumit Sarkar

Parallel Governments

Parallel governments were established at many places:

- Ballia (in August 1942 for a week)—under Chittu Pandey. He got many Congress leaders released.
- Tamluk (Midnapore, from December 1942 to September 1944)—*Jatiya Sarkar* undertook cyclone relief work, sanctioned grants to schools, supplied paddy from the rich to the poor, organised *Vidyut Vahinis*, etc.
- Satara (mid-1943 to 1945)—named "Prati Sarkar", was organised under leaders like Y.B. Chavan, Nana Patil, etc. Village libraries and Nyayadan Mandals were organised,

prohibition campaigns were carried on, and 'Gandhi marriages' were organised.

Active help was provided by businessmen (through donations, shelter, and material help), students (acting as couriers), simple villagers (by refusing information to authority), pilots and train drivers (by delivering bombs and other material), and government officials including police (who passed on secret information to the activists).

Extent of Mass Participation

The participation was on many levels.

Youth, especially the students of schools and colleges, remained in the forefront.

Women, especially school and college girls, actively participated, and included Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalani, and Usha Mehta.

Workers went on strikes and faced repression.

Peasants of all strata were at the heart of the movement. Even some zamindars participated. These peasants concentrated their offensive on symbols of authority, and there was complete absence of anti-zamindar violence.

Government officials, especially those belonging to lower levels in police and administration, participated resulting in erosion of government loyalty.

Muslims helped by giving shelter to underground activists. There were no communal clashes during the movement.

The **Communists** did not join the movement; in the wake of Russia (where the communists were in power) being attacked by Nazi Germany, the communists began to support the British war against Germany and the 'Imperialist War' became the 'People's War'.

The Muslim League opposed the movement, fearing that if the British left India at that time, the minorities would be oppressed by the Hindus.

The Hindu Mahasabha boycotted the movement.

The **Princely states** showed a low-key response.

Government Repression

Although martial law was not applied, the repression was severe. Agitating crowds were lathi-charged, tear-gassed, and

fired upon. The number of those killed is estimated at 10,000. The press was muzzled. The military took over many cities; police and secret service reigned supreme. Rebellious villages were fined heavily, and in many villages, mass flogging was done.

Estimate

- Left without leaders, there was no restraint and violence became common.
- Main storm centres of the movement were in eastern United Provinces, Bihar, Midnapore, Maharashtra, Karnataka.
- Students, workers, and peasants were the backbone of the movement, while the upper classes and the bureaucracy remained largely loyal.
- Loyalty to government suffered considerable erosion. This also showed how deep nationalism had reached.
- The movement established the truth that it was no longer possible to rule India without the wishes of Indians.
- The element of spontaneity was higher than before, although a certain degree of popular initiative had been sanctioned by the leadership itself, subject to limitations of the instructions. Also, the Congress had been ideologically, politically, and organisationally preparing for the struggle for a long time.
- The great significance was that the movement placed the demand for independence on the immediate agenda of the national movement. After Quit India, there could be no retreat.
- In this struggle, the common people displayed unparalleled heroism and militancy. The repression they faced was the most brutal, and the circumstances under which resistance was offered were most adverse.

Gandhi Fasts

In February 1943, Gandhi started a fast as an answer to an exhortation by the government to condemn violence; the fast was directed against the violence of the State. The popular response to the news of the fast was immediate and overwhelming. Protests were organised at home and abroad through hartals, demonstrations, and strikes. Three members

of the viceroy's executive council resigned. The fast achieved the following:

- Public morale was raised.
- Anti-British feeling was heightened.
- An opportunity was provided for political activity.
- Government's high-handedness was exposed.

Gandhi got the better of his opponents and refused to oblige by dying.

On **March 23, 1943** Pakistan Day was observed.

Famine of 1943

The horror and inconveniences of war were increased by the famine of 1943. The worst-affected areas were south-west Bengal comprising the Tamluk-Contai-Diamond Harbour region, Dacca, Faridpur, Tippera, and Noakhali. Around 1.5 to 3 million people perished in this basically man-made famine, the epidemics (malaria, cholera, and small pox), malnutrition and starvation. The fundamental causes of the famine were as follows:

1. The need to feed a vast army diverted foodstuffs.
2. Rice imports from Burma and South-East Asia had been stopped.
3. The famine got aggravated by gross mismanagement and deliberate profiteering; rationing methods were belated and were confined to big cities.

Rajagopalachari Formula

Meanwhile, efforts were on to solve the ongoing constitutional crisis, and some individuals also tried to come up with constitutional proposals.

The Formula

C. Rajagopalachari (CR), the veteran Congress leader, prepared a formula for Congress-League cooperation in 1944. It was a tacit acceptance of the League's demand for Pakistan. Gandhi supported the formula. The main points in the CR Plan were:

- Muslim League to endorse Congress demand for independence.

- League to cooperate with Congress in forming a provisional government at centre.
- After the end of the war, the entire population of Muslim majority areas in the North-West and North-East India to decide by a plebiscite, whether or not to form a separate sovereign state.
- In case of acceptance of partition, agreement to be made jointly for safeguarding defence, commerce, communications, etc.
- The above terms to be operative only if England transferred full powers to India.

Objections

Jinnah wanted the Congress to accept the two-nation theory. He wanted only the Muslims of North-West and North-East to vote in the plebiscite and not the entire population. He also opposed the idea of a common centre.

While the Congress was ready to cooperate with the League for the independence of the Indian Union, the League did not care for independence of the Union. It was only interested in a separate nation.

Hindu leaders led by Vir Savarkar condemned the CR Plan.

Desai-Liaqat Pact

Efforts continued to end the deadlock. Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the Congress Party in the Central Legislative Assembly, met Liaqat Ali Khan, deputy leader of the Muslim League in that Assembly, and both of them came up with the draft proposal for the formation of an interim government at the centre, consisting of:

- an equal number of persons nominated by the Congress and the League in the central legislature.
- 20% reserved seats for minorities.

No settlement could be reached between the Congress and the League on these lines, but the fact that a sort of parity between the Congress and the League was decided upon had far-reaching consequences.

Wavell Plan

Although the war in Europe came to an end in May 1945, the Japanese threat still remained. The Conservative

government in Britain led by Churchill was keen to reach a solution on the constitutional question in India. The viceroy, Lord Wavell, was permitted to start negotiations with Indian leaders. Congress leaders were released from jails in June 1945.

Why the Government was Keen on a Solution Now

1. The general election in England was scheduled for mid-1945. The Conservatives wanted to be seen as sincere on reaching a solution.

2. There was pressure from the Allies to seek further Indian cooperation in the war.

3. The government wanted to divert Indian energies into channels more profitable for the British.

The Plan

The idea was to reconstruct the governor general's executive council pending the preparation of a new constitution. For this purpose, a conference was convened by the viceroy, Lord Wavell, at Shimla in June 1945. The main proposals of the Wavell Plan were as follows:

- With the exception of the governor general and the commander-in-chief, all members of the executive council were to be Indians.
- Caste Hindus and Muslims were to have equal representation.
- The reconstructed council was to function as an interim government within the framework of the 1935 Act (i.e. not responsible to the Central Assembly).
- The governor general was to exercise his veto on the advice of ministers.
- Representatives of different parties were to submit a joint list to the viceroy for nominations to the executive council. If a joint list was not possible, then separate lists were to be submitted.
- Possibilities were to be kept open for negotiations on a new constitution once the war was finally won.

Muslim League's Stand

The League wanted all Muslim members to be League nominees, because it feared that since the aims of other

minorities—depressed classes, Sikhs, Christians, etc.—were the same as those of the Congress, this arrangement would reduce the League to a one-third minority. (Wavell wanted Khizr Hyat Khan as the Muslim representative from Western Punjab.) The League claimed some kind of veto in the council with decisions opposed to Muslims needing a two-thirds majority for approval.

Congress Stand

The Congress objected to the plan as "an attempt to reduce the Congress to the status of a purely caste Hindu party and insisted on its right to include members of all communities among its nominees".

Wavell's Mistake

Wavell announced a breakdown of talks thus giving the League a virtual veto. This strengthened the League's position, as was evident from the elections in 1945–46, and boosted Jinnah's position; and exposed the real character of the Conservative government of Churchill.

The Indian National Army and Subhas Bose

Subhas Chandra Bose was an intrepid man. He had always shown a militant streak and reacted violently to any insult of Indians by the Europeans. He passed the Indian Civil Services examination securing fourth position but resigned from the service in 1921 to join the struggle for freedom by becoming a member of the Congress. His political guru was Chittaranjan Das. He became mayor of Calcutta in 1923. He was jailed many times by the British. Once it became clear to Subhas Chandra Bose that he could not follow Gandhi's way but that the Congress was determined to follow Gandhi, Bose decided to go his own way to fight for independence.

In March 1940, Bose convened an Anti-Compromise Conference at Ramgarh; it was a joint effort of the Forward Bloc and the Kisan Sabha. It was resolved at the conference that a worldwide struggle should be launched on April 6, the

first day of the National Week, with a call to the people not to help the Imperialist War with any resource—men, money, or materials. He called for resistance to be offered to all forms of exploitation of Indian resources for the imperial cause. There was enthusiastic participation by the people in the struggle launched on April 6.

Bose was arrested in July when he protested and tried to launch a satyagraha against a proposed monument for Holwell in Calcutta. He was released from prison and placed under house arrest in December 1940 after a hunger strike. In January 1941, it was reported that Bose had escaped. On January 26, 1941, he reached Peshawar under the pseudo-name Ziauddin, helped by Bhagat Ram.

Later it was heard that he had left India "to supplement from outside the struggle going on at home". He was reported to have approached Russia for help in the Indian struggle for freedom from Britain. But, in June 1941, Russia joined the Allies in the war, which disappointed Bose. He then went to Germany.

Bose met Hitler under the pseudo name, Orlando Mazzotta. With the help of Hitler, the 'Freedom Army' (Mukti Sena) was formed, which consisted of all the prisoners of war of Indian origin captured by Germany and Italy. Dresden, Germany, was made the office of the Freedom Army. Bose came to be called 'Netaji' by the people of Germany. He gave the famous slogan, 'Jai Hind' from the Free India Centre, Germany.

He began regular broadcasts from Berlin radio in January 1942, which enthused Indians. In early 1943, he left Germany and travelled by German and later by Japanese submarines to reach Japan and then Singapore in July of the same year. He was to take over command of the Indian independence movement from Rashbehari Bose, but that was the second phase of the Indian National Army.

Origin and First Phase of the Indian National Army

The idea of creating an army out of the Indian prisoners of war (POWs) was originally that of Mohan Singh, an Indian army officer who had decided not to join the retreating

British army in Malaya. He decided to turn to the Japanese for help. The Japanese had till then encouraged Indian civilians to form anti-British organisations. Mohan Singh asked for Indian prisoners of war.

The Japanese handed over the Indian prisoners of war to Mohan Singh who tried to recruit them into an Indian National Army. After the fall of Singapore, several POWs were ready to join Mohan Singh. By the end of 1942, 40,000 men were ready to join the INA. It was intended that the INA would go into action only on the invitation of the Indian National Congress and the people of India. The move to form this army has been seen by many as a check against the misconduct of the Japanese against Indians in South-East Asia and as a bulwark against a possible future Japanese occupation of India.

The INA got a boost with the outbreak of the Quit India Movement in India. In September 1942, the first division of the INA was formed with 16,300 men. With the Japanese contemplating an Indian invasion, the idea of an armed wing of INA seemed more relevant to them. But soon, serious differences emerged between the Indian Army officers led by Mohan Singh and the Japanese over the role to be played by the INA. Actually, the Japanese wanted a token force of 2,000 only while Mohan Singh wanted to raise a much larger army. Mohan Singh was taken into custody by the Japanese.

The second phase began with the arrival of Subhas Bose in Singapore. But before that in June 1943, Subhas Chandra Bose (under pseudo name Abid Hussain) reached Tokyo and met the Japanese prime minister, Tojo.

The role of Rashbehari Bose, another great freedom fighter, should also be acknowledged here. He had fled to Japan in 1915 following the failed revolutionary activities. In Japan, Rashbehari Bose eventually became a naturalised citizen. He made a lot of effort in getting the Japanese interested in the Indian independence movement. He became active in Pan-Asian circles, founded the Indian Club of Tokyo, and gave lectures on the evils of Western imperialism.

Very early itself he was impressed by Subhas Chandra Bose. When the Indian National Army was formed by Mohan Singh in Singapore, Rashbehari Bose was greatly excited and

left Tokyo for Southeast Asia. It was at a conference in Bangkok (also under Japanese occupation at the time) that it was decided to place the INA under an Indian Independence League whose chairman would be Rashbehari Bose himself. He had created the League in 1942 in Tokyo.

When Subhash Bose was sought by the Japanese to lead the INA, he was ready for it. He went to Singapore and met Rashbehari Bose, and the latter happily transferred the control and leadership of the Indian Independence League and the INA to Subhash in July 1943. It must be noted that it was on the organisational spadework done by Rashbehari Bose that Subhas Bose could build up the Indian National Army. Subhas Bose became Supreme Commander of the INA on August 25. (In February 1944, after a collapse of his lungs, Rashbehari's health steadily deteriorated, and he died on January 21, 1945, aged 58.)

On October 21, 1943, Subhas Bose formed the Provisional Government for Free India at Singapore with H.C. Chatterjee (Finance portfolio), M.A. Aiyar (Broadcasting), Lakshmi Swaminathan (Women Department), etc. The famous slogan—"Give me blood, I will give you freedom" was given in Malaya.

This provisional government declared war on Britain and the United States, and was recognised by the Axis powers. Recruits were trained and funds collected for the INA. A women's regiment called the Rani Jhansi Regiment was also formed.

The INA headquarters was shifted to Rangoon (in Burma) in January 1944, and the army recruits were to march from there with the war cry "Chalo Delhi!" on their lips.

On November 6, 1943, Andaman and Nicobar islands was given by the Japanese army to the INA; the islands were renamed as Shahid Dweep and Swaraj Dweep respectively.

On July 6, 1944, Subhas Bose addressed Mahatma Gandhi as 'Father of Nation'—from the Azad Hind Radio (the first person to call Gandhi, 'Father of Nation'). He asked for Gandhi's blessings for "India's last war of independence".

One INA battalion commanded by Shah Nawaz was allowed to accompany the Japanese Army to the Indo-Burma front and participate in the Imphal campaign. However, the

Indians received discriminatory treatment from the Japanese, which included being denied rations and arms and being made to do menial work for the Japanese units, and this disgusted and demoralised the INA units.

The Azad Hind Fauz crossed the Burma border and stood on Indian soil on March 18, 1944. The INA units subsequently advanced up to Kohima and Imphal. On April 14, Colonel Malik of the Bahadur Group hoisted the INA flag for the first time on the Indian mainland at Moirang, in Manipur (where the INA Memorial Complex stands today) to enthusiastic cries of "Jai Hind" and "Netaji Zindabad". For three months, the INA carried out military administration duties at Moirang, but then the Allied forces reclaimed the territory. The INA met the same fate as the Japanese, and all brigades began their withdrawal on July 18, 1944.

The steady Japanese retreat thereafter quashed any hopes of the INA liberating the nation. The retreat continued till mid-1945.

On August 15, 1945 the surrender of Japan in the Second World War took place, and with this the INA also surrendered.

On August 18, 1945, reportedly, Subhas Bose died mysteriously in an air crash at Taipei (Taiwan).

But when the INA POWs were brought back to India after the war to be court-martialled, a powerful movement emerged in their defence.

Summary

- **Quit India Movement**
  - ***Why launch a movement now?***
    Failure of Cripps Offer an evidence of British lack of will to concede Indian demands
    Public discontent against wartime hardships
    A feeling of imminent British collapse
    Indian leadership's desire to prepare masses for possible Japanese invasion
  - ***AICC Meeting (Bombay—August 8, 1942)***
    The meeting ratifies Quit India Resolution
  - ***August 9, 1942*** All prominent leaders arrested

* ***Major Activity***
Public on rampage—especially Eastern UP, Bihar, Bengal—attacking symbols of authority
Underground activity to provide a line of command
Parallel governments in Ballia (UP), Tamluk (Bengal), and Satara (Maharashtra)
Sections participating included youth, women, workers, peasants, government officials, some communists

February 1943 Gandhi started a fast.
March 23, 1943 Pakistan was Day observed.

- **C. Rajagopalachari Formula (March 1944)**
  League should immediately support independence for India and cooperate in Interim Government:
  After War, Muslim majority areas were to exercise right to self-determination.
  In case of partition, common centre for defence, commerce, communications, etc.
  Jinnah rejected the offer as he wanted Congress to accept the two-nation theory.
- **Desai-Liaqat Pact**
  Congress and League nominees to have equal representation in Central Executive
  20% of seats reserved for minorities
- **Wavell Plan (Shimla Conference—June 1945)**
  An all-Indian executive council except the governor general and commander-in-chief
  Equal representation for caste Hindus and Muslims
  Muslim League wanted all Muslims to be its nominees and claimed a communal veto in the executive council
  Congress objected to it being painted purely as a caste Hindu party
- **Subhas Bose and the INA**
  Origin of INA—Mohan Singh's role
  First Phase of INA
  Second Phase of INA
  Subhas Bose takes over from Rasbhehari Bose.
  INA achievements—flag hoisted on Indian soil
  Retreat of INA with the Japanese with the end of Second World War

CHAPTER 24

Post-War National Scenario

Two Strands of National Upsurge

Two basic strands of national upsurge can be identified during the last two years of British rule:

(i) tortuous negotiations involving the government, Congress, and Muslim League, increasingly accompanied by communal violence and culminating in freedom and the partition.

(ii) sporadic, localised, and often extremely militant and united mass action by workers, peasants, and states' peoples which took the form of a countrywide strike wave. This kind of activity was occasioned by the INA Release Movement, Royal Indian Navy (RIN) revolt, Tebhaga movement, Worli revolt, Punjab Kisan Morchas, Travancore peoples' struggle (especially the Punnapra-Vayalar episode), and the Telangana peasant revolt.

Change in Government's Attitude

When the government lifted the ban on the Congress and released the Congress leaders in June 1945, they expected to find a demoralised people. Instead, they found tumultuous crowds impatient to do something. Popular energy resurfaced after three years of repression. People's expectations were

heightened by the release of their leaders. The Wavell Plan backed by the Conservative government in Britain failed to break the constitutional deadlock.

In July 1945, Labour Party formed the government in Britain. Clement Attlee took over as the new prime minister and Pethick Lawrence as the new secretary of state for India.

In August 1945, elections to central and provincial assemblies were announced.

In September 1945, it was announced that a constituent assembly would be convened after the elections and that the government was working according to the spirit of the Cripps Offer.

The government's change attitude was dictated by the following factors:

1. The end of the War resulted in a change in balance of global power—the UK was no more a big power, while the USA and USSR emerged as superpowers, both of which favoured freedom for India.
2. The new Labour government was more sympathetic to Indian demands.
3. Throughout Europe, there was a wave of socialist-radical governments.
4. British soldiers were weary and tired and the British economy lay shattered. (By 1945, the British government in London owed India £1.2 billion and was being drained by the US Lend-Lease agreement, which was finally paid off only in 2006.)
5. There was an anti-imperialist wave in South-East Asia—in Vietnam and Indonesia—resisting efforts to replant French and Dutch rule there.
6. Officials feared another Congress revolt, a revival of the 1942 situation but much more dangerous because of a likely combination of attacks on communications, agrarian revolts, labour trouble, army disaffection joined by government officials and the police in the presence of INA men with some military experience.
7. Elections were inevitable once the war ended since the last elections had been held in 1934 for the Centre and in 1937 for the provinces.

The British would have had to retreat; the Labour government only quickened the process somewhat.

Congress Election Campaign and INA Trials

Elections were held in the winter of 1945–46.

Election Campaign for Nationalistic Aims

The most significant feature of the election campaign was that it sought to mobilise the Indians against the British; it did not just appeal to the people for votes.

The election campaign expressed the nationalist sentiments against the state repression of the 1942 Quit India upsurge. This was done by glorifying martyrs and condemning officials. The brave resistance of the leaderless people was lauded; martyrs' memorials were set up; relief funds were collected for sufferers; the officials responsible for causing pain were condemned; and promises of enquiry and threats of punishment to guilty officials were spelt out.

The government failed to check such speeches. This had a devastating effect on the morale of the services. The prospect of the return of Congress ministries, especially in those provinces where repression had been most brutal, further heightened the fears of those in government services. A 'gentleman's agreement' with the Congress seemed necessary to the government.

Mass pressure against the trial of INA POWs, sometimes described as "an edge of a volcano", brought about a decisive shift in the government's policy. The British had initially decided to hold public trials of several hundreds of INA prisoners besides dismissing them from service and detaining without trial around 7,000 of them. They compounded the folly by holding the first trial at the Red Fort in Delhi in November 1945 and putting on dock together a Hindu, Prem Kumar Sehgal, a Muslim, Shah Nawaz Khan, and a Sikh, Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon.

Another issue was provided by the use of Indian Army units in a bid to restore French and Dutch colonial rule in Vietnam and Indonesia: this enhanced the anti-imperialist feeling among a section of urban population and the army.

Congress Support for INA Prisoners

- At the first post-War Congress session in September 1945 at Bombay, a strong resolution was adopted declaring Congress support for the INA cause.
- Defence of INA prisoners in the court was organised by Bhulabhai Desai, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Kailash Nath Katju, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Asaf Ali.
- INA Relief and Enquiry Committee distributed small sums of money and food, and helped arrange employment for the affected.
- Fund collection was organised.

The INA Agitation—A Landmark on Many Counts

The high pitch and intensity at which the campaign for the release of INA prisoners was conducted was unprecedented. The agitation got wide publicity through extensive press coverage with daily editorials, distribution of pamphlets often containing threats of revenge, grafitti conveying similar messages, holding of public meetings, and celebrations of INA Day (November 12, 1945), and INA week (November 5–11).

The campaign spread over a wide area of the country and witnessed the participation of diverse social groups and political parties. While the nerve centres of the agitation were Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, United Provinces towns, and Punjab, the campaign spread to distant places such as Coorg, Baluchistan, and Assam. The forms of participation included fund contributions made by many people—from film stars, municipal committees, Indians living abroad, and gurudwaras to tongawallas; participation in meetings; shopkeepers closing shops; political groups demanding release of prisoners; contributing to INA funds; student meetings and boycott of classes; organising kisan conferences; and All India Women's Conference demanding the release of INA prisoners.

Those who supported the INA cause in varying degrees, apart from the Congress, included the Muslim League, Communist Party, Unionists, Akalis, Justice Party, Ahrars in Rawalpindi, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha, and the Sikh League.

Pro-INA sentiments surfaced in traditional bulwarks of the Raj. Government employees collected funds. The loyalists—the gentlemen with titles—appealed to the government to abandon the trials for good Indo-British relations. Men of the armed forces were unexpectedly sympathetic and attended meetings, received those released (often in uniforms), and contributed funds.

The central theme became the questioning of Britain's right to decide a matter concerning Indians. Britain realised the political significance of the INA issue, which with each day assumed more and more of an 'Indian versus British' colour.

Three Upsurges—Winter of 1945–46

The nationalist sentiment which reached a crescendo around the INA trials developed into violent confrontations with the authority in the winter of 1945–46. There were three major upsurges:

1. November 21, 1945—in Calcutta over the INA trials
2. February 11, 1946—in Calcutta against the seven-year sentence to INA officer Rashid Ali
3. February 18, 1946—in Bombay, strike by the Royal Indian Navy ratings

Three-Stage Pattern

All three upsurges showed a similar three-stage pattern.

Stage I. When a Group Defies Authority and is Repressed

In the first instance of this stage (November 21, 1945), a student procession comprising some Forward Bloc sympathisers, Student Federation of India (SFI) activists, and Islamia College students, who had joined up with the League and the Congress, tied flags as a symbol of anti-imperialist unity, marched to Dalhousie Square—the seat of government in Calcutta. These protestors refused to disperse and were lathi-charged. They retaliated by throwing stones and brickbats. The police resorted to firing in which two persons died.

In the next step (February 11, 1946), the protest was led by Muslim League students in which some Congress and communist students' organisations joined. Some arrests provoked the students to defy Section 144. There were more arrests and the agitating students were lathi-charged.

Rebellion by Naval Ratings On February 18, 1946, some 1100 Royal Indian Navy (RIN) ratings of *HMIS Talwar* went on a strike to protest against:

* racial discrimination (demanding equal pay for Indian and white soldiers);
* unpalatable food;
* abuse by superior officers;
* arrest of a rating for scrawling 'Quit India' on *HMIS Talwar;*
* INA trials; and
* use of Indian troops in Indonesia, demanding their withdrawal.

The rebellious ratings hoisted the tricolour, crescent, and the hammer and sickle flags on the mast of the rebel fleet. Other ratings soon joined and they went around Bombay in lorries holding Congress flags threatening Europeans and policemen. Crowds brought food to the ratings, and shop-keepers invited them to take whatever they needed.

Stage II. When the City People Join In

This phase was marked by a virulent anti-British mood resulting in the virtual paralysis of Calcutta and Bombay. There were meetings, processions, strikes, hartals, and attacks on Europeans, police stations, shops, tram depots, railway stations, banks, besides stopping of rail and road traffic by squatting on tracks and barricading of streets.

Stage III. When People in Other Parts of the Country Express Sympathy and Solidarity

While the students boycotted classes and organised hartals and processions to express sympathy with other students and the ratings, there were sympathetic strikes in military establishments in Karachi, Madras, Visakhapatnam, Calcutta, Delhi, Cochin, Jamnagar, Andamans, Bahrain, and Aden. There were strikes by the Royal Indian Air Force in Bombay, Poona, Calcutta, Jessore, and Ambala.

Patel and Jinnah persuaded the ratings to surrender on February 23 with an assurance that national parties would prevent any victimisation.

Evaluation of Potential and Impact of the Three Upsurges

The three upsurges were significant in many ways:

- Fearless action by the masses was an expression of militancy in the popular mind.
- Revolt in the armed forces had a great liberating effect on the minds of people.
- The RIN revolt was seen as an event marking the end of British rule.
- These upsurges prompted the British to extend some concessions:

(i) On December 1, 1946, the government announced that only those INA members accused of murder or brutal treatment of fellow prisoners would be brought to trial.

(ii) Imprisonment sentences passed against the first batch were remitted in January 1947.

(iii) Indian soldiers were withdrawn from Indo-China and Indonesia by February 1947.

(iv) The decision to send a parliamentary delegation to India (November 1946) was taken.

(v) The decision to send Cabinet Mission was taken in January 1946.

But could the communal unity witnessed during these events, if built upon, have offered a way out of the communal deadlock? Or, in other words, what was the potential of these upsurges?

These upsurges were in the nature of direct and violent conflict with authority, which had obvious limitations. Only the more militant sections could participate.

These upsurges were short-lived and were confined to a few urban centres while the general INA agitation reached the remotest villages.

Communal unity witnessed was more organisational than a unity among the people. Muslim ratings went to the League to seek advice and the rest to the Congress and the Socialists.

Despite considerable erosion of the morale of the bureaucracy, the British infrastructure to repress was intact. They were soon able to control the situation. It was a Maratha battalion in Bombay that rounded up the ratings and restored them to their barracks.

Congress Strategy

The leftists claim that the Congress indifference to the revolutionary situation arose because of two considerations—that the situation would go out of its control and that a disciplined armed forces were vital in a free India. They also claim that if the Congress leaders had not surrendered to power play, a different path to independence would have emerged. But actually these upsurges were an extension of earlier nationalist activity fostered by the Congress through its election campaign, its advocacy of the INA cause, and highlighting of the excesses of 1942.

These upsurges were distinguishable from the earlier activity because of their form of articulation. These were violent challenges to the authority while the earlier activity was a peaceful demonstration of national solidarity.

The Congress did not officially support these upsurges because of their tactics and timing.

Negotiations had been an integral part of the Congress strategy, to be explored before a mass movement could be launched, especially when the British were seen to be preparing to leave soon.

In Gandhi's opinion, the mutiny was badly advised: if they mutinied for India's freedom, they were doubly wrong; if they had any grievances, they should have waited for the guidance of leaders.

Election Results

Performance of the Congress

- It got 91 per cent of non-Muslim votes.
- It captured 57 out of 102 seats in the Central Assembly.
- In the provincial elections, it got a majority in most provinces except in Bengal, Sindh, and Punjab. The Congress majority provinces included the NWFP and Assam which were being claimed for Pakistan.

Muslim League's Performance

- It got 86.6 per cent of the Muslim votes.
- It captured the 30 reserved seats in the Central Assembly.
- In the provincial elections, it got a majority in Bengal and Sindh.
- Unlike in 1937, now the League clearly established itself as the dominant party among Muslims.

In Punjab A Unionist-Congress-Akali coalition under Khizr Hayat Khan assumed power.

Significant Features of Elections

The elections witnessed communal voting in contrast to the strong anti-British unity shown in various upsurges due to:

1. separate electorates; and
2. limited franchise—for the provinces, less than 10 per cent of the population could vote and for the Central Assembly, less than 1 per cent of the population was eligible.

The Cabinet Mission

The Attlee government announced in February 1946 the decision to send a high-powered mission of three British cabinet members (Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for India; Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade; and A.V. Alexander, First Lord of Admiralty) to India to find out ways and means for a negotiated, peaceful transfer of power to India. (Pethick Lawrence was the chairman of the mission.)

Why British Withdrawal Seemed Imminent Now

1. The success of nationalist forces in the struggle for hegemony was fairly evident by the end of the War. Nationalism had penetrated into hitherto untouched sections and areas.

2. There was a demonstration in favour of nationalism among the bureaucracy and the loyalist sections; because the paucity of European ICS recruits and a policy of Indianisation had ended the British domination of the ICS as early as the First World War, and by 1939, there existed a British-Indian parity. The long war had caused weariness and economic

worries. Now only a depleted, war-weary bureaucracy battered by the 1942 events remained.

3. The British strategy of conciliation and repression had its limitations and contradictions.

- After the Cripps' Offer, there was little left to offer for conciliation except full freedom.
- When non-violent resistance was repressed with force, the naked force behind the government stood exposed, while if the government did not clamp down on 'sedition' or made offers for truce, it was seen to be unable to wield authority, and its prestige suffered.
- Efforts to woo the Congress dismayed the loyalists.

This policy of an unclear mix presented a dilemma for the services, who nevertheless had to implement it. The prospect of Congress ministries coming to power in the provinces further compounded this dilemma.

4. Constitutionalism or Congress Raj had proved to be a big morale-booster and helped in deeper penetration of patriotic sentiments among the masses.

5. Demands of leniency for INA prisoners from within the army and the revolt of the RIN ratings had raised fears that the armed forces may not be as reliable if the Congress started a 1942-type mass movement, this time aided by the provincial ministries.

6. The only alternative to an all-out repression of a mass movement was an entirely official rule, which seemed impossible now because the necessary numbers and efficient officials were not available.

Views

The British Cabinet saw the growing rift between the Congress and the Muslim League as their trump card... Both Linlithgow and the Cabinet looked to the rivalry of the Congress and the League as their most useful weapon against the demands of either.

B.R. Tomlinson

Our time in India is limited and our power to control events almost gone. We have only prestige and previous momentum to trade on and these will not last long.

Lord Wavell (October 1946)

7. The government realised that a settlement was necessary for burying the ghost of a mass movement and for good future Indo-British relations.

Now the overarching aim of the British policymakers was a graceful withdrawal, after a settlement on the modalities of the transfer of power and nature of post-imperial India-Britain relations.

On the Eve of Cabinet Mission Plan

The Congress demanded that power be transferred to one centre and that minorities' demands be worked out in a framework ranging from autonomy to Muslim-majority provinces to self-determination or secession from the Indian Union—but, only after the British left.

The British bid for a united and friendly India and an active partner in defence of the Commonwealth, because a divided India would lack in defence and would be a blot on Britain's diplomacy.

The British policy in 1946 clearly reflected a preference for a united India, in sharp contrast to earlier declarations. On March 15, 1946, the Prime Minister of Britain, Clement Attlee said: "...though mindful of the rights of minorities... cannot allow a minority to place their veto on advance of the majority." This was a far cry from the Shimla Conference where Wavell had allowed Jinnah to wreck the conference.

Cabinet Mission Arrives

The Cabinet Mission reached Delhi on March 24, 1946. It had prolonged discussions with Indian leaders of all parties and groups on the issues of:

(i) interim government; and

(ii) principles and procedures for framing a new constitution giving freedom to India.

As the Congress and the League could not come to any agreement on the fundamental issue of the unity or partition of India, the mission put forward its own plan for the solution of the constitutional problem in May 1946.

Cabinet Mission Plan—Main Points

- Rejection of the demand for a full-fledged Pakistan, because:

(i) the Pakistan so formed would include a large non-Muslim population—38 per cent in the North-West and 48 per cent in the North-East;
(ii) the very principle of communal self-determination would claim separation of Hindu-majority western Bengal and Sikh- and Hindu-dominated Ambala and Jullundur divisions of Punjab (already some Sikh leaders were demanding a separate state if the country was partitioned);
(iii) deep-seated regional ties would be disturbed if Bengal and Punjab were partitioned;
(iv) partition would entail economic and administrative problems, for instance, the problem of communication between the western and eastern parts of Pakistan; and
(v) the division of the armed forces would be dangerous.

● Grouping of existing provincial assemblies into three sections:

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

Section-B: Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, and Sindh (Muslim-majority provinces)

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

● Three-tier executive and legislature at provincial, section, and union levels.

● A constituent assembly was to be elected by provincial assemblies by proportional representation (voting in three groups—General, Muslims, Sikhs). This constituent assembly would be a 389-member body with provincial assemblies sending 292, chief commissioner's provinces sending 4, and princely states sending 93 members.

(This was a good, democratic method not based on weightage.)

● In the constituent assembly, members from groups A, B, and C were to sit separately to decide the constitution for provinces and if possible, for the groups also. Then, the whole constituent assembly (all three sections A, B, and C combined) would sit together to formulate the union constitution.

- A common centre would control defence, communication, and external affairs. A federal structure was envisaged for India.
- Communal questions in the central legislature were to be decided by a simple majority of both communities present and voting.
- Provinces were to have full autonomy and residual powers.
- Princely states were no longer to be under paramountcy of the British government. They would be free to enter into an arrangement with successor governments or the British government.
- After the first general elections, a province was to be free to come out of a group and after 10 years, a province was to be free to call for a reconsideration of the group or the union constitution.
- Meanwhile, an interim government was to be formed from the constituent assembly.

Different Interpretations of the Grouping Clause

Each party or group looked at the plan from its own point of view.

Congress*:* To the Congress, the Cabinet Mission Plan was against the creation of Pakistan since grouping was optional; one constituent assembly was envisaged; and the League no longer had a veto.

Muslim League*:* The Muslim League believed Pakistan to be implied in compulsory grouping. (The Mission later clarified that the grouping was compulsory.)

Main Objections

Different parties objected to the plan on different grounds.

Congress • Provinces should not have to wait till the first general elections to come out of a group. They should have the option of not joining a group in the first place. (Congress had the Congress-ruled provinces of NWFP and Assam in mind, which had been included in groups B and C respectively.)

- Compulsory grouping contradicts the oft-repeated insistence on provincial autonomy.

● Absence of provision for elected members from the princely states in the constituent assembly (they could only be nominated by the princes) was not acceptable.

League ● Grouping should be compulsory with sections B and C developing into solid entities with a view to future secession into Pakistan.

The League had thought that the Congress would reject the plan, thus prompting the government to invite the League to form the interim government.

Acceptance and Rejection

The Muslim League on June 6 and the Congress on June 24, 1946 accepted the long-term plan put forward by the Cabinet Mission.

July 1946 Elections were held in provincial assemblies for the Constituent Assembly.

July 10, 1946 Nehru stated, "We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided to go into the Constituent Assembly (implying that the Constituent Assembly was sovereign and would decide the rules of procedure). The big probability is that there would be no grouping as NWFP and Assam would have objections to joining sections B and C."

July 29, 1946 The League withdrew its acceptance of the long-term plan in response to Nehru's statement and gave a call for **"direct action"** from August 16 to achieve Pakistan.

Wavell's 'Breakdown Plan'

Wavell presented his plan to the Cabinet Mission in May 1946. It visualised a middle course between "repression" and "scuttle". This plan envisaged the withdrawal of the British Army and officials to the Muslim provinces of North-West and North-East and handing over the rest of the country to the Congress. Though superseded by the Cabinet Mission Plan, Wavell's plan was an evidence of:

● British recognition of the impossibility of suppressing any future Congress-led rebellion; and

● desire in some high official circles to make a "Northern Ireland" of Pakistan.

Communal Holocaust and the Interim Government

From August 16, 1946, the Indian scene was rapidly transformed. There were communal riots on an unprecedented scale, which left around several thousands dead.

The worst-hit areas were Calcutta, Bombay, Noakhali, Bihar, and Garhmukteshwar (United Provinces).

Changed Government Priorities

Wavell was now eager to somehow get the Congress into the Interim Government, even if the League stayed out (a departure from Wavell's stand during the Shimla conference). This attitude was against the League's insistence that all settlements be acceptable to it and also against earlier government postures of encouraging communal forces, of denying the legitimacy of nationalism, and of denying the representative nature of Congress.

Thus, continuance of British rule had demanded one stance from Britain, and the withdrawal and post-imperial links dictated a contrary posture.

Interim Government

Fearing mass action by the Congress, a Congress-dominated Interim Government headed by Nehru was sworn in on September 2, 1946, with Nehru continuing to insist on his party's opposition to the compulsory grouping.

Despite the title, the Interim Government was little more than a continuation of the old executive of the viceroy (Wavell overruled the ministers on the issue of the release of INA prisoners in his very last cabinet meeting in March 1947).

Wavell quietly brought the Muslim League into the Interim Government on October 26, 1946. The League was allowed to join:

- without giving up the 'direct action';
- despite its rejection of the Cabinet Mission's long-term and short-term plans; and
- despite insistence on compulsory grouping with decisions being taken by a majority vote by a section

as a whole (which would reduce the opponents of Pakistan in Assam and NWFP to a position of helpless minority).

14 Ministers of Interim Government (September 2, 1946–August 15, 1947)

1. **Jawaharlal Nehru**: Vice President of Executive Council, External Affairs and Common Wealth Relations
2. **Vallabhbhai Patel**: Home, Information and Broadcasting
3. **Baldev Singh**: Defence
4. **Dr. John Mathai**: Industries and Supplies
5. **C. Rajagopalachari**: Education
6. **C.H. Bhabha**: Works, Mines and Power
7. **Rajendra Prasad**: Agriculture and Food
8. **Jagjivan Ram:** Labour
9. **Asaf Ali**: Railway
10. **Liaquat Ali Khan (Muslim League)**: Finance
11. **Ibrahim Ismail Chundrigar (Muslim League)**: Commerce
12. **Abdur Rab Nishtar (Muslim League)**: Communications
13. **Ghazanfar Ali Khan (Muslim League)**: Health
14. **Jogendra Nath Mandal (Muslim League)**: Law

Obstructionist Approach and Ulterior Motives of the League

The League did not attend the Constituent Assembly which had its first meeting on December 9, 1946. Consequently, the Assembly had to confine itself to passing a general 'Objectives Resolution' drafted by Jawaharlal Nehru stating the ideals of an independent sovereign republic with autonomous units, adequate minority safeguards, and social, political, and economic democracy.

The League refused to attend informal meetings of the cabinet to take decisions.

The League questioned the decisions and appointments made by the Congress members.

Liaqat Ali Khan as the finance minister restricted and encumbered the efficient functioning of other ministries.

The League had only sought a foothold in the government

to fight for Pakistan. For them, it was a continuation of the civil war by other means. The Congress demand that the British get the League to change its attitude in the Interim Government or quit was voiced ever since the League joined the Interim Government.

In February 1947, nine Congress members of the cabinet wrote to the viceroy demanding the resignation of League members and threatening the withdrawal of their own nominees. The last straw came with the League demanding the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. A crisis seemed to be developing rapidly.

Birth and Spread of Communalism in India

With the rise of nationalism, communalism appeared around the end of the 19th century. It proved to be a huge threat to the unity of the Indian people and the national movement. The legacy, unfortunately, continues.

Characteristic Features of Indian Communalism

Communalism (more accurately 'sectarianism') is basically an ideology, which gives more importance to one's own ethnic/religious group rather than to the wider society as a whole, evolved through three broad stages in India.

(i) **Communal Nationalism:** the notion that since a group or a section of people belong to a particular religious community, their secular interests are the same, i.e., even those matters which have got nothing to do with religion affect all of them equally.

(ii) **Liberal Communalism:** the notion that since two religious communities have different religious interests, they have different interests in the secular sphere also (i.e., in economic, political, and cultural spheres).

(iii) **Extreme Communalism:** the notion that not only do different religious communities have different interests, but also that these interests are incompatible, i.e., two communities cannot co-exist because the interests of one community come into conflict with those of the other.

There is nothing unique about Indian communalism. It was the result of the conditions which have, in other societies, produced similar phenomena and ideologies such as Fascism, anti-Semitism, racism, the Catholic-Protestant conflict in Northern Ireland and the Christian-Muslim conflict in Lebanon.

Bypassing basic economic interests, the communalists claim to protect interests which do not necessarily exist.

Communalism is a modern phenomenon—rooted in the modern social, economic, and political colonial structure—that emerged out of modern politics based on mass mobilisation and popular participation. Modern politics made it necessary for people to have wider links and loyalties and to form establish identities. This process involved the spread of modern ideas of nation, class, and cultural-linguistic identity. In India, religious consciousness was transformed into communal consciousness in some parts of the country and among some sections of the people.

Its social roots lay in the rising middle classes who propagated imaginary communal interests to further their own economic interests—communalism was a bourgeois question par excellence, according to the Left.

Communalists were backed in their communal campaign by the colonial administration. It was the channel through which colonialists expanded their social base.

Communalists and colonialists were helped in their sinister motives by the fact that often socio-economic distinctions in Indian society coincided with religious distinctions. The inherent class contradictions were given a post-facto communal colouring by the vested interests.

Conservative social reactionary elements gave full support to communalism.

Religiosity itself did not amount to communalism, but in a country where lack of education and low awareness of the outside world was a sad reality, religion had the potential of becoming, and was used as, a vehicle of communalism.

Reasons for Growth of Communalism

Communalism grew in the modern economic, political, and social institutions where new identities were emerging in a

haphazard manner even as the old, pre-modern identities had not diminished. A clash of this fundamental dichotomy gave rise to a communal ideology.

Socio-economic Reasons

Religion did not actually dictate the economic and political interests of the Hindus and Muslims. One community (consisting of Hindus as well as Muslims) differed from another (also consisting of Hindus and Muslims) by language, culture, caste, social status, food and dress habits, social practices, or customs and so on. Even socially and culturally the Hindu and the Muslim masses had developed common ways of life: a Bengali Muslim has much more in common with a Bengali Hindu than with a Punjabi Muslim. Moreover, Hindus and the Muslims were equal victims of oppression and exploitation by British imperialism.

Modern Western thought and scientific ideas were not absorbed by Muslim intellectuals, who remained traditional and backward. Even when, as a result of the efforts of reformers, modern education spread among Muslims, the proportion of the educated was far lower among Muslims than among Hindus, Parsis, or Christians. The Muslims also lagged behind as participants in the growth of trade and industry. As the number of educated persons and men of trade and industry among the Muslims was rather small, it was easy for the reactionary big landlords and the richer classes to continue to wield influence over the Muslim masses. Landlords and zamindars, whether Hindu or Muslim, supported the British rule out of self-interest. But, among the Hindus, the modern intellectuals and the rising commercial and industrialist class had taken over the leadership from the old order of landlords.

The educated Muslims found few opportunities in business or the professions; they inevitably looked for government employment. The British officials and the loyalist Muslim leaders incited the educated Muslims against the educated Hindus. Syed Ahmad Khan and others demanded special treatment for the Muslims in the matter of government service, on the one hand, and on the other told the Muslims that if the educated Muslims remained loyal to the British,

the latter would reward them with government jobs and other special favours. The same arguments were used by some loyalist Hindus and Parsis with regard to their people, but they were in a small minority.

As a result of the underdevelopment due to colonial policies, there was a lack of industrial development; hence, unemployment was an acute problem in India, especially for the educated, and there was an intense competition for existing jobs. In the circumstances there were advocates of short-sighted and short-term solutions such as reservation in jobs on communal, provincial, or caste lines. These persons aroused communal and religious and, later, caste and provincial passions in an attempt to get a larger share of the existing, limited employment opportunities. It was easy for those desperately searching for jobs for employment to fall prey to such ideas.

Because of the economic backwardness of India and rampant unemployment, there was ample scope for the colonial government to use concessions, favours, and reservations to fuel communal and separatist tendencies. Also, modern political consciousness was late in developing among the Muslims and the dominance of traditional reactionary elements over the Muslim masses helped a communal outlook to take root.

There was talk of Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism. Politically immature, many Hindus as well as

Views

There has been a difference of a generation or more in the development of the Hindu and the Muslim middle classes, and that difference continues to show itself in many directions, political, economic, and other. It is this lag which produces a psychology of fear among the Muslims.

Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery of India*

He who does what is beneficial to the people of this country, be he a Muhammedan or an Englishman, is not alien. 'Alienness' has to do with interests. Alienness is certainly not concerned with white or black skin or religion.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Muslims did not realise that the economic, educational, and cultural difficulties they were experiencing were born out of their subjection to foreign rule and because of economic underdevelopment.

British Policy of Divide and Rule

Muslims were generally looked upon with suspicion initially, especially after the Wahabi and 1857 revolts, and were subjected to repression and discrimination by the British government. Also, the introduction of English education had undermined Arabic and Persian learning, which added further to the economic backwardness and exclusion of the Muslims from service.

After the 1870s, with signs of the emergence of Indian nationalism and growing politicisation of the educated middle classes, the government reversed its policy of repression of Muslims and, instead, decided to rally them behind the government through concessions, favours, and reservations, and used them against nationalist forces. The government used persons like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to counter the growing influence of the Congress. Syed Ahmed Khan had a broad-minded and reformist outlook initially, but later he started supporting the colonial government, exhorting the Muslim masses to stay away from the Congress and not to get politicised. He also started talking of separate interests of Hindus and Muslims.

Communalism in History Writing

Initially suggested by imperialist historians and later adopted by some chauvinist Indian historians, the communal interpretation of Indian history portrayed the ancient phase as the Hindu phase and the medieval phase (which included the rule of the Turks, the Afghans, and the Mughals) as the Muslim phase. The conflicts of ruling classes during the medieval phase were distorted and exaggerated as Hindu-Muslim conflicts.

Historians ignored the fact that politics, ancient and medieval as of all times and anywhere, was based on economic and political interests and not on religious considerations. It was in the interests of the British and communal historians to refuse to acknowledge the notion of

View

Communal harmony could not be permanently established in our country so long as highly distorted versions of history were taught in her schools and colleges, through the history textbooks.

M.K. Gandhi

a composite culture in India. On its part, the Hindu communal view of history chose to project the view that Indian society and culture had reached ideal heights in the ancient period from which they began to decay in the medieval period because of 'Muslim' rule. In this, there was a refusal to acknowledge how Indian economy and technology, religion and philosophy, arts and literature, culture and society had developed and been enriched in the medieval period.

Side-effects of Socio-religious Reform Movements

Reform movements such as the Wahabi Movement among Muslims and Shuddhi among Hindus with their militant overtones made the role of religion more vulnerable to communalism. Reforms, at times, were seen as a process of insulating one community from the influence of another religious community.

Side-effects of Militant Nationalism

The early nationalists made conscious efforts to remove minority fears. Dadabhai Naoroji, presiding over the second Congress session (1886), declared the intentions of the Congress not to raise socio-religious questions in its forums. In 1889, the Congress decided not to take up any issue opposed by the Muslims. But later, with the coming of militant nationalism, a distinct Hindu nationalist tinge was palpable in the nationalist politics. For instance, Tilak's Ganapati and Shivaji festivals and anti-cow slaughter campaigns created much suspicion. Aurobindo's vision of an Aryanised world, the Swadeshi Movement with elements like dips in the Ganga and revolutionary activity with oath-taking before goddesses were hardly likely to enthuse Muslims into these campaigns in a big way. The communal element in the Lucknow Pact (1916) and the Khilafat agitation (1920–22) was too visible to be of insignificant consequences.

When the Khilafat question came up, there was unease among some Congressmen who felt that the issue was not really nationalistic. The fight against imperialistic Britain in this case was not about the economic and political consequences of imperialism, but on the ground that the Caliph and some holy places of Islam were being threatened. The Muslims' sympathy for Turkey was on religious grounds. Even later, the heroes and myths and cultural traditions the Muslims appealed to belonged not to the history of India but to the history of West Asia. Though this tendency did not immediately clash with Indian nationalism, but in fact made its supporters anti-imperialist, in the longer term, it encouraged the habit of looking at political questions from a religious point of view.

Communal Reaction by Majority Community

The minority communalism met with a reaction from the majority community. From the 1870s itself, some Hindu zamindars, moneylenders, and middle-class professionals began to give expression to anti-Muslim sentiments. They went to the extent of declaring that the British had liberated the land from Muslim tyranny and saved the Hindus from the oppression by Muslims. The cause of Hindi was given a communal colour by saying that Urdu was the language of the Muslims (which was not historically quite correct).

Then came organisations to promote a communal outlook. The Punjab Hindu Sabha, founded in 1909 by U.N. Mukherjee and Lal Chand, opposed the Congress for trying to unite Indians of all colours into a single nation. They argued that Hindus should side with the colonial government in their fight against Muslims. The All-India Hindu Mahasabha held its first session in April 1915 with the Maharaja of Kasim Bazar as president. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was established in 1925. However, Hindu communalism was not a strong force for a long time as the modern secular intelligentsia and middle class among Hindus wielded a greater influence. This was not the case with the Muslims; the Muslim communal elements—landlords, traditional religious leaders, and bureaucrats—exercised a lot of influence on the Muslims.

The one-upmanship of different versions of communal tendencies was a factor which deterred any effective counter-offensive against communalism.

Evolution of the Two-Nation Theory

The development of the two-nation theory over the years is as follows:

1887: There was a frontal attack on the Congress by Dufferin, the viceroy, and Colvin, the Lt. Governor of the United Provinces. Syed Ahmed Khan and Raja Shiv Prasad of Bhinga were propped up as an anti-Congress front by the government. Syed Ahmed Khan appealed to the educated Muslims to stay away from the Congress, although some Muslims did join the Congress. These included Badruddin Tyabji, Mir Musharraf Hussain, A. Bhimji, and Hamid Ali Khan.

1906: Agha Khan led a Muslim delegation (called the Shimla delegation) to the viceroy, Lord Minto, to demand separate electorates for Muslims at all levels and that the Muslim representation should be commensurate not only with their numerical strength but also with their "political importance and their contribution to the British Empire". Minto assured them of special communal representation in excess of their population for their "extraordinary service" to the empire.

The All India Muslim League was founded by the Agha Khan, Nawab Salimullah of Dacca, Nawab Mohsin-ul-Mulk, and Nawab Waqar-ul-Mulk to preach loyalty to the British government and to keep the Muslim intelligentsia away from the Congress.

1909: Separate electorates were awarded under Morley-Minto Reforms.

Punjab Hindu Sabha was founded by U.N. Mukherji and Lal Chand.

1915: First session of All India Hindu Mahasabha was held under the aegis of the Maharaja of Kasim Bazar.

1912–24: During this period, the Muslim League was dominated by younger Muslim nationalists, but their nationalism was inspired by a communal view of political questions.

1916: The Congress accepted the Muslim League demand of separate electorates, and the Congress and the League presented joint demands to the government. But the Congress and the League came together as separate political entities and the Congress gave political legitimacy to the existence of the Muslim League.

1920–22: Muslims participated in the Rowlatt and Khilafat Non-Cooperation agitations, but there was a communal element in the political outlook of the Muslims.

1920s: The shadow of communal riots loomed large over the country. The Arya Samajists started Shuddhi (purification) and Sangathan (organisation) movements. The Shuddhi movement was aimed at reconverting to Hinduism those who had converted to Islam. The Muslims started the Tabligh and Tanzeem movements in retaliation.

Some nationalists also turned communal. The Swarajists were divided along communal lines, and many of the Responsivists among them joined the Hindu Mahasabha. The Ali brothers, after having put up a spectacular united front with the Congress, accused the Congress of protecting only Hindu interests.

The Congress failed to evolve a suitable strategy to counter the rise of communalism.

1928: The Nehru Report on constitutional reforms as suggested by the Congress was opposed by Muslim hardliners and the Sikh League. Jinnah proposed 14 points demanding separate electorates and reservation for Muslims in government service and self-governing bodies. By negotiating with the Muslim League, the Congress made a number of mistakes:

1. It gave legitimacy to the politics of the League, thus giving recognition to the division of society into separate communities with separate interests.
2. It undermined the role of secular, nationalist Muslims.
3. Concessions to one community prompted other communities to demand similar concessions.
4. Launching an all-out attack on communalism became difficult.

1930–34: Some Muslim groups, such as the Jamaat-i-ulema-i-Hind, State of Kashmir and Khudai Khidmatgars

participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement, but, overall, the participation of Muslims was nowhere near the level of the Khilafat agitation. While the Congress stayed away from two of the three round table conferences held in London to discuss further constitutional reforms, the communalists attended all three of them.

1932: The Communal Award accepted all Muslim communal demands contained in the 14 points.

After 1937: After the Muslim League performed badly in the 1937 provincial elections, it decided to resort to extreme communalism. There began a tendency to project the Muslims, not as a minority but as a separate nation (in the early 1930s this idea of a separate Muslim nation was proposed by a young Muslim intellectual Rahmat Ali and later developed further by the poet Iqbal). From now onwards, communalism was organised as a mass movement with its base among middle and upper classes. Vicious propaganda was launched against the Congress by Z.A. Suleri, F.M. Durrani, Fazl-ul-Haq, etc. Extreme communalism was based on fear, hatred, and violence of word and deed.

Till 1937, there had been liberal communalism, centred around safeguards and reservations. It was communal while upholding certain liberal, democratic, humanistic, and nationalistic values and the notion that these diverse communities could be welded together into one nation in one national interest.

The extreme communalism of Muslims found its echo in the militant communal nationalism of Hindus represented by organisations such as the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS and in the thoughts of leaders like Golwalkar. There were several reasons for the advent of extreme communalism.

1. With increasing radicalisation, the reactionary elements searched for a social base through channels of communalism.

2. The colonial administration had exhausted all other means to divide nationalists.

3. Earlier failures to challenge communal tendencies had emboldened the communal forces.

Views

The question of majority and minority community is a creation of the British Government and would disappear with their withdrawal.

M.K. Gandhi

We divide and they rule.

Maulana Mohammad Ali

After 1940 it was clear as daylight to the Muslims that their real destiny was neither a second class citizenship in a uni-national Hindu state, nor even the doubtful partnership in a multinational India...but a separate nationhood with a separate homeland.

History of Freedom Movement of Pakistan

The independent sovereign nation of Pakistan was born in the Muslim University of Aligarh.

Agha Khan

1937–39: Jinnah blocked all avenues for conciliation by forwarding the impossible demand that the Congress should declare itself a Hindu organisation and recognise the Muslim League as the sole representative of the Indian Muslims.

March 24, 1940: The 'Pakistan Resolution' was passed at the Lahore session of the Muslim League calling for "grouping of all geographically contiguous Muslim majority areas (mainly north-western and eastern India) into independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign, and adequate safeguards to Muslims in other areas where they are in a minority".

During Second World War The British India Government gave a virtual veto to the League on political settlement. The League made full use of this privilege and stuck to its demand of a separate Pakistan throughout the negotiations under the August Offer, Cripps' proposals, Shimla Conference, and Cabinet Mission Plan. Finally, it got what it had aspired for—an independent Pakistan comprising Muslim majority areas of Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, North-West Frontier Province, and Bengal in 1947.

Summary

- **Last Two Years of British Rule**
  - * ***Two basic strands—***
  1. Tortuous negotiations resulting in freedom and partition, accompanied by communal violence
  2. Sporadic, localised mass action
  - * ***July 1945*** Labour government comes to power in Britain
  - * ***August 1945*** Elections to central and provincial assemblies announced
  - * ***September 1945*** Announcement of a Constituent Assembly after War
  - * ***A change in government's attitude due to***
    Change in global power equations; UK no longer a power
    Labour government sympathetic to India
    Tired British soldiers and shattered British economy
    Anti-imperialist wave throughout Asia
    Officials feared another Congress revolt
  - * ***Two Main Election Planks for Congress***
    1. Repression of 1942
    2. Mass pressure against trial of INA POWs
  - * ***INA Agitation—Main Features***
    Had unprecedented high pitch and intensity
    Had wide geographical and social spread
    Penetrated traditional bulwarks of Raj—government employees and loyalists
    With each day, became a purely India versus Britain issue
  - * ***Three Upsurges***
    1. November 21, 1945 in Calcutta over INA trials
    2. February 11, 1946 in Calcutta over seven-year sentence to an INA officer
    3. February 18, 1946 in Bombay, strike by Royal Indian Navy Ratings

  Congress did not support these upsurges because of their timing and tactics
  - * ***Election Results***
    Congress won 57 out of 102 seats in Central Assembly;
  — got majority in Madras, Bombay, UP, Bihar, Orissa, and Central Provinces and coalition partner with Unionists and Akalis in Punjab
    Muslim League won 30 reserved seats in Central Assembly; got majority in Bengal, Sindh
  - * ***Why British Withdrawal Seemed Imminent by 1946***

1. Success of nationalist forces in struggle for hegemony
2. Demoralisation among bureaucracy and the loyalist sections
3. Limitations of British strategy of conciliation and repression
4. Demands of leniency for INA by armymen and RIN ratings' revolt
5. An entirely official rule was impossible

* ***Main Aim of Government Policy Now***
  A graceful withdrawal after settlement on modalities of transfer of power, and post-imperial Indo-British relations

● **Cabinet Mission**

* ***Proposals***
  Rejection of Pakistan
  Grouping of existing assemblies into three sections A, B, C
  Three-tier executive and legislature at province, princely, states and union level
  Provincial assemblies to elect a constituent assembly
  Common centre for defence, communications, external affairs
  Provinces to have autonomy and residual powers
  Princely states free to have an arrangement with the successor government or the British Government
  In future, a province free to come out of the section or the union

  Meanwhile, an interim government to be formed from constituent assembly.
* ***Interpretation*** Congress claimed that the grouping was optional, while the League thought that the grouping was compulsory. Mission decided the matter in the League's favour
* ***Acceptance*** League, followed by Congress, accepted Cabinet Mission proposals in June 1946.
* ***Further Developments: July 1946*** League withdrew from the Plan after Nehru's press statement, and gave a call for "direct action" from August 16, 1946.
  September 1946 An Interim Government headed by Nehru was sworn in.
  October 1946 League joins Interim Government and follows an obstructionist approach.
  February 1947 Congress members demand removal of League members; League demands dissolution of Constituent Assembly.

● **Birth and Spread of Communalism in India**

CHAPTER 25

Independence with Partition

Attlee's Statement of February 20, 1947

Clement Attlee, the British prime minister, sensing the trouble all around, made an announcement on February 20, 1947. The British House of Commons declared the British intention of leaving the Indian subcontinent.

Main Points of Attlee's Statement

- A deadline of June 30, 1948 was fixed for transfer of power even if the Indian politicians had not agreed by that time on the constitution.
- The British would relinquish power either to some form of central government or in some areas to the existing provincial governments if the constituent assembly was not fully representative, i.e., if the Muslim majority provinces did not join.
- British powers and obligations *vis-a-vis* the princely states would lapse with transfer of power, but these would not be transferred to any successor government in British India.
- Mountbatten would replace Wavell as the viceroy. The statement contained clear hints of partition and

even Balkanisation of the country into numerous states and was, in essence, a reversion of the Cripps Offer.

Why a Date Fixed by Government for Withdrawal

- The government hoped that a fixed date would shock the parties into an agreement on the main question.
- The government was keen to avert the developing constitutional crisis.
- The government hoped to convince the Indians of British sincerity.
- The truth in Wavell's assessment could no longer be denied—that an irreversible decline of the government's authority had taken place.

Congress Stand

The provision of transfer of power to more than one centre was acceptable to Congress because it meant that the existing assembly could go ahead and frame a constitution for the areas represented by it, and it offered a way out of the existing deadlock.

But the illusory hopes of a settlement were soon shattered as the statement proved to be a prelude to the final showdown. The League launched a civil disobedience movement to overthrow the coalition government in Punjab, as it felt emboldened by the statement.

Independence and Partition

The communal riots and the unworkability of the Congress-League coalition compelled many in early 1947 to think in terms of accepting the so far unthinkable idea of partition. The most insistent demand now came from the Hindu and Sikh communal groups in Bengal and Punjab who were alarmed at the prospect of compulsory grouping which might find them in Pakistan. The Hindu Mahasabha in Bengal was assessing the feasibility of a separate Hindu province in West Bengal.

On **March 10, 1947**, Nehru stated that the Cabinet Mission's was the best solution if carried out; the only real alternative was the partition of Punjab and Bengal.

In **April 1947**, the Congress president, Kripalani, communicated to the viceroy— "... rather than have a battle, we shall let them have their Pakistan provided you allow Bengal and Punjab to be partitioned in a fair manner."

Mountbatten as the Viceroy

Mountbatten proved more firm and quick in taking decisions than his predecessors because he was informally given more powers to decide things on the spot. He also had the advantage of the firm decision of the British government to quit at the earliest. His task was to explore the options of unity and division till October 1947 and then advise the British government on the form of transfer of power. But he soon discovered that the broad contours of the scenario to emerge were discernible even before he came to India. The Cabinet Mission Plan was a dead horse, and Jinnah was obstinate about not settling for anything less than a sovereign state. But a serious attempt at unity would involve supporting those forces which wanted a unified India and countering those who opposed it. Mountbatten preferred to woo both sides.

Mountbatten Plan, June 3, 1947

The freedom-with-partition formula was coming to be widely accepted well before Mountbatten arrived in India. One major innovation (actually suggested by V.P. Menon) was the immediate transfer of power on the basis of grant of dominion status (with a right of secession), thus obviating the need to wait for an agreement in the constituent assembly on a new political structure.

Main Points

The important points of the plan were as follows:

- Punjab and Bengal Legislative Assemblies would meet in two groups, Hindus and Muslims, to vote for partition. If a simple majority of either group voted for partition, then these provinces would be partitioned.
- In case of partition, two dominions and two constituent assemblies would be created.
- Sindh would take its own decision.
- Referendums in NWFP and Sylhet district of Bengal would decide the fate of these areas.

View

There is, however, no basis for the claim that the Civil Disobedience Movement directly led to independence. The campaigns of Gandhi … came to an ignoble end about fourteen years before India achieved independence … During the First World War the Indian revolutionaries sought to take advantage of German help in the shape of war materials to free the country by armed revolt. But the attempt did not succeed. During the Second World War Subhas Bose followed the same method and created the INA. In spite of brilliant planning and initial success, the violent campaigns of Subhas Bose failed … The Battles for India's freedom were also being fought against Britain, though indirectly, by Hitler in Europe and Japan in Asia. None of these scored direct success, but few would deny that it was the cumulative effect of all the three that brought freedom to India. In particular, the revelations made by the INA trial, and the reaction it produced in India, made it quite plain to the British, already exhausted by the war, that they could no longer depend upon the loyalty of the sepoys for maintaining their authority in India. This had probably the greatest influence upon their final decision to quit India.

R.C. Mazumdar

● Since the Congress had conceded a unified India, all their other points would be met, namely,

(i) independence for princely states ruled out—they would join either India or Pakistan;
(ii) independence for Bengal ruled out;
(iii) accession of Hyderabad to Pakistan ruled out (Mountbatten supported the Congress on this);
(iv) freedom to come on August 15, 1947; and
(v) a boundary commission to be set up if partition was to be effected.

Thus, the League's demand was conceded to the extent that Pakistan would be created and the Congress' position on unity was taken into account to make Pakistan as small as possible. Mountbatten's formula was to divide India but retain maximum unity.

Why Congress Accepted Dominion Status

The Congress was willing to accept dominion status despite its being against the Lahore Congress (1929) spirit because:

(i) it would ensure a peaceful and quick transfer of power;
(ii) it was more important for the Congress to assume authority to check the explosive situation; and
(iii) it would allow for some much-needed continuity in the bureaucracy and the army.

For Britain, the dominion status offered a chance to keep India in the Commonwealth, even if temporarily, considering the economic strength, defence potential, and greater value of trade and investment in India.

Rationale for an Early Date (August 15, 1947)

Britain wanted to secure Congress' agreement to the dominion status. At the same time, the British could escape the responsibility for the communal situation.

The plan was put into effect without the slightest delay. The legislative assemblies of Bengal and Punjab decided in favour of partition of these two provinces. Thus, East Bengal and West Punjab joined Pakistan; West Bengal and East Punjab remained with the Indian Union. The referendum in Sylhet resulted in the incorporation of that district in East Bengal. Two boundary commissions, one in respect of each province, were constituted to demarcate the boundaries of the new provinces. The referendum in NWFP decided in favour of Pakistan, the Provincial Congress refraining from the referendum. Baluchistan and Sindh threw in their lot with Pakistan.

Indian Independence Act

On July 5, 1947 the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act which was based on the Mountbatten Plan, and the Act got royal assent on July 18, 1947. The Act was implemented on August 15, 1947.

The Act provided for the creation of two independent dominions of India and Pakistan with effect from August 15, 1947. Each dominion was to have a governor general to be responsible for the effective operation of the Act. The constituent assembly of the each new dominion was to exercise the powers of the legislature of that dominion, and the existing Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of States were to be automatically dissolved. For the

Plan Balkan

Between March and May of 1947, Mountbatten decided that the Cabinet Mission Plan had become untenable and formulated an alternative plan. This plan envisaged the transfer of power to separate provinces (or to a confederation, if formed before the transfer), with Punjab and Bengal given the option to vote for partition of their provinces. The various units thus formed along with the princely states (rendered independent by lapse of paramountcy) would have the option of joining India or Pakistan or remaining separate. The plan was quickly abandoned after Nehru reacted violently to it.

transitional period, i.e., till a new constitution was adopted by each dominion, the governments of the two dominions were to be carried on in accordance with the Government of India Act, 1935.

As per the provisions of the Indian Independence Act, 1947, Pakistan became independent on August 14 while India got its freedom on August 15, 1947. M.A. Jinnah became the first Governor General of Pakistan. India, however, decided to request Lord Mountbatten to continue as the Governor General of India.

Problems of Early Withdrawal

The breakneck speed of events under Mountbatten caused anomalies in arranging the details of partition and totally failed to prevent the Punjab massacre, because:

- there were no transitional institutional structures within which partition problems could be tackled;
- Mountbatten had hoped to be the common Governor General of India and Pakistan, thus providing the necessary link, but Jinnah wanted the position for himself in Pakistan;
- there was a delay in announcing the Boundary Commission Award (under Radcliffe); though the award was ready by August 12, 1947, Mountbatten decided to make it public after August 15 so that the British could escape all responsibility of disturbances.

Integration of States

During 1946–47, there was a new upsurge of the State People's Movement demanding political rights and elective

representation in the Constituent Assembly. Nehru presided over the All India State People's Conference sessions in Udaipur (1945) and Gwalior (April 1947). He declared that the states refusing to join the Constituent Assembly would be treated as hostile. In July 1947, Vallabhbhai Patel took charge of the new States Department. Under Patel, the incorporation of Indian states took place in two phases with a skilful combination of baits and threats of mass pressure in both.

Phase I By August 15, 1947, all states except Kashmir, Hyderabad, and Junagarh had signed an instrument of accession with the Indian government, acknowledging central authority over defence, external affairs, and communication. The princes agreed to this fairly easily because (i) they were 'surrendering' only what they never had (these three functions had been a part of the British paramountcy), and (ii) there was no change in the internal political structure.

Phase II The second phase involved a much more difficult process of 'integration' of states with neighbouring provinces or into new units like the Kathiawar Union, Vindhya and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan or Himachal Pradesh alongwith internal constitutional changes in states, which, for some years, retained their old boundaries (Hyderabad, Mysore, Travancore-Cochin). This phase was accomplished within a year. The principal bait offered was a generous privy purse while some princes were made governors and *rajpramukhs* in free India.

This rapid political unification of the country after independence was Patel's greatest achievement.

Inevitability of Partition

Why Congress Accepted Partition

● The Congress was only accepting the inevitable due to the long-term failure to draw the Muslim masses into the national movement. The partition reflects the success-failure dichotomy of the Congress-led anti-imperialist movement. The Congress had a two fold task—(i) structuring diverse

classes, communities, groups, and regions into a nation, and (ii) securing independence for this nation. While the Congress succeeded in building up sufficient national consciousness to exert pressure on the British to quit India, it failed to complete the task of welding the nation, especially in integrating the Muslims into the nation.

● Only an immediate transfer of power could forestall the spread of 'direct action' and communal violence. The

Views

The British were neither the foes of the Hindus nor friends of the Muslims. They set up Pakistan not as a gesture of friendship towards the Muslims, but under the compulsions of their international policies.

Wali Khan

It was not so much that Britain pursued a policy of divide and rule as that the process of devolving power by stages in a politically and socially desperate country was inherently divisive.

R.J. Moore

The truth is that we were tired men, and we were getting on in years too. Few of us could stand the prospect of going to prison again—and if we had stood out for a united India as we wished it, prison obviously awaited us. We saw the fires burning in the Punjab and heard every day of the killings. The plan for partition offered a way out and we took it.

Jawaharlal Nehru

I felt that if we did not accept partition, India would be split into many bits and would be completely ruined. My experience of office for one year convinced me that the way we have been proceeding would lead us to disaster. We would not have had one Pakistan but several. We would have had Pakistan cells in every office.

Sardar Patel

Congress, as well as the Muslim League, had accepted partition...The real position was, however, completely different...The acceptance was only in a resolution of the AICC of the Congress and on the register of the Muslim League. The people of India had not accepted partition with free and open minds. Some had accepted it out of sheer anger and resentment and others out of a sense of despair.

Maulana Azad

virtual collapse of the Interim Government also made the notion of Pakistan appear unavoidable.

● The partition plan ruled out independence for the princely states which could have been a greater danger to Indian unity as it would have meant Balkanisation of the country.

● Acceptance of partition was only a final act of the process of step-by-step concessions to the League's championing of a separate Muslim state.

— During Cripps Mission (1942), autonomy of Muslim majority provinces was accepted.

— During Gandhi-Jinnah talks (1944), Gandhi accepted the right of self-determination of Muslim-majority provinces.

— After the Cabinet Mission Plan (1946), Congress conceded the possibility of Muslim majority provinces setting up a separate constituent assembly. Later, the Congress accepted, without demur, that grouping was compulsory (December 1946).

— Official reference to Pakistan came in March 1947, when CWC resolution stated that Punjab (and by implication, Bengal) must be partitioned if the country was divided.

— With the 3rd June Plan, Congress accepted partition.

● While loudly asserting the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, the Congress quietly accepted compulsory grouping and accepted the partition most of all because it could not stop the communal riots.

There was nevertheless much wishful thinking and lack of appreciation of the dynamics of communal feeling by the Congress, especially in Nehru who stated at various times—

"Once the British left, Hindu-Muslim differences would be patched up and a free, united India would be built up."

"Partition is only temporary."

"Partition would be peaceful—once Pakistan was conceded, what was there to fight for?"

View

I alone with the help of my Secretary and my typewriter won Pakistan for the Muslims.

M.A. Jinnah

The communalism of the 1920s and the 1930s was different from that of the 1940s. Now it was an all-out effort for an assertive 'Muslim nation'. Congress leadership underestimated the potential of this type of communalism.

Gandhi's Helplessness

Gandhi felt helpless because there had been a communalisation of the people. He had no option but to accept partition because the people wanted it. How could there be a movement to fight communalism involving a communalised people? He asked the Congressmen, however, not to accept it in their hearts.

Summary

- **Attlee's Statement (February 20, 1947)**
  - June 30, 1948 as deadline for transfer of power
  - Power may be transferred to one centre or in some areas to existing provincial governments.
- **Mountbatten Plan June 3, 1947**
  - Punjab and Bengal Assemblies to take decision on partition.
  - Sindh to take its own decision
  - Referendum to be held in NWFP and Sylhet district
  - Two dominions to be created if partition is to take place, with two Constituent Assemblies
  - Freedom to be granted on August 15, 1947
- **July 18, 1947**
  - The Indian Independence Act 1947 got royal assent, and it was implemented on August 15, 1947.
- **Why partition was seen to be inevitable**

UNIT 9

India under British Rule: Governance and Other Aspects

Chapters 26 to 32

CHAPTER 26

Constitutional, Administrative, and Judicial Developments

The establishment of the East India Company in 1600 and its transformation into a ruling body from a trading one in 1765 had little immediate impact on Indian polity and governance. But the period between 1773 and 1858 under the Company rule, and then under the British Crown till 1947, witnessed a plethora of constitutional and administrative changes. The nature and objective of these changes were to serve the British imperial ideology, but, unintentionally, they

introduced elements of the modern State into India's political and administrative system.

Constitutional Development between 1773 and 1858

After the Battle of Buxar (1764), the East India Company got the Diwani (right to collect revenue) of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. An annual subsidy was to be paid to the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II, and an annual pension to the Nawab of Awadh, Shuja-ud-Daula. The Company appointed two Indians as the deputy diwans—Mohammad Reza Khan for Bengal and Raja Shitab Rai for Bihar.

1767 The first intervention in Indian affairs by the British government came in 1767. It demanded 10 per cent share in the plunder, amounting to 4 million pounds annually.

1765–72 The dual system of government where the Company had the authority but no responsibility and its Indian representatives had all the responsibility but no authority continued for seven years. This period was characterised by:

- rampant corruption among servants of the Company who made full use of private trading to enrich themselves;
- excessive revenue collection and oppression of peasantry; and
- the Company's bankruptcy, while the servants were flourishing.

By now the British government decided to regulate the Company to bring some order into its business. From now, there would be a gradual increase in controlling laws.

The Regulating Act of 1773

- The 1773 Regulating Act brought about the British government's involvement in Indian affairs in the effort to control and regulate the functioning of the East India Company. It recognised that the Company's role in India extended beyond mere trade to administrative and political fields, and introduced the element of centralised administration.
- The directors of the Company were required to

submit all correspondence regarding revenue affairs and civil and military administration to the government. (Thus, for the first time, the British cabinet was given the right to exercise control over Indian affairs.)

- In Bengal, the administration was to be carried out by governor general and a council consisting of four members, representing civil and military government. They were required to function according to the majority rule. Warren Hastings and four others were named in the act, later ones were to be appointed by the Company.
- A Supreme Court of judicature was to be established in Bengal with original and appellate jurisdictions where all subjects could seek redressal. In practice, however, the Supreme Court had a debatable jurisdiction *vis-a-vis* the council which created various problems.
- The governor general could exercise some powers over Bombay and Madras—again, a vague provision which created many problems.

The whole scheme was based on checks and balances.

Amendments (1781) ● The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was defined—within Calcutta, it was to administer the personal law of the defendant.

- The servants of the government were immune if they did anything while discharging their duties.
- Social and religious usages of the subjects were to be honoured.

Pitt's India Act of 1784

- The Pitt's India Act gave the British government a large measure of control over the Company's affairs. In fact, the Company became a subordinate department of the State. The Company's territories in India were termed 'British possessions'.
- The government's control over the Company's affairs was greatly extended. A Board of Control consisting of the chancellor of exchequer, a secretary of state, and four members of the Privy Council (to be appointed by the Crown) were to exercise control over the Company's civil, military, and revenue affairs. All dispatches were to be approved by the board. Thus, a dual system of control was set up.
- In India, the governor general was to have a council

of three (including the commander-in-chief), and the presidencies of Bombay and Madras were made subordinate to the governor general.

- A general prohibition was placed on aggressive wars and treaties (breached often).

The Act of 1786

- Cornwallis wanted to have the powers of both the governor general and the commander-in-chief. The new act conceded this demand and also gave him the power.
- Cornwallis was allowed to override the council's decision if he owned the responsibility for the decision. Later, this provision was extended to all the governors general.

The Charter Act of 1793

- The act renewed the Company's commercial privileges for the next 20 years.
- The Company, after paying the necessary expenses, interest, dividends, salaries, etc., from the Indian revenues, was to pay 5 lakh pounds annually to the British government.
- The royal approval was mandated for the appointment of the governor general, the governors, and the commander-in-chief.
- Senior officials of the Company were debarred from leaving India without permission—doing so was treated as resignation.
- The Company was empowered to give licences to individuals as well as the Company's employees to trade in India. The licences, known as 'privilege' or 'country trade', paved the way for shipments of opium to China.
- The revenue administration was separated from the judiciary functions, and this led to disappearing of the *Maal Adalats*.
- The Home Government members were to be paid out of Indian revenues, which continued up to 1919.

The Charter Act of 1813

In England, the business interests were pressing for an end to the Company's monopoly over trade in India because of a spirit of *laissez-faire* and the continental system by Napoleon by which the European ports were closed for Britain. The 1813 Act sought to redress these grievances:

● The Company's monopoly over trade in India ended, but the Company retained the trade with China and the trade in tea.

● The Company's shareholders were given a 10.5 per cent dividend on the revenue of India.

● The Company was to retain the possession of territories and the revenue for 20 years more, without prejudice to the sovereignty of the Crown. (Thus, the constitutional position of the British territories in India was defined explicitly for the first time.)

● Powers of the Board of Control were further enlarged.

● A sum of one lakh rupees was to be set aside for the revival, promotion, and encouragement of literature, learning, and science among the natives of India, every year. (This was an important statement from the point of State's responsibility for education.)

● The regulations made by the Councils of Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta were now required to be laid before the British Parliament. The constitutional position of the British territories in India was thus explicitly defined for the first time.

● Separate accounts were to be kept regarding commercial transactions and territorial revenues. The power of superintendence and direction of the Board of Control was not only defined but also enlarged considerably.

● Christian missionaries were also permitted to come to India and preach their religion.

The Charter Act of 1833

● The lease of 20 years to the Company was further extended. Territories of India were to be governed in the name of the Crown.

● The Company's monopoly over trade with China and in tea also ended.

● All restrictions on European immigration and the acquisition of property in India were lifted. Thus, the way was paved for the wholesale European colonisation of India.

● In India, a financial, legislative, and administrative centralisation of the government was envisaged:

— The governor general was given the power to

superintend, control, and direct all civil and military affairs of the Company.

— Bengal, Madras, Bombay, and all other territories were placed under complete control of the governor general.

— All revenues were to be raised under the authority of the governor general who would have complete control over the expenditure too.

— The Governments of Madras and Bombay were drastically deprived of their legislative powers and left with a right of proposing to the governor general the projects of law which they thought to be expedient.

- A law member was added to the governor general's council for professional advice on law-making.
- Indian laws were to be codified and consolidated.
- No Indian citizen was to be denied employment under the Company on the basis of religion, colour, birth, descent, etc. (Although the reality was different, this declaration formed the sheet-anchor of political agitation in India.)
- The administration was urged to take steps to ameliorate the conditions of slaves and to ultimately abolish slavery. (Slavery was abolished in 1843.)

The Charter Act of 1853

- The Company was to continue possession of territories unless the Parliament provided otherwise.
- The strength of the Court of Directors was reduced to 18.
- The Company's patronage over the services was dissolved—the services were now thrown open to a competitive examination.
- The law member became the full member of the governor general's executive council.
- The separation of the executive and legislative functions of the Government of British India progressed with the inclusion of six additional members for legislative purposes.
- Local representation was introduced in the Indian legislature. The legislative wing came to be known as the Indian Legislative Council. However, a law to be promulgated

needed the assent of the governor general, and the governor general could veto any bill of the legislative council.

The Act for Better Government of India 1858

The 1857 revolt had exposed the Company's limitations in administering under a complex situation. Till then, there had not been much accountability. The 1858 Act sought to rectify this anomaly:

- India was to be governed by and in the name of the Crown through a secretary of state and a council of 15. The initiative and the final decision was to be with the secretary of state, and the council was to be just advisory in nature. (Thus, the dual system introduced by the Pitt's India Act came to an end.)
- Governor general became the viceroy (his prestige, if not authority, increased).

The assumption of power by the Crown was one of formality rather than substance. It gave a decent burial to an already dead horse—the Company's administration.

Developments after 1858 till Independence

Indian Councils Act 1861

- The 1861 Act marked an advance in that the principle of representatives of non-officials in legislative bodies became accepted; laws were to be made after due deliberation, and as pieces of legislation they could be changed only by the same deliberative process. Law-making was thus no longer seen as the exclusive business of the executive.
- The portfolio system introduced by Lord Canning laid the foundations of cabinet government in India, each branch of the administration having its official head and spokesman in the government, who was responsible for its administration.
- The act by vesting legislative powers in the Governments of Bombay and Madras and by making provision for the institution of similar legislative councils in other provinces laid the foundations of legislative devolution.

However, the legislative councils established by the Act of 1861 possessed no real powers and had many weaknesses. The councils could not discuss important matters and no financial matters at all without the previous approval of government. They had no control over budget. They could not discuss executive action. Final passing of the bill needed viceroy's approval. Even if approved by the viceroy, the secretary of state could disallow a legislation. Indians associated as non-officials were members of elite sections only.

Indian Councils Act 1892

- In 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded. The Congress saw reform of the councils as the "root of all other reforms". It was in response to the Congress demand that the legislative councils be expanded that the number of non-official members was increased both in the central (Imperial) and provincial legislative councils by the Indian Councils Act, 1892.
- The Legislative Council of the Governor General (or the Indian Legislative Council, as it came to be known) was enlarged.
- The universities, district boards, municipalities, *zamindars,* trade bodies, and chambers of commerce were empowered to recommend members to the provincial councils. Thus was introduced the principle of representation.
- Though the term 'election' was firmly avoided in the act, an element of indirect election was accepted in the selection of some of the non-official members.
- The members of the legislatures were now entitled to express their views upon financial statements which were henceforth to be made on the floor of the legislatures.
- They could also put questions within certain limits to the executive on matters of public interest after giving six days' notice.

Indian Councils Act 1909

- Popularly known as the ***Morley-Minto Reforms***, the act made the first attempt to bring in a representative and popular element in the governance of the country.
- The strength of the Imperial Legislative Council was increased.

● With regard to the central government, an Indian member was taken for the first time in the Executive Council of the Governor General (Satyendra Prasad Sinha was the first Indian to join the Governor General's—or Viceroy's—Executive Council, as law member.)

● The members of the Provincial Executive Council were increased.

● The powers of the legislative councils, both central and provincial, were increased.

Under this act the real power remained with the government and the councils were left with no functions but criticism.

The introduction of separate electorates for Muslims created new problems.

Besides separate electorates for the Muslims, representation in excess of their population strength was accorded to the Muslims. Also, the income qualification for Muslim voters was kept lower than that for Hindus.

The system of election was very indirect.

Thus, the representation of the people at large remained remote and unreal.

Government of India Act 1919

This act was based on what are popularly known as the ***Montague-Chelmsford Reforms***. In August 1917, the British government for the first time declared that its objective was to gradually introduce responsible government in India, but as an integral part of the British Empire.

The Act of 1919, clarified that there would be only a gradual development of self-governing institutions in India and that the British Parliament—and not self-determination of the people of India—would determine the time and manner of each step along the path of constitutional progress.

● Under the 1919 Act, the Indian Legislative Council at the Centre was replaced by a bicameral system consisting of a Council of State (Upper House) and a Legislative Assembly (Lower House). Each house was to have a majority of members who were directly elected. So, direct election was introduced, though the franchise was much restricted being based on qualifications of property, tax, or education.

- The principle of communal representation was extended with separate electorates for Sikhs, Christians, and Anglo-Indians, besides Muslims.
- The act introduced dyarchy in the provinces, which indeed was a substantial step towards transfer of power to the Indian people.
- The provincial legislature was to consist of one house only (legislative council).
- The act separated for the first time the provincial and central budgets, with provincial legislatures being authorised to make their budgets.
- A High Commissioner for India was appointed, who was to hold his office in London for six years and whose duty was to look after Indian trade in Europe. Some of the functions hitherto performed by the Secretary of State for India were transferred to the high commissioner.
- The Secretary of State for India who used to get his pay from the Indian revenue was now to be paid by the British Exchequer, thus undoing an injustice in the Charter Act of 1793.
- Though Indian leaders for the first time got some administrative experience in a constitutional set-up under this act, there was no fulfilment of the demand for responsible government. Though a measure of power devolved on the provinces with demarcation of subjects between centre and provinces, the structure continued to be unitary and centralised. Dyarchy in the provincial sector failed.

The Central Legislature, though more representative than the previous legislative councils and endowed, for the first time, with power to vote supplies, had no power to replace the government, and even its powers in the field of legislation and financial control were limited and subject to the overriding powers of the governor general. Besides his existing power to veto any bill passed by the legislature or to reserve the same for the signification of the British monarch's pleasure, the governor general was given the power to secure the enactment of laws which he considered essential for the safety, tranquility, or interests of British India, or any part of British India.

The Indian legislature under the Act of 1919 was only a non-sovereign law-making body and was powerless before

the executive in all spheres of governmental activity, as Subhash Kashyap observes.

Simon Commission

The 1919 Act had provided that a Royal Commission would be appointed 10 years after the act to report on its working. In November 1927, two years before schedule, the British government announced the appointment of such a commission—the Indian Statutory Commission. The commission submitted its report in 1930. It recommended that dyarchy be abolished, responsible government be extended in the provinces, a federation of British India and the Princely States be established, and that communal electorates be continued.

Three Round Table Conferences were called by the British government to consider the proposals. Subsequently, a **White Paper on Constitutional Reforms** was published by the British government in March 1933 containing provisions for a federal set-up and provincial autonomy. A joint committee of the Houses of the British Parliament was set up under Lord Linlithgow to further consider the scheme. Its report submitted in 1934 said that a federation would be set up if at least 50 per cent of the princely states were ready to join it. The bill prepared on the basis of this report was passed by the British Parliament to become the Government of India Act of 1935.

Government of India Act 1935

- The act, with 321 articles and 10 schedules, contemplated the establishment of an All-India Federation in which Governors' Provinces and the Chief Commissioners' Provinces and those Indian states which might accede to be united were to be included. (The ruler of each Princely State willing to join was to sign an 'instrument of accession' mentioning the extent to which authority was to be surrendered to the federal government.)
- Dyarchy, rejected by the Simon Commission, was provided for in the Federal Executive.
- The Federal Legislature was to have two chambers (bicameral)—the Council of States and the Federal Legislative Assembly. The Council of States (the Upper House) was to be a permanent body.

● There was a provision for joint sitting in cases of deadlock between the houses. There were to be three subject-lists—the ***Federal Legislative List,*** the ***Provincial Legislative List,*** and the ***Concurrent Legislative List. Residuary legislative powers*** were subject to the discretion of the governor general. Even if a bill was passed by the federal legislature, the governor general could veto it, while even acts assented to by the governor general could be disallowed by the King-in-Council.

● Dyarchy in the provinces was abolished and provinces were given autonomy, i.e., the distinction between Reserved and Transferred Subjects was abolished and full responsible government was established, subject to certain safeguards.

● Provinces derived their power and authority directly from the British Crown. They were given independent financial powers and resources. Provincial governments could borrow money on their own security.

● Provincial legislatures were further expanded. Bicameral legislatures were provided in the six provinces of Madras, Bombay, Bengal, United Provinces, Bihar, and Assam, with other five provinces retaining unicameral legislatures.

● The principles of 'communal electorates' and 'weightage' were further extended to depressed classes, women, and labour.

● Franchise was extended, with about 10 per cent of the total population getting the right to vote.

● The act also provided for a Federal Court (which was established in 1937), with original and appellate powers, to interpret the 1935 Act and settle inter-state disputes, but the Privy Council in London was to dominate this court.

● The India Council of the Secretary of State was abolished.

● The All-India Federation as visualised in the act never came into being because of the opposition from different parties of India. The British government decided to introduce the provincial autonomy on April 1, 1937, but the Central government continued to be governed in accordance with the 1919 Act, with minor amendments. The operative part of the Act of 1935 remained in force till August 15, 1947.

The 1935 Act was an endeavour to give India a written constitution, even though Indians were not involved in its

creation, and it was a step towards complete responsible government in India. However, the act provided a rigid constitution with no possibility of internal growth. Right of amendment was reserved for the British Parliament. Extension of the system of communal electorates and representation of various interests promoted separatist tendencies—culminating in the partition of India. The 1935 Act was condemned by nearly all sections and unanimously rejected by the Congress. The Congress demanded, instead, convening of a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise to frame a constitution for independent India.

Various other developments took place after the 1935 Act. There was the August Offer of 1940, the Cripps Proposals of 1942, the C.R. Formula of 1944 trying to seek the cooperation of the Muslim League, the Wavell Plan of 1945, and the Cabinet Mission. Then came the Mountbatten Plan in 1947 and finally the Indian Independence Act, 1947.

[These developments have been extensively discussed in the earlier chapters. The making of the Constitution of independent India is discussed in a later chapter.]

Evolution of Civil Services in India

The civil service system introduced in India by the East India Company for the benefit of its commercial affairs got transformed into a well-structured machinery to look after the administrative affairs of the acquired territories in India. In fact, in the beginning, the term 'civil service' was used to distinguish the servants of the Company engaged in commercial affairs from those people employed in the military and naval services. Gradually, the civil servants were bestowed with other responsibilities and authority.

Cornwallis' Role

Cornwallis (governor general, 1786–93) was the first to bring into existence and organise the civil services. He tried to check corruption through:

- raising the civil servants' salary;
- strict enforcement of rules against private trade;

- debarring civil servants from taking presents, bribes etc.; and
- enforcing promotions through seniority.

Wellesley's Role

In **1800**, Wellesley (governor general, 1798–1805) set up the Fort William College for training of new recruits. In **1806,** Wellesley's college was disapproved by the Court of Directors and instead the East India College was set up at Haileybury in England to impart two years' training to the recruits.

Charter Act of 1853

The 1853 Charter Act ended the Company's patronage, enjoining recruitment to be through an open competition henceforth.

The Indians, however, were barred from high posts from the very beginning. Cornwallis thought, "Every native of Hindustan is corrupt." The Charter Act of 1793 had reserved all posts worth 500 pounds per annum for the covenanted servants of the Company. The reasons for exclusion of Indians were:

- the belief that only the English could establish administrative services serving British interests;
- the belief that the Indians were incapable, untrustworthy, and insensitive to the British interests;
- the fact that there was high competition among the Europeans themselves for lucrative posts, so why offer them to the Indians.

Although the Charter Act of 1833 theoretically threw open the services to the Indians, the relevant provisions were never really implemented. After 1857, when the Indians claimed a share in higher services, the Proclamation of 1858 declared the British intention of including the Indians, freely and impartially, in offices under the civil service.

Indian Civil Service Act of 1861

This act reserved certain offices for convenanted civil servants, but the examination was held in England in the English language, based on classical learning of Greek and Latin. The maximum permissible age was gradually reduced

from 23 (in 1859) to 22 (in 1860) to 21 (in 1866) and to 19 (1878).

In **1863**, Satyendra Nath Tagore became the first Indian to qualify for the Indian Civil Service.

Statutory Civil Service

In **1878–79**, Lytton introduced the Statutory Civil Service consisting of one-sixth of covenanted posts to be filled by Indians of high families through nominations by local governments subject to approval by the secretary of State and the viceroy. But the system failed and was abolished.

Congress Demand and Aitchison Committee

The Indian National Congress raised the demand, after it was set up in 1885, for:

- lowering of age limit for recruitment, and
- holding the examination simultaneously in India and Britain.

The **Aitchison Committee on Public Services (1886)**, set up by Dufferin, recommended:

- dropping of the terms 'covenanted' and 'uncovenanted';
- classification of the civil service into Imperial Indian Civil Service (examination in England), Provincial Civil Service (examination in India), and Subordinate Civil Service (examination in India); and
- raising the age limit to 23.

In **1893**, the House of Commons in England passed a resolution supporting holding of simultaneous examination in India and England, but the resolution was never implemented. Kimberley, the secretary of state, said, "It is indispensable that an adequate number of members of civil service shall always be Europeans."

Montford Reforms 1919

The Montford reforms:

- stated a realistic policy—"If a responsible government is to be established in India, the more Indians we can employ in public service, the better;"

- recommended holding of simultaneous examination in India and England; and
- recommended that one-third of recruitments be made in India itself—to be raised annually by 1.5 per cent.

Lee Commission (1924)

The Lee Commission recommended that:

- the secretary of state should continue to recruit the ICS, the Irrigation branch of the Service of Engineers, the Indian Forest Service, etc.;
- the recruitments for the transferred fields like education and civil medical service be made by provincial governments;
- direct recruitment to ICS on the basis of 50:50 parity between the Europeans and the Indians be reached in 15 years; and
- a Public Service Commission be immediately established (as laid down in the Government of India Act, 1919).

Government of India Act, 1935

The 1935 Act recommended the establishment of a Federal Public Service Commission and Provincial Public Service Commission under their spheres.

But the positions of control and authority remained in British hands and the process of Indianisation of the civil service did not put effective political power in Indian hands since the Indian bureaucrats acted as the agents of colonial rule.

Evaluation of Civil Services under British Rule

Just as Indians were systematically excluded from law and policy-making bodies, they were mostly kept out of the institutions responsible for policy implementation. European supremacy was assured in the civil service as in other spheres of governance. This was done in mainly two ways.

Firstly, although Indians had begun to enter the coveted ranks of the Indian Civil Services (ICS) ever since 1863, entering the civil services was still extremely difficult for the Indians. The entrance examination for the ICS was held

in London in English medium only, and the subjects included classical Greek and Latin learning. Moreover, the maximum age for appearing at the examination was reduced from 23 in 1859 to 19 in 1878 under Lytton.

Secondly, all key positions of power and authority and those which were well-paid were occupied by the Europeans.

Though a slow process of Indianisation occurred after 1918 under nationalist pressure, important and senior positions continued to be occupied by Europeans. But gradually, the Indians came to realise that Indianisation of civil service had not, in any way, transferred effective power into Indian hands. The Indian members of the civil service continued to serve the imperialist interests of their British masters.

Evolution of Police System in Modern India

In pre-colonial India, the governments, under the Mughals and other native states, were autocratic in nature and lacked a separate or formal police system. However, there have been watch guards since time immemorial protecting villages at night. Later, under the Mughal rule there were the *faujdars* who helped in maintaining law and order, and *amils* who were basically revenue collectors but had to contend with rebels, if any. The *kotwal* was responsible for maintenance of law and order in the cities. Even during the dual rule in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa between 1765 and 1772, the zamindars were expected to maintain the staff including *thanedars* for law and order duties and for maintaining peace, as well as dealing with crime and criminals. But very often, the zamidars neglected their duties. They are even said to have colluded with dacoits and shared their loot. In 1770, the institution of the *faujdar* and *amils* were abolished. However, in 1774, Warren Hastings restored the institution of *faujdars* and asked the zamindars to assist them in suppression of dacoits, violence, and disorder. In 1775, *faujdar thanas* were established in the major towns of large districts and were assisted by several smaller police stations.

An account of steady developments in the police system under the British have been given below.

1791 Cornwallis organised a regular police force to maintain law and order by going back to and modernising the old Indian system of *thanas* (circles) in a district under a *daroga* (an Indian) and a superintendent of police (SP) at the head of a district. He relieved the zamindars of their police duties.

1808 Mayo appointed an SP for each division helped by a number of spies (*goyendas*), but these spies committed depredations on local people.

1814 By an order of the Court of Directors, the appointment of *darogas* and their subordinates was abolished in all possessions of the Company except in Bengal.

Bentinck (governor general, 1828–35) abolished the office of the SP. The collector/magistrate was now to head the police force in his jurisdiction, and the commissioner in each division was to act as the SP. This arrangement resulted in a badly organised police force, putting a heavy burden on the collector/magistrate. Presidency towns were the first to have the duties of collector/magistrate separated.

The recommendations of the **Police Commission (1860)** led to the Indian Police Act, 1861. The commission recommended:

- A system of civil constabulary—maintaining the village set-up in the present form (a village watchman maintained by the village) but in direct relationship with the rest of the constabulary
- Inspector-general as the head in a province, deputy inspector-general as the head in a range, and SP as the head in a district

The police gradually succeeded in curbing criminal acts, such as dacoity, *thugee,* etc. But, while dealing with the public, the attitude of the police was unsympathetic. The police was also used to suppress the national movement.

The British did not create an All-India Police. The Police Act, 1861 presented the guidelines for a police set-up in the provinces. The ranks were uniformly introduced all over the country.

1902-03 When Curzon was the governor general, the Police Commission set up under Sir Andrew Frazer recommended some far-reaching police reforms. The

commission suggested that junior police officials should not be promoted to high official positions and that senior officials should be recruited directly. It suggested the opening of training schools where constables and officers could be trained; increasing the strength of the police force in all provinces; allowing policemen to visit the villages for making inquiries; increasing salaries; and creating a Criminal Intelligence Department at the Centre.

Following the recommendations, the Department of Criminal Intelligence (DCI) was attached to the Government of India, and it became the central domestic and foreign intelligence agency. Criminal investigation departments (CIDs) were set up in all the provinces of British India. (In 1929, the CID was divided into Special Branch, CID, and the Crime Branch).

In the years that followed, the Indian police developed as an agency of the government to help sustain the huge structure of the British Raj. The growing nationalist movement fighting for self-government in India faced the repressive policies of the government and in this repression the role of the police was clear. In the process, the police lost the empathy of the Indian masses.

Military Under the British

The military was the backbone of the Company's rule in India. Prior to the revolt of 1857, there were two separate sets of military forces under the British control, which operated in India. The first set of units, known as the Queen's army, were the serving troops on duty in India. The other was the Company's troops—a mixture of European regiments of Britons and Native regiments recruited locally from India but with British officers. The Queen's army was part of the Crown's military force.

After 1857, there was a systematic reorganisation of the army since, as Dufferin warned in December 1888, "...the British should always remember the lessons which were learnt with such terrible experience 30 years ago".

To prevent the recurrence of another revolt was the

main reason behind this reorganisation. Also, the Indian Army was to be used to defend the Indian territory of the empire from other imperialist powers in the region—Russia, Germany, France, etc. The Indian branch of the army was to be used for expansion in Asia and Africa, while the British section was to be used as an army of occupation—the ultimate guarantee of British hold over India.

To begin with, domination of the European branch over the Indian branches was ensured. The commissions of 1859 and 1879 insisted on the principle of a one-third white army (as against 14 per cent before 1857). Finally, the proportion of Europeans to Indians was carefully fixed at one to two in the Bengal Army and two to five in the Madras and Bombay armies. Strict European monopoly over key geographical locations and departments, such as artillery, tanks, and armed corps, was maintained. Even the rifles given to Indians were of an inferior quality till 1900, and Indians were not allowed in these high-tech departments till the Second World War. No Indians were allowed in the officer rank, and the highest rank an Indian could reach till 1914 was that of a subedar (only from 1918 onwards were Indians allowed in the commissioned ranks). As late as 1926, the Indian Sandhurst Committee was visualising a 50 per cent Indianised officer cadre for 1952!

The Indian branch was reorganised on the basis of the policy of balance and counterpoise or divide and rule. The 1879 Army Commission had emphasised—"Next to the grand counterpoise of a sufficient European force comes the counterpoise of natives against natives." An ideology of 'martial races' and 'non-martial races', which assumed that good soldiers could come only from some specific communities, developed particularly from the late 1880s, under Lord Roberts, the commander-in-chief from 1887 to 1892. It was used to justify a discriminatory recruitment policy directed towards Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Pathans who had assisted in the suppression of the revolt and were relatively marginal social groups—therefore less likely to be affected by nationalism. The soldiers from Awadh, Bihar, Central India, and South India who had participated in the revolt were declared to be non-martial. Moreover, caste and communal

companies were introduced in all the regiments and Indian regiments were made a mixture of various socio-ethnic groups so as to balance each other. Communal, caste, tribal, and regional consciousness was encouraged to check the growth of nationalist feelings among soldiers. Charles Wood, the Secretary of State for India, said, "I wish to have a different and rival spirit in different regiments, so that Sikh might fire into Hindu, Gorkha into either, without any scruple in case of need." Finally, conscious efforts were made to isolate the soldiers from life and thoughts of rest of the population through measures such as preventing newspapers, journals, and nationalist publications from reaching them.

On the whole, the British Indian Army remained a costly military machine.

Development of Judiciary in British India

In the India of pre-colonial times—in the Mughal era or even prior to that (including the ancient period)—the judicial system, as a whole, neither adopted proper procedures nor had proper organisation of the law courts—in a regular gradation from the highest to the lowest—nor had any proper distribution of courts in proportion to the area to be served by them. The bulk of the litigation among the Hindus was decided by caste elders or village panchayats or zamindars. For Muslims, the unit of judicial administration was the qazi—an office held by religious persons—located in provincial capitals, towns, and *qasbas* (large villages). The *rajas* and *badshahs* were considered as the fountainhead of justice, and the process of dispensing justice could be arbitrary.

The beginning of a common law system, based on recorded judicial precedents, can be traced to the establishment of 'Mayor's Courts' in Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta in 1726 by the East India Company. With the Company's transformation from a trading company into a ruling power, new elements of judicial system replaced the existing Mughal legal system. A brief survey of those changes has been discussed below.

Reforms under Warren Hastings (1772–85)

- District Diwani Adalats were established in districts to try civil disputes. These *adalats* were placed under the collector and had Hindu law applicable for Hindus and the Muslim law for Muslims. The appeal from District Diwani Adalats lay to the Sadar Diwani Adalat which functioned under a president and two members of the Supreme Council.
- District Fauzdari Adalats were set up to try criminal disputes and were placed under an Indian officer assisted by *qazis* and *muftis*. These *adalats* also were under the general supervision of the collector. Muslim law was administered in Fauzdari Adalats. The approval for capital punishment and for acquisition of property lay to the Sadar Nizamat Adalat at Murshidabad which was headed by a deputy nizam (an Indian Muslim) assisted by chief *qazi* and chief *mufti*.
- Under the Regulating Act of 1773, a Supreme Court was established at Calcutta, which was competent to try all British subjects within Calcutta and the subordinate factories, including Indians and Europeans. It had original and appellate jurisdictions. Often, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court clashed with that of other courts.

Reforms under Cornwallis (1786–93)—Separation of Powers

- The District Fauzdari Courts were abolished and, instead, circuit courts were established at Calcutta, Dacca, Murshidabad, and Patna. These circuit courts had European judges and were to act as courts of appeal for both civil and criminal cases.
- The Sadar Nizamat Adalat was shifted to Calcutta and was put under the governor general and members of the Supreme Council assisted by the chief *qazi* and the chief *mufti*.
- The District Diwani Adalat was now designated as the District, City, or the Zila Court and placed under a district judge. The collector was now responsible only for the revenue administration with no magisterial functions.
- A gradation of civil courts was established (for both Hindu and Muslim laws):

(i) Munsiff's Court under Indian officers,
(ii) Registrar's Court under a European judge,
(iii) District Court under the district judge,
(iv) Four Circuit Courts as provincial courts of appeal,
(v) Sadar Diwani Adalat at Calcutta, and
(vi) King-in-Council for appeals of 5,000 pounds and above.

- The Cornwallis Code was laid out:

— There was a separation of revenue and justice administration.

— European subjects were also brought under jurisdiction.

— Government officials were answerable to the civil courts for actions done in their official capacity.

— The principle of sovereignty of law was established.

Reforms under William Bentinck (1828–33)

- The four Circuit Courts were abolished and their functions transferred to collectors under the supervision of the commissioner of revenue and circuit.
- Sadar Diwani Adalat and a Sadar Nizamat Adalat were set up at Allahabad for the convenience of the people of Upper Provinces.
- Till now, Persian was the official language in courts. Now, the suitor had the option to use Persian or a vernacular language, while in the Supreme Court, English language replaced Persian.

1833 : A Law Commission was set up under Macaulay for codification of Indian laws. As a result, a Civil Procedure Code (1859), an Indian Penal Code (1860), and a Criminal Procedure Code (1861) were prepared.

Later Developments

1860 : It was provided that the Europeans can claim no special privileges except in criminal cases, and no judge of an Indian origin could try them.

1865 : The Supreme Court and the Sadar Adalats were merged into three high courts at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

1935 : The Government of India Act provided for a Federal Court (set up in 1937) which could settle disputes between governments and could hear limited appeals from the high courts.

Evaluation

Positive Aspects of Judiciary under the British

- The rule of law was established.
- The codified laws replaced the religious and personal laws of the rulers.
- Even European subjects were brought under the jurisdiction, although in criminal cases, they could be tried by European judges only.
- Government servants were made answerable to the civil courts.

The Negative Aspects

- The judicial system became more and more complicated and expensive. The rich could manipulate the system.
- There was ample scope for false evidence, deceit, and chicanery.
- Dragged out litigation meant delayed justice.
- Courts became overburdened as litigation increased.
- Often, the European judges were not familiar with the Indian usage and traditions.

Major Changes in Administrative Structure after 1857

Genesis of Administrative Changes: New Stage of Colonialism

The British were quick to learn from their experience of 1857—an organised mass action could pose a serious challenge to the existence of British rule in India. The ruler-subject gap was sought to be narrowed so as to reduce, if

not eliminate altogether, the alienation of the masses from the administration. Also, association of natives in administration could give the rulers an opportunity to have a better idea of the customs, traditions, and values of the people they were supposed to rule. This could help them handle more tactfully an 1857-like situation.

The second half of the 19th century saw further spread and intensification of the industrial revolution. The emergence of new industrial powers—the USA, Japan, and European countries—and a cut-throat competition for colonies and sub-colonies for raw materials, markets for manufactured goods and capital investment were the highlights of this new phenomenon. The British supremacy in the world in finance and manufactured goods trade came to an end. At this point, there were large-scale British capital investments in railways and loans to the Government of India, and to a smaller extent in tea plantations, coal-mining, jute mills, shipping, trade, and banking.

All these factors combined to inaugurate a new stage of colonialism in India. The prime concern of the colonial authority in India was to consolidate its position here to secure British economic and commercial interests against political dangers and to extend its sphere to other parts of the world, wherever and whenever possible. There was a renewed upsurge of imperial control and imperialist ideology which was reflected in the reactionary policies during the vice-royalties of Lytton, Dufferin, Lansdowne, Elgin, and, above all, Curzon. The changes in the governmental structure and policies in India were to shape the destiny of modern India in many ways.

Administration: Central, Provincial, Local

Central Government

The **Act for Better Government of India**, 1858 transferred the power to govern from the East India Company to the British Crown. The Company's limitations in administering the country in complex situations had been exposed by the

revolt of 1857; besides, there was not much accountability. Now, the power to govern was to be wielded through a secretary of state (earlier this power was exercised by Directors of the Company and the Board of Control). The secretary of state was to be a member of the British cabinet, and was to be assisted by a council of 15. He was answerable to the British Parliament. All initiatives and final decisions rested with the secretary and the council was only advisory in nature. (Thus, the dual system introduced by Pitt's India Act, 1784 came to an end.) Also, the ultimate power over India remained with Parliament.

The Government in India was to be carried on, as before, by the governor general whose prestige, if not authority, increased with the new title of viceroy given to him. The viceroy was to be assisted by an executive council whose members were to act as the heads of various departments, as well as viceroy's official advisors.

The concentration of the main authority in the hands of the secretary of state based in London, on the one hand, gradually reduced the viceroy to a subordinate status and further alienated the Indian public opinion from the government policy-making. On the other hand, it had the effect of increasing the influence of British industrialists, merchants, and bankers over government policy in India. This made the Indian administration even more reactionary than it had been before 1858.

By the **Indian Councils Act, 1861**, a fifth member, who was to be a jurist, was added to viceroy's executive council. For legislative purposes, the viceroy could add six to twelve additional members, of whom at least half had to be non-officials who could be either Indian or English. The legislative council so constituted possessed no real powers and was merely advisory in nature. Its weaknesses were as follows:

- It could not discuss important matters, and no financial matters at all without previous approval of the government.
- It had no control over the budget.
- It could not discuss executive action.
- Final passing of the bill needed the viceroy's approval.

- Even if approved by the viceroy, the secretary of state could disallow a legislation.
- Indians associated as non-officials were members of elite sections only—princes, landlords, *diwans,* etc.—and were not representative of the Indian opinion.
- The viceroy could issue ordinances (of six months' validity) in case of emergency.

The only important function of the legislative council was to endorse official measures and give them the appearance of having been passed by a legislative body. The British Government in India remained, as before, an alien despotism.

Provincial Government

The Indian Councils Act, 1861 returned the legislative powers to provinces of Madras and Bombay which had been taken away in 1833. Later, legislative councils were established in other provinces. The three presidencies of Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta enjoyed more rights and powers compared to other provinces. The presidencies were administrated by a governor and his executive council of three who were appointed by the Crown, while other provinces were administered by lieutenant governors and chief commissioners appointed by the governor general.

In the following decades, some steps towards financial decentralisation were taken, but these were more in the nature of administrative reorganisation aimed at increasing revenues and reducing expenditure and these did not in any way indicate progress towards provincial autonomy.

The granting of fixed sums out of central revenues for administration of certain services like police, jails, education, medical services, and roads to provincial governments signified the first step in the direction towards bifurcating central and provincial finances in 1870 by Lord Mayo. Now, the provincial governments were asked to administer these services as they liked.

Certain other heads of expenditure like land revenue, excise, general administration, and law and justice were transferred to provinces in 1877 by Lord Lytton. Besides this, a provincial government was to receive a fixed share

of the income realised within that province from sources like stamps, excise, and income tax.

In 1882, all sources of revenue were divided into three groups—general (going entirely to centre), provincial (going entirely to the provinces), and those to be divided between the centre and the provinces.

Nevertheless, the central government remained supreme and retained detailed control over provinces. This was inevitable since both the central and provincial governments were completely subordinated to the secretary of state and the British Government.

Local Bodies

It was decided to decentralise administration by promoting local government through municipalities and district boards, which would administer local services like education, health, sanitation, water supply, roads, and other basic amenities financed through local taxes. There were many factors which made it necessary for the British government in India to work towards establishing local bodies.

(i) Financial difficulties faced by the government, due to overcentralisation, made decentralisation imperative.

(ii) It became necessary that modern advances in civic amenities in Europe be transplanted in India considering India's increasing economic contacts with Europe.

(iii) The rising tide of nationalism had improvement in basic facilities as a point on its agenda.

(iv) A section of British policy-makers saw association of Indians with the administration in some form or the other, without undermining the British supremacy in India, as an instrument to check the increasing politicisation of Indians.

(v) The utilisation of local taxes for local welfare could be used to counter any public criticism of British reluctance to draw upon an already overburdened treasury or to tax the rich upper classes.

The important stages in the evolution of local government can be identified as follows:

Between 1864 and 1868

Local bodies were first formed in this period, but in most cases consisted of nominated members and were headed by

district magistrates. Thus, these were seen not more than as instruments of additional tax collection.

Mayo's Resolution of 1870

Financial decentralisation was a legislative devolution inaugurated by the Indian Councils Act of 1861. Apart from the annual grant from imperial government, the provincial governments were authorised to resort to local taxation to balance their budgets. This was done in context of transfer of certain departments of administration, such as medical services, education, and roads, to the control of provincial governments. This was the beginning of local finance. Mayo's Resolution emphasised, "Local interest, supervision and care are necessary for success in the management of the funds devoted to education, sanitation, medical relief and local public works."

The various provincial governments such as in Bengal, Madras, North-Western Province, Punjab, passed municipal acts to implement the policy outlined.

Ripon's Resolution of 1882

The Government of Ripon desired the provincial governments to apply in case of local bodies the same principle of financial decentralisation which Lord Mayo's Government had begun towards them. For his contributions, Lord Ripon is called **father of local self-government in Indi**a. The main points of the resolution were as follows:

- Development of local bodies advocated to improve the administration and as an instrument of political and popular education.
- Policy of administrating local affairs through urban and rural local bodies charged with definite duties and entrusted with suitable sources of revenues.
- Non-officials were to be in majority in these bodies. who could be elected if the officials thought that it was possible to introduce elections.
- Non-officials were to act as chairpersons to these bodies.
- Official interference was to be reduced to the minimum and to be exercised to revise and check the acts of local bodies, but not to dictate policies.

- Official executive sanction required in certain cases, such as raising of loans, alienation of municipal property, imposition of new taxes, undertaking works costing more than a prescribed sum, framing rules and bye-laws, etc.

In pursuance of this resolution, many acts were passed between 1883 and 1885, which greatly altered the constitution, powers and functions of municipal bodies in India. But, an era of effective local self-governing bodies was still a dream unfulfilled. The existing local bodies had various drawbacks.

- The elected members were in a minority in all district boards and in many of the municipalities.
- The franchise was very limited.
- District boards continued to be headed by district officials, though non-officials gradually came to head the municipalities.
- The Government retained strict control, and it could suspend or supersede these bodies at will.

The bureaucracy, in fact, did not share the liberal views of the viceroy and thought that the Indians were unfit for self-government. The closing decades of the 19th century were a period of imperialism, and the high priest of that creed, Lord Curzon, actually took steps to increase official control over local bodies.

Royal Commission on Decentralisation (1908)

Pointing out the lack of financial resources as the great stumbling block in the effective functioning of local bodies, the commission made the following recommendations:

(i) It emphasised that village panchayats should be entrusted with more powers like judicial jurisdiction in petty cases, incurring expenditure on minor village works, village schools, small fuel and fodder reserves, etc. The panchayats should be given adequate sources of income.

(ii) It emphasised the importance of sub-district boards to be established in every *taluka* or *tehsil*, with separate spheres of duties and separate sources of revenue for sub-district boards and the district boards.

(iii) It urged the withdrawal of existing restrictions on their powers of taxation, and also, the stoppage of regular

grants-in-aid from provincial governments except for undertaking large projects.

(iv) The municipalities might undertake the responsibility for primary education and, if willing, for middle vernacular schools, otherwise the government should relieve them of any charges in regard to secondary education, hospitals, relief, police, veterinary works, etc.

The Government of India Resolution of 1915

This resolution contained the official views on the recommendations of the Decentralisation Commission, but most of the recommendations remained on paper and the condition of local bodies continued to be as it was left by Lord Ripon.

The Resolution of May 1918

This resolution reviewed the entire question of local self-government in the light of the announcement of August 20, 1917, which had declared that the future direction of constitutional advance was towards grant of responsible government to the people of India, and the first step towards the progressive realisation of that ideal was to be in the sphere of local self-government.

The resolution suggested that the local bodies be made as representative as possible of the people with real and not nominal authority vested in them.

Under Dyarchy

Local self-government was made a 'transferred' subject under popular ministerial control by Government of India Act, 1919, and each province was allowed to develop local self-institutions according to provincial needs and requirements. But, since finance was a 'reserved' subject under the charge of an executive councillor, the Indian ministers could not do much work in the sphere of local self-government for lack of funds.

The Simon Commission (May 1930) pointed out the lack of progress of village panchayats except in the United Provinces, Bengal, and Madras. The commission suggested the retrograde step of increasing provincial control over local bodies for the sake of efficiency. The commission also

adversely commented on reluctance of elected members to impose local taxes and observed that, generally speaking, the management of finances of local bodies had deteriorated since the introduction of the reforms of 1919.

The Government of India Act, 1935 and After

The provincial autonomy ushered in by the Government of India Act, 1935 gave further impetus to the development of local self-governing institutions in India. Portfolio finance being under the control of popular ministries, now the funds could be made available for development of local bodies. Further, the demarcation of taxation between provincial and local finance, which prevailed since the reforms of 1919, was scrapped. New acts were passed in the provinces, giving more authority to local bodies.

However, financial resources and power of taxation of local institutions remained more or less at the same level as in the days of Ripon. Rather, after 1935, certain new restrictions were placed on powers of local bodies to levy or enhance terminal taxes on trades, callings, and professions and municipal property. The provincial governments seemed to have ignored the liberal policy of granting wide powers of taxation to local institutions as recommended by the Decentralisation Commission (1908).

[The Constitution of free India directs the state governments to organise village panchayats as effective organs of local self-government (Article 40). The Seventy-third and Seventy-fourth Amendments are aimed at plugging the loopholes in the structure of local self-governing institutions in rural and urban areas.]

Summary

- **Constitutional Development between 1773 and 1858**
  The Regulating Act of 1773; Pitt's India Act of 1784; the Act of 1786; the Charter Act of 1793; the Charter Act of 1813; the Charter Act of 1833; the Charter Act of 1853; the Act for Better Government of India 1858
- **Developments after 1858 till Independence**
  Indian Councils Act of 1861; Indian Councils Act of 1882; Indian Councils Act of 1909; Government of India Act of 1919; Simon Commission; Government of India Act 1935

- **Evolution of Civil Services**
  Cornwallis' Role; Wellesley's Role; Charter Act of 1853; Indian Civil Service Act 1861; Statutory Civil Service; Congress demand and Aitchison Committee; Montford Reforms; Lee Commission; Evaluation of Civil Services under British Rule
- **Evolution of Police System in Modern India**
  Institutions of *amil* and *faujdar* abolished in 1770, but institution of *faujdar* restored by Hastings, and *faujdar thanas* established in 1775; landmarks in evolution of police system: 1791 under Cornwallis; in 1808 under Mayo; 1818; in 1828-35 under Bentinck; Indian Police Act of 1861 following the recommendations of Police Commission; Frazer Commission (1902-03) and changes in the Police; Police becomes an imperialist agency and loses touch with the common masses
- **Military under the British**
  The backbone of the British Empire; reorganisation after 1857; the Indian branch of the army reduced in strength and used for expansion of British power; European branch of army gets to dominate and Indians discriminated against; the Indian branch of the army reorganized on the basis of divide and rule policy; attempt to isolate the soldiers from the rest of the population
- **Judiciary**
  Beginnings of a common law system with the establishment of mayor's courts in 1726; reforms under Warren Hastings; Reforms under Cornwallis – separation of powers; Reforms under Bentinck; later developments and evaluation of the judicial system established by the British
- **Changes in Administrative Structure after 1857**
  New stage of colonialism including efforts to the alienation of the masses from the administration; policy directed towards consolidating British position to secure commercial interests against political dangers
- **Administration at Different Levels**
  Central government changes through the Acts of 1858, 1861; the provincial government evolution with the Act of 1861 and various steps in 1870, 1877, and 1882; central government, however, retains overall control over the provinces; decentralization of administration at local level; factors necessitating the establishment of local bodies; important stages in the evolution of local government – Mayo's Resolution of 1878, Ripon's resolution of 1882, Royal Commission on Decentralisation of 1908, Resolutions of 1915 and 1918, under dyarchy, the 1935 Act and after

CHAPTER 27

Survey of British Policies in India

Administrative Policies

Contrary to their pre-1857 intentions of trying to modernise India on progressive lines, now the administration adopted blatantly reactionary policies on the pretext that Indians were not fit for self-governance and needed British presence in their lives.

Divide and Rule

Determined to avoid a united mass action challenging their authority, the British rulers in India decided to practice a naked policy of divide and rule, by putting princes against states' people, region against region, province against province, caste against caste, and Hindus against Muslims.

After an immediate spell of repression against Muslims, following the 1857 revolt, the authorities decided, after 1870, to use the middle and upper educated classes among Muslims against the rising tide of nationalism, using conflicts over scarce resources in education, administrative jobs, and later political spoils (which were inherent in the very logic of colonial underdevelopment) as a tool to create a split along religious lines among educated Indians.

Hostility Towards Educated Indians

The emerging middle class nationalist leadership was analysing the exploitative, colonial character of British rule and demanding Indian participation in administration. At a time

Views

All experience teaches us that where a dominant race rules another, the mildest form of government is despotism.

Charles Wood (the Secretary of State for India)

Systems of nomination, representation and election were all means of enlisting Indians to work for imperial ends.

Anil Seal

when the nationalist movement was born (Indian National Congress was founded in 1885), the British interpreted the moves as a challenge to their authority and adopted a hostile attitude to such leadership. In fact, from then onwards, they opposed all those who stood for modern education.

Attitude Towards the Zamindars

In their pursuit of reactionary policies and hope to expand their social base, the British looked for alliances with the most reactionary of social groups—the princes, zamindars, etc. The British intended to use them as a counterweight against nationalist-minded intelligentsia. Now, the zamindars and landlords were hailed as the 'natural' and 'traditional' leaders of people. Lands of most of the Awadh taluqdars confiscated prior to 1857 were restored to them. The interests and privileges of zamindars and landlords were protected in opposition to those of the peasants; the former in turn saw the British as guarantors of their very existence and became their firm supporters.

Attitude Towards Social Reforms

Having decided to side with the reactionary elements of Indian society, the British withdrew support to social reforms, which they felt had aroused the wrath of orthodox sections against them. Also, by encouraging caste and communal consciousness, the British helped the reactionary forces.

Underdeveloped Social Services

A disproportionately large expenditure on army and civil administration and the cost of wars left little to be spent on social services like education, health, sanitation, physical infrastructure, etc., a legacy which still haunts this country. And whatever facilities were established catered to the elite sections and urban areas.

Labour Legislations

As in the early stages of industrial revolution in Europe, the working conditions in factories and plantations in the 19th-century India were miserable. Working hours were long—for women and children as well as for men—and wages were low. In overcrowded, poorly ventilated and poorly lighted working places, the safety measures were practically non-existent.

Ironically, the first-ever demand for regulation of the condition of workers in factories in India came from the Lancashire textile capitalist lobby. Apprehending the emergence of a competitive rival in the Indian textile industry under conditions of cheap and unregulated labour, they demanded the appointment of a commission for investigation into factory conditions. The first commission was appointed in 1875, although the first Factory Act was not passed before 1881.

The **Indian Factory Act, 1881** dealt primarily with the problem of child labour (between 7 and 12 years of age). Its significant provisions were:

- employment of children under 7 years of age prohibited;
- working hours restricted to 9 hours per day for children;
- children to get four holidays in a month; and
- hazardous machinery to be properly fenced off.

The **Indian Factory Act, 1891**

- increased the minimum age (from 7 to 9 years) and the maximum (from 12 to 14 years) for children;
- reduced maximum working hours for children to 7 hours a day;
- fixed maximum working hours for women at 11 hours per day with an one-and-a-half hour interval (working hours for men were left unregulated); and
- provided weekly holiday for all.

But these laws did not apply to British-owned tea and coffee plantations where the labour was exploited ruthlessly and treated like slaves. The government helped these planters by passing laws such as those which made it virtually impossible for a labourer to refuse to work once a contract was entered into. A breach of contract was a criminal offence, with a planter having the right to get the defaulting labourer arrested.

Views

I am sorry to hear of the increasing friction between the Hindus and Mohammedans in the north-west and the Punjab. One hardly knows what to wish, for unity of ideas and action could be very dangerous politically; divergence of ideas and collision are administratively troublesome. Of the two, the latter is least risky, though it throws anxiety and responsibility upon those on the spot where the friction exists.

Hamilton (Secretary of State, 1897)

The English were an imperial race, we were told, with God-given right to govern us and keep us in subjection; if we protested, we were reminded of the tiger qualities of an imperial race.

Jawaharlal Nehru

More labour laws were passed under nationalist pressures in the 20th Century, but the overall working conditions remained deplorable as ever.

Restrictions on Freedom of the Press

The nationalists had been quick to use new advancements in press technology to educate public opinion and influence government policies through criticism and censure and later to arouse national consciousness.

In 1835, Metcalfe had lifted restrictions imposed on the Indian press. But Lytton, fearing an increased influence of the nationalist press on public opinion, imposed restrictions on Indian language press through the infamous Vernacular Press Act, 1878. This act had to be repealed under public protest in 1882. After that, the press enjoyed relative freedom for about two decades but was under repression again in the wake of swadeshi and anti-partition movements as restrictions were imposed in 1908 and 1910. (Also refer to chapter 'Development of Press in India'.)

White Racism

The notion of white superiority was maintained very carefully by the colonial rulers by systematically excluding the Indians from higher grades of services—both civil and military—from railway compartments, parks, hotels, clubs, etc., and by public display of racial arrogance through beatings, blows, and even murders (reported as accidents). As Elgin once wrote, "We could only govern by maintaining the fact that we were the dominant race—though Indians in services should be encouraged, there is a point at which we must reserve the control to ourselves, if we are to remain at all."

Revenue Policies

Agriculture has always been the main occupation of the people in rural India. When the British obtained the Diwani rights of Bengal in 1765, the agrarian economy was the mainstay of other sectors of the economy as well. The policies of the British changed the agrarian structure as they introduced new systems of land tenures and policies of revenue administration; the main aim was to extract maximum income from land with little care about the interests of the cultivators.

Hastings' System

The rapacity and corruption of the employees of the Company were partly responsible for one of the worst famines in Bengal in 1769-70. When Warren Hastings became the governor general, he adopted the *Izaredari* system, also called the farming system, to bring some order to the revenue collection. The power to collect land revenue was given to contractors (called 'farmers') chosen on the basis of the highest bids, i.e., those who offered to pay the largest amount from a particular district or subdivision. (The land, in other words, was 'farmed out' to the highest bidders.) The power of revenue collection was for five years at a time (quinquennial settlement). The collection was made annual in 1777.

The system resulted in extortion and oppression in the collection of revenue as (i) the contractors were merely revenue farmers interested in their profit and did not care for the peasants' welfare, and (ii) the large amounts promised by the contractors far exceeded the production capacity of the land. The policy was based on the assumption that the traditional zamindars were mere tax gatherers with no proprietary rights, so the zamindars were even discouraged from bidding. As a result, many hereditary zamindars were ousted. Also, corruption reduced the amount of revenue actually going to the government.

The country was impoverished and as agriculture diminished so did many items that the British traded in –

silk and cotton, for example. The surplus the British expected from the land revenue did not materialise.

Permanent Settlement

In 1776 itself, Philip Francis, a member of Hastings' council, recommended a permanent settlement in land revenue. In the end, Lord Cornwallis was sent as governor general with instructions that the land revenue settlements with the zamindars be made permanent. Lord Cornwallis set up a committee consisting of himself, Sir John Shore, and James Grant to examine the issue. Cornwallis, himself a member of the landed aristocracy of Britain, favoured giving the right of ownership to the zamindars, who, he hoped, would improve the land as English landlords did. Also, the number of cultivators being too large, it was seen to be simpler to collect the revenue from the smaller number of zamindars. So, every piece of land in the areas where the permanent settlement was promulgated became a part of some zamindari or other.

The Permanent Settlement or Zamindari System covered around 19 per cent of the territory under British rule. Introduced in Bengal and Bihar, it was extended to Orissa, Banaras (Varanasi), and northern Madras.

Features ● The zamindars were given proprietary rights over their land.

● In 1790, a ten-year settlement of tax to be paid was made with the zamindars, and in 1793, the settlement was made permanent.

● A fixed tax on the land had to be paid by the zamindar, and the revenue was to be collected by him from the cultivators who had now become tenants (the ryots or raiyyats).

● The zamindar was allowed to keep one-tenth to one-eleventh of the revenue and give the rest to the Company government.

● The zamindar, as the owner of the land, could sell, mortgage, or transfer it; his heirs could inherit the land along with rights and liabilities. But, under the 'sunset clause' introduced in 1794, if the tax due was not paid by sunset

of a certain date, the zamindari would be taken over by the government and auctioned, and the rights would be transferred to the new owner.

- Regulations made in 1793, 1799, and 1812 empowered the zamindar to seize the tenants' property if the rent had not been paid and, for this, he did not need the permission of any court of law.

Shortcomings ● The revenue was fixed at a very high rate, leaving many of the zamindaris with very little or no margin for shortfalls in times of flood, drought, or other calamity. This resulted in the takeover and sale of many zamindaris in the years following the permanent settlement. Absentee-landlordism grew as merchants and government officials, besides other zamindars, bought these lands.

- The high rates forced many zamindars to divide up their estates into small lots of land called *patni taluq* and rent them out permanently to holders (*patnidar*) on the promise that they would pay a fixed rent. Thus began the process of subinfeudation.
- Under the settlement, zamindars were required to issue written agreements (*pattas*) to each cultivator, specifying what tenant was to pay. However, no such agreements were made; the result was that the peasants were at the mercy of the zamindars to be exploited and harassed for more rent, driving the cultivators into the clutch of moneylenders. The peasantry was reduced to serfdom.
- The zamindars did nothing to improve the land or agricultural system, concentrating only on the extraction of rent.
- From the government's point of view, there was no way of increasing the tax, so the revenue could not increase to meet the growing expenses of the Company which was trying to expand its base through wars.

Ryotwari System

Thomas Munro and Captain Alexander Read, who were sent in 1792 to administer the recently acquired Baramahal region of Madras Presidency, devised a system of collecting directly from the villages, fixing the amount that each village had to

pay. When Munro became governor of Madras Presidency in 1820, he introduced the system which came to be known as the Ryotwari System. The most important reason for the adoption of this system, from the Company's point of view, was that it brought in a larger revenue than any other system could have done as no intermediaries were involved and whatever was extracted from the cultivator went directly to the government.

Munro reduced the tax to one-third of the gross produce and extended the ryotwari system to other areas in the presidency (excepting those already under permanent settlement). Unfortunately, this one-third of gross produce was nearly equal to the economic rental, and the state wanted its money regardless of the actual yield of the holding and the prices prevailing in the market. This continued for nearly thirty years with the peasants getting deeply mired in poverty

As the system was extended to many districts that had not been surveyed there was no clear picture of how much land a peasant cultivated, or how much it would produce. The tax was fixed arbitrarily, often on the basis of what the ryot had paid in earlier years. This was known as a 'putcut' assessment. The tax was so high that very often it was beyond the ryot's capacity to pay. But the ryots were coerced and even tortured to extract revenue. Many ryots were forced into the clutch of moneylenders.

In 1855, the Madras Torture Commission Report revealed the practices of coercion, bribery, and corruption by the subordinate officials of the collectorate. It was from 1855 that a scientific survey of land and a fresh assessment of revenue were undertaken, resulting in a decline in the actual burden of tax. Now it was decided that the revenue rate would be half of the net value of the produce of the land and the settlement would be made for thirty years. The reformed system of settlement was introduced in 1864 which led to agricultural prosperity and extension of agriculture in coming years although interrupted by two famines in 1865-66 and 1876-78.

In the Bombay Presidency, beginning in Gujarat, the British began collecting directly from the peasants in

1813-14. After 1818, when the British conquered the Peshwa's territory, the ryotwari system on the Madras pattern was also introduced there, under the supervision of Elphinstone, a disciple of Munro and Governor of Bombay from 1819 to 1827. On the basis of a survey carried out in 1824-28.

The state demand was fixed at 55 per cent of the net produce. However, most of the surveys were faulty, and the estimates of produce erroneous, leading to over-assessment. The harassment of the peasantry reached such levels that the cultivators deserted their fields and large tracts of land remained fallow.

Around 1836, Wingate and Goldsmith improved the system. This modified assessment covered most of the Deccan by 1865. Each field was to be assessed on the basis of its soil and location. The land revenue was somewhat reduced, and land that had become devalued acquired some saleable value.

The system was extended to Berar, East Bengal, parts of Assam, and Coorg.

It may be noted that the system was devised at a time when Utilitarian ideas had begun to influence policy planning in India, among which was David Ricardo's theory of rent.

Features ● Ownership and occupancy rights of land were vested in the ryot and there was no limit on the extent of land they could own. They were free to sublet, transfer, or sell their land.

● Ryots paid the tax directly to the Company. The revenue to be paid was in the range of 45 per cent to 55 per cent based on an estimated production of the land.

● Revenue was not fixed, so it could be raised when production was higher.

● The settlement was not permanent and could be revised periodically.

● In theory the ryot were allowed to cultivate the land of their choice, but in practice they were more or less forced to cultivate land even if they did not want to do so.

● Barren land under government control was allowed to be cultivated and the revenue generated would have to be shared with the government.

● Land could be confiscated if the revenue was not paid.

Shortcomings ● Overassessment of revenue was a major problem. The land revenue fixed was often more than the capacity of land.

● The method of collection was inflexible, often involving torture to extract tax.

● Corruption grew as the officers could be bribed while assessing the land.

● It was possible for non-cultivating landlords to get registered as the owners of particular holdings, with the actual cultivator being reduced to becoming their tenants, servants, or even bonded labourers.

● The high tax and the harassment in collection devalued land value as not many wanted to buy it.

Mahalwari System

The adoption of mahalwari system in parts of Northern India began to be considered in 1819 when Holt Mackenzie, the secretary to the board of commissioners, recommended this form of the settlement of land revenue.

The recommendation was formalised by the Regulation VII of 1922. The complex method of survey, high revenue demand, and harsh methods of extraction led to a breakdown of the scheme. The situation was worsened by the agricultural depression of 1828. Even as arrears began to accumulate, land remained uncultivated; and there were few buyers of land. It was in 1833, when William Bentinck was governor general, that the Regulation of 1833 simplified the procedure for estimating the produce.

Merttins Bird, regarded as the Father of Land Settlements in Northern India, supervised the new scheme. It consisted of a survey of a tract of land showing field boundaries of cultivated and fallow lands. The state share was fixed at 66 per cent of the rental value and the settlement was made for 30 years.

Even this rate was too high, so Lord Dalhousie issued fresh directions to the settlement officers in 1855 under which the state demand was limited to 50 per cent of the rental value.

This system came to be known as a modified zamindari system because the village headman was a link between the individual cultivator and the government; however, he did not have the rights that the zamindar had.

It is to be noted that the settlement had different versions and operated with different names at different places. In the North Western Provinces, it went under the name of '*mauzawar*'; in the region of the Central Provinces its name was '*malguzari*'.

The system was a dual system in which settlement was done collectively with the whole community and also with the individual landlords.

Features • *Mahal,* a Hindi word denoting a house or by extension an estate, was the basis of revenue assessment in this system; in the mahalwari system, a *mahal* could be a village or a group of villages and was considered as the unit for assessment of tax.

• Revenue was determined on the basis of the produce of a *mahal.*

• The village community was considered the owner of the land. Individual ownership rights lay with the cultivator.

• Each individual farmer gave his share of the tax.

• The responsibility of collection of the tax and payment of that tax to the Company government lay with the village headman (called lambardar) or a community of village leaders.

• Under Bentinck, the state's revenue share was 66 per cent of the rental value; later this was modified to 50 per cent.

• The concept of average rents for different soil classes was introduced.

• In the mahalwari regions, the land revenue was revised periodically.

Shortcomings • The system required the government officials to record all the rights of cultivators, zamindars, and others, and fix the tax payable on every piece of land. This was practically impossible to implement.

• The calculations the officials made were often quite inaccurate, often being based on guesswork, and the collectors

usually manipulated them to increase the revenue due to the government. There was scope for corruption too.

- It hardly favoured the village communities; it, in fact, ruined them by imposing exorbitant tax assessments that could not be complied with.
- In the face of inability of cultivators and landholders to meet the rates of taxation, large tracts of land went to moneylenders and merchants who ousted the old cultivating proprietors or turned them into tenants.
- On the whole, the settlement system led to the impoverishment and largescale dispossession of the cultivating communities of North India, and their resentment and discontent found expression in the popular uprisings in 1857.
- From the Company point of view, more was spent for the collection than the revenue collected.

Overall Impact of the British Land revenue Systems

The Mahalwari Settlement, was introduced in about 30 per cent of the total area under British rule i.e., in major parts of the North Western Provinces, Central Provinces, and the Punjab with some variations.

The Ryotwari System covered about 51 per cent of the area under British rule comprising part of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, Assam, and certain other parts of British India. All these revenue settlements proved disastrous for farmers and Zamindars too. As the revenue fixed by the system was too high, many zamindars defaulted on payments and their property was seized. High rates of land revenue, indebted the farmers for lifelong.

Various types of revenue settlement gave rise to a new form of private ownership of land in which, the benefit of the innovation did not reach the cultivators. Instead, it led to the impoverishment of the peasantry and hence rural indebtedness.

With zamindar's permanent right on land, the ownership of land became inequal.

Land became saleable, mortgageable, and alienable to protect the government's revenue.

The village community was divided into two hostile groups: land owning class and landless peasantry. The stability and continuity of the Indian village was shaken.

The village artisans became jobless and were converted into landless labourers.

Under these systems, law courts, lawyer's fees, and formal procedures replaced the old body of customs.

The British land revenue systems exposed the Indian peasantry to the exploitations of the moneylenders and the middlemen. The government demand of revenues was arbitrarily high. In such a situation, the landlords delegated the collection of revenue to middlemen who squeezed high sums from the peasants.

The new systems gave rise to absentee landlordism as the practice of subletting revenue collection rights came into being.

Exorbitant revenue demands led to commercialisation of agriculture.

British Social and Cultural Policy in India

Till 1813, the British followed a policy of non-interference in the social, religious, and cultural life of the country. After 1813, measures were taken to transform Indian society and its cultural environs because of the emergence of new interests and ideas in Britain of the nineteenth century in the wake of significant changes in Europe during the 18th and the 19th centuries. Some of these changes were:

(i) **Industrial Revolution** which began in the 18th century and resulted in the growth of industrial capitalism. The rising industrial interests wanted to make India a big market for their goods and therefore required partial modernisation and transformation of Indian society.

(ii) **Intellectual Revolution** which gave rise to new attitudes of mind, manners, and morals.

(iii) **French Revolution** which with its message of liberty, equality and fraternity, unleashed the forces of democracy and nationalism.

The new trend was represented by Bacon, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Adam Smith and Bentham in thought and by Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Charles Dickens in literature.

Characteristics of New Thought

Some of the characteristics of the new wave of thought were:

(i) **Rationalism** which advocated faith in reason and a scientific attitude.

(ii) **Humanism** which advocated the love of man—the belief that every man is an end in himself and should be respected and prized as such. No man has a right to look upon another man as a mere agent of his happiness. These ideals gave rise to liberalism, socialism, and individualism.

(iii) **Doctrine of Progress** according to which nothing is static and all societies must change with time. Man has the capacity to remodel nature and society on just and rational lines.

Schools of Thought

These new currents of thought caused conflicts among administrators and produced different schools of thought:

The **Conservatives** advocated introduction of as few changes as possible. Indian civilisation, they felt, was different from the European one but not necessarily inferior to it. Many of these thinkers respected Indian philosophy and culture. If at all, Western ideas and practices were to be introduced gradually and cautiously. Social stability was a must, they felt. Early representatives of this school of thought were Warren Hastings and Edmund Burke and later ones included Munro, Metcalfe, and Elphinstone. The Conservatives remained influential throughout and most of the British officials in India were generally of a conservative persuasion.

The **Paternalistic Imperialists** became influential, especially after 1800. They were sharply critical of Indian society and culture and used to justify economic and political enslavement of India.

The **Radicals** went beyond the narrow criticism and imperialistic outlook of the Conservatives and the Imperialists

and applied advanced humanistic and rational thought to the Indian situation. They thought that India had the capacity to improve and that they must help the country do that. They wanted to make India a part of the modern progressive world of science and humanism and therefore advocated the introduction of modern western science, philosophy, and literature. Some of the British officials who came to India after 1820 were Radicals. They were strongly supported by Raja Rammohan Roy and other like-minded reformers.

But predominantly, the ruling elements in the British Indian administration continued to be imperialistic and exploitative. They thought that the modernisation of India had to occur within broad limits imposed by the needs of an easier and more thorough exploitation of its resources. In this respect, often the Radicals also towed a conservative line. They desired most of all the safety and perpetuation of the British rule in India; every other consideration was secondary.

Indian Renaissance

There were many Indians who instigated social reform and caused legislations to be brought about so as to control and eradicate social evils imbedded in so-called tradition. Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, B.M. Malabari, to name a few social reformers, worked hard to get legislation passed by the government to remove social evils. [These aspects have been discussed in detail in the chapter on Religious and Social Reform.]

Dilemma Before the Government

The government feared that too much modernisation might generate forces hostile to their interests; thus it was thought to be appropriate to opt for partial modernisation—introducing it in some respects and blocking it in others, in other words, a 'colonial modernisation'.

Role of Christian Missionaries

The missionaries regarded Christianity to be a superior religion and wanted to spread it in India through westernisation which, they believed, would destroy the faith of the natives in their own religion and culture. Towards this end, the Christian missionaries:

— supported the Radicals whose scientific approach, they believed, would undermine the native culture and beliefs;
— supported the Imperialists since law and order and the British supremacy were essential for their propaganda; and
— sought business and the capitalist support holding out the hope to them that the Christian converts would be better customers of their goods.

British Retreat

After 1858, however, the policy of hesitant modernisation was gradually abandoned. However, the Indians proved to be apt pupils and shifted rapidly towards modernisation of their society and assertion of their culture and demanded a rule in accordance with the modern principles of liberty, equality, and justice. Now, the British came to side with the socially orthodox and conservative elements of society. They also encouraged casteism and communalism.

British Policy Towards Princely States

Relations with princely states were to be guided by a two-point policy—using and perpetuating them as bulwark of the empire and subordinating them completely to British authority (the policy of subordinate union).

To cultivate these states as a buffer against future political unrest and to reward them for their loyalty during the revolt of 1857, the policy of annexation was abandoned. The new policy was to depose or punish but not annex. Also, territorial integrity of states was guaranteed and it was announced that their right to adopt an heir would be respected.

The subordination of princely states to British authority was completed when the fiction of Indian states standing in a status of equality with the Crown as independent, sovereign states ended with the Queen adopting the title of *Kaiser-i-Hind* (Queen Empress of India) in 1876, to emphasise British sovereignty over entire India. It was later made clear by Lord Curzon that the princes ruled their states merely as agents

View

The British and the princes needed one another; India's need for either was highly doubtful.

F.G. Hutchins

of the British Crown. With paramountcy, the British Government exercised the right to interfere in the internal affairs of states through their residents or by appointing and dismissing ministers and officials.

The British were helped further in their encroachment by modern developments in communication—railways, roads, telegraph, canals, post offices, etc. The motive for interference was also provided by the rise of nationalist, democratic sentiments in these states, the suppression of which, the British realised, was essential for their survival. As a positive side to these modern political movements, the British helped these states adopt modern administrative institutions. (Also refer to chapter on 'Indian States under British Rule'.)

British Foreign Policy in India

The pursuance of a foreign policy, guided by interest of British imperialism, often led to India's conflicts with neighbouring countries. These conflicts arose due to various reasons. Firstly, political and administrative consolidation of the country coupled with the introduction of modern means of communication impelled the Government of India to reach out for natural, geographical frontiers for internal cohesion and defence, which sometimes resulted in border clashes. Secondly, the British Government had as its major aims in Asia and Africa:

(i) protection of the invaluable Indian empire;
(ii) expansion of British commercial and economic interests; and
(iii) keeping other European imperialist powers, whose colonial interests came in conflict with those of the British, at an arm's length in Asia and Africa.

These aims led to British expansion and territorial conquests outside India's natural frontiers, and to conflicts with other imperialist European powers such as Russia and France.

While the interests served were British, the money spent and the blood shed was Indian.

(A survey of British relations with various neighbours of India has been made in the chapter 'British Expansion and Consolidation in India').

Summary

- **Administrative Policies**
  - Divide and Rule
  - Hostility to educated Indians
  - Zamindars and landlords propped as counterweights to the nationalists
  - Reversal of policy of support to social reforms
  - Social services ignored
  - Half-hearted and inadequate labour legislations introduced
  - Stifling of press wherever seen to be helping the nationalist upsurge
  - Racial arrogance
- **Revenue Policies**
  - Hastings' Efforts
  - Permanent Settlement
  - Ryotwari System
  - Mahalwari System
  - Overall Impact of British Revenue Policies
- **British Social and Cultural Policies**
- **Foreign Policy**
  - Reach out to natural geographical frontiers for internal cohesion and defence
  - Keep other European powers at an arm's length
  - Promote British economic and commercial interests

CHAPTER 28

Economic Impact of British Rule in India

The major difference between the British colonists in India and earlier invaders was that none of the earlier invaders made any structural changes in Indian economy or drained away India's wealth as tribute. British rule in India caused a transformation of India's economy into a colonial economy, i.e., the structure and operation of Indian economy were determined by the interests of the British economy.

According to historians, at the beginning of the 18th century, India had some 23 per cent of the world economy. This share came down to some 3 per cent when India got independence.

A detailed survey of the economic impact of British rule follows.

Deindustrialisation—Ruin of Artisans and Handicraftsmen

One-Way Free Trade

Cheap and machine-made imports flooded the Indian market after the Charter Act of 1813 allowing one-way free trade for the British citizens. On the other hand, Indian products found it more and more difficult to penetrate the European markets. Tariffs of nearly 80 per cent were imposed on Indian

Views

The misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce; the bones of cotton weavers are bleaching the plains of north India.

—William Bentinck

The armour of the isolated self-sufficient village was pierced by the steel rail, and its life blood ebbed away.

—D.H. Buchanan

textiles so that Indian cloth could no longer be cheap. After 1820, European markets were virtually closed to Indian exports. Cheap British-made cloth flooded the Indian market. The newly introduced rail network helped the European products to reach the remotest corners of the country. From being a net exporter, India became a net importer.

No Steps towards Modern Industrialisation

The loss of traditional livelihood was not accompanied by a process of industrialisation in India, as had happened in other rapidly industrialising countries of the time. This resulted in deindustrialisation of India at a time when Europe was witnessing a reintensified Industrial Revolution. This happened at a time when Indian artisans and handicraftsmen were already feeling the crunch due to loss of patronage by princes and the nobility, who were now under the influence of new western tastes and values.

Ruralisation

Another feature of deindustrialisation was the decline of many cities and a process of ruralisation of India. Many artisans, faced with diminishing returns and repressive policies (in Bengal, during the Company's rule, artisans were paid low wages and forced to sell their products at low prices), abandoned their professions, moved to villages, and took to agriculture. This resulted in increased pressure on land. An overburdened agriculture sector was a major cause of poverty during British rule and this upset the village economic set-up.

Impoverishment of Peasantry

The government, only interested in maximisation of rents and in securing its share of revenue, had enforced the Permanent

View

… for most of the colonial era, the story of India manufacturing was of dispossession, displacement and defeat. What happened to India's textiles was replicated across the board. From the great manufacturing nation described by Sunderland, India became a mere exporter of raw materials and foodstuffs, raw cotton, as well as jute, silk, coal, opium, rice, spices and tea. With the collapse of its manufacturing and the elimination of manufactured goods from its export rosters, India's share of world manufacturing exports fell from 27 per cent to 2 per cent under British rule.

—**Shashi Tharoor** in *An Era of Darkness*

Settlement system in large parts. Transferability of land was one feature of the new settlement which caused great insecurity to the tenants who lost all their traditional rights in land. There was little spending by the government on improvement of land productivity. The zamindars, with increased powers, resorted to summary evictions, demanded illegal dues and *'begar'* to maximise their share in the produce and, as such, had no incentive to invest for the improvement of agriculture. The overburdened peasants had to approach the moneylenders to be able to pay their dues to the zamindars. The moneylender, who was often also the village grain-merchant, forced the farmer to sell the produce at low prices to clear his dues. The powerful moneylender was also able to manipulate the judiciary and law in his favour.

The peasant turned out to be the ultimate sufferer under the triple burden of the government, zamindar, and moneylender. His hardship increased at the time of famine and scarcity. This was as much true for the zamindari areas as for areas under Ryotwari and Mahalwari systems. The peasant became landless.

Emergence of Intermediaries, Absentee Landlordism, Ruin of Old Zamindars

By 1815, half of the total land in Bengal had passed into new hands—merchants, moneylenders, and other moneyed

classes living in towns. The new zamindars, with increased powers but with little or no avenues for new investments, resorted to landgrabbing and sub-infeudation. Increase in number of intermediaries to be paid gave rise to absentee landlordism and increased the burden on the peasant. Since the demand for land was high, prices went up and so did the liabilities of the peasant. With no traditional or benevolent ties with the tenants, the zamindar had no incentive to invest in the improvement of agriculture. The interests of the zamindars lay only in the perpetuation of British rule and in opposing the national movement.

Stagnation and Deterioration of Agriculture

The cultivator had neither the means nor any incentive to invest in agriculture. The zamindar had no roots in the villages, while the government spent little on agricultural, technical, or mass education. All this, together with fragmentation of land due to sub-infeudation, made it difficult to introduce modern technology, which caused a perpetually low level of productivity.

Famine and Poverty

Regular recurrence of famines became a common feature of daily existence in India. These famines were not just because of foodgrain scarcity, but were a direct result of poverty unleashed by colonial forces in India. Between 1850 and 1900, about 2.8 crore people died in famines.

Commercialisation of Indian Agriculture

In the latter half of the 19th century, another significant trend was the emergence of the commercialisation of agriculture. So far, agriculture had been a way of life rather than a business enterprise. Now agriculture began to be influenced by commercial considerations. Certain specialised crops began to be grown not for consumption in the village but for sale in the national and even international markets. Commercial crops like cotton, jute, groundnut, oilseeds,

View

The servants of the Company forced the natives to buy dear and sell cheap... Enormous fortunes were thus rapidly accumulated at Calcutta, while thirty millions of human beings were reduced to the extremity of wretchedness. They had never [had to live] under tyranny like this...

—Macaulay

sugarcane, tobacco, etc., were more remunerative than foodgrains. Again, the cultivation of crops like condiments, spices, fruits, and vegetables could cater to a wider market. Perhaps, the commercialisation trend reached the highest level of development in the plantation sector, i.e., in tea, coffee, rubber, indigo, etc., which was mostly owned by Europeans and the produce was for sale in a wider market.

The new market trend of commercialisation and specialisation was encouraged by many factors—spread of money economy, replacement of custom and tradition by competition and contract, emergence of a unified national market, growth of internal trade, improvement in communications through rail and roads, and boost to international trade given by entry of British finance capital, etc.

For the Indian peasant, commercialisation seemed a forced process. There was hardly any surplus for him to invest in commercial crops, given the subsistence level at which he lived, while commercialisation linked Indian agriculture with international market trends and their fluctuations. For instance, the cotton of the 1860s pushed up prices, but this mostly benefited the intermediaries, and when the slump in prices came in 1866, it hit the cultivators the most, bringing in its turn heavy indebtedness, famine, and agrarian riots in the Deccan in the 1870s. Thus, the cultivator hardly emerged better from the new commercialisation trend.

Destruction of Industry and Late Development of Modern Industry

Indian industry was steadily destroyed. The destruction of textile competition of India is a glaring example of the de-

industrialisation of India. The British stopped paying for Indian textiles in pounds, choosing instead to pay from the revenue gained from Bengal and at very low rates, thus impoverishing the peasants further.

A thriving ship-building industry was crushed. Surat and Malabar on the western coast and Bengal and Masulipatnam on the eastern coast were known for their ship-building industries. The British ships contracted by the Company were given a monopoly over trade routes, while even the Indian merchant ships plying along the coast were made to face heavy duties. In 1813, a law by the British parliament prohibited ships below 350 tonnes from sailing between India to Britain; this effectively put a large proportion of Bengal-built ships out of commission on the Indo-British trade routes. In 1814, another law was passed under which Indian-built ships were refused to be considered 'British-registered vessels' which could trade with America and the European continent. So, the decline of the Indian shipping industry was ensured.

The British did not allow the Indian steel industry to grow. Industries like the Tatas, which began to produce steel after a lot of trouble getting the required permissions, were restricted by being forced to produce a higher standard of steel for British use. The firms were not able to produce the lower standard of steel at the same time, so they were left out of the larger market that demanded the lower quality of steel. As restrictions were placed by Britain on Indian steel imports, this steel could only be used in India. Obviously, the growth of the industry was hampered.

Indian traders, moneylenders, and bankers had amassed some wealth as junior partners of English merchant capitalists in India. Their role fitted in the British scheme of colonial exploitation. The Indian moneylender provided loans to hardpressed agriculturists and thus facilitated the state collection of revenue. The Indian trader carried imported British products to the remotest corners and helped in the movement of Indian agricultural products for exports. The indigenous bankers helped both in the process of distribution and collection. But the colonial situation retarded the development of a healthy and independent industrial

bourgeoisie, and its development was different from other independent countries like Germany and Japan.

It was only in the second half of the 19th century that modern machine-based industries started coming up in India. The first cotton textile mill was set up in 1853 in Bombay by Cowasjee Nanabhoy and the first jute mill came up in 1855 in Rishra (Bengal). But most of the modern industries were foreign-owned and controlled by British managing agencies.

There was a rush of foreign capital in India at this time due to prospects of high profits, availability of cheap labour, cheap and readily available raw material, ready market in India and the neighbours, diminishing avenues for investments at home, willingness of the administration to provide all help, and ready markets abroad for some Indian exports such as tea, jute, and manganese.

Indian-owned industries came up in cotton textiles and jute in the 19th century and in sugar, cement, etc., in the 20th century. Indian-owned industries suffered from many handicaps—credit problems, no tariff protection by government, unequal competition from foreign companies, and stiff opposition from British capitalist interests who were backed by sound financial and technical infrastructure at home.

The colonial factor also caused certain structural and institutional changes. The industrial development was characterised by a lopsided pattern—core and heavy industries and power generation were neglected and some regions were favoured more than the others—causing regional disparities. These regional disparities hampered the process of nation-building. In the absence of careful nurturing of technical

View

…deindustrialisation was a deliberate British policy, not an accident. British industry flourished and Indian industry did not because of systematic destruction abetted by tariffs and regulatory measures that stacked the decks in favour of British industry conquering the Indian market, rather than the other way around.

—**Shashi Tharoor** in *An Era of Darkness*

education, the industry lacked sufficient technical manpower. Socially, the rise of an industrial capitalist class and the working class was an important feature of this phase.

Nationalist Critique of Colonial Economy

The early intellectuals of the first half of the 19th century supported British rule under the impression that it would modernise the country based on latest technology and capitalist economic organisation. After the 1860s, disillusionment started to set in among the politically conscious and they began to probe into the reality of British rule in India.

The foremost among these economic analysts was Dadabhai Naoroji, the 'Grand Old Man of India', who after a brilliant analysis of the colonial economy put forward the theory of economic drain in *Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India.* Other economic analysts included Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Romesh Chandra Dutt (*The Economic History*

Economic Drain

The term 'economic drain' refers to a portion of national product of India which was not available for consumption of its peoples, but was being drained away to Britain for political reasons and India was not getting adequate economic or material returns for it. The drain theory was put forward by Dadabhai Naoroji in his book *Poverty and UnBritish Rule in India.* The major components of this drain were salaries and pensions of civil and military officials, interests on loans taken by the Indian Government from abroad, profits on foreign investment in India, stores purchased in Britain for civil and military departments, payments to be made for shipping, banking, and insurance services which stunted the growth of Indian enterprise in these services.

The drain of wealth checked and retarded capital formation in India while the same portion of wealth accelerated the growth of British economy. The surplus from British economy re-entered India as finance capital, further draining India of its wealth. This had immense effect on income and employment potential within India.

of India), Gopal Krishna Gokhale, G. Subramania Iyer, and Prithwishchandra Ray. The essence of 19th century colonialism, they said, lay in the transformation of India into a supplier of foodstuffs and rawmaterials to the metropolis, a market for metropolitan manufacturers and a field for investment of British capital. These early nationalist analysts organised intellectual agitations and advocated a complete severance of India's economic subservience to Britain and the development of an independent economy based on modern industries.

British Policies Making India Poor

The basic assertion of these early intellectuals was that India was poor and growing poorer due to British imperialism, and since the causes of India's economic backwardness were man-made, they were explainable and removable. The problem of poverty was seen as a problem of raising productive capacity and energy of the people or as a problem of national development, thus making poverty a national issue. This helped in rallying all sections of society around common economic issues. Also, development was equated with industrialisation. This industrialisation was to be based on Indian and not foreign capital because, according to the early nationalists, foreign capital replaced and suppressed instead of augmenting and encouraging Indian capital. This suppression caused economic drain, further strengthening British hold over India. The political consequences of foreign capital investments were equally harmful as they caused political subjugation and created vested interests which sought security for investors, thus perpetuating the foreign rule.

Growth of Trade and Railways to Help Britain

These analysts exposed the force of British arguments that the growth of foreign trade and railways implied development for India. They pointed out that the pattern of foreign trade was unfavourable to India. It relegated India to a position of importer of finished goods and exporter of raw materials and foodstuffs. The development of railways, they argued, was not coordinated with India's industrial needs and it ushered in a commercial rather than an industrial revolution. The net

Views

'India Reform Tract' II, p. 3, says: 'It is an exhausting drain upon the resources of the country, the issue of which is replaced by no reflex; it is an extraction of the life blood from the veins of national industry which no subsequent introduction of nourishment is furnished to restore.

—**Dadabhai Naoroji** quoting from Mill's History of India

Our system acts very much like a sponge, drawing up all the good things from the banks of the Ganges, and squeezing them down on the banks of the Thames.

—**John Sullivan**, President, Board of Revenue, Madras

Where foreign capital has been sunk in a country, the administration of that country becomes at once the concern of the bondholders.

—***The Hindu*** (September 1889)

It is not the pitiless operations of economic laws, but it is the thoughtless and pitiless action of the British policy; it is the pitiless eating of India's substance in India, and the further pitiless drain to England; in short, it is the pitiless perversion of economic laws by the sad bleeding to which India is subjected, that is destroying India.

—**Dadabhai Naoroji**

Taxes spent in the country from which they are raised are totally different in their effect from taxes raised in one country and spent in another. In the former case the taxes collected from the population... are again returned to the industrious classes... But the case is wholly different when the taxes are not spent in the country from which they are raised... They constitute [an] absolute loss and extinction of the whole amount withdrawn from the taxed country... [The money] might as well be thrown into the sea. Such is the nature of the tribute we have so long exacted from India.

—**Sir George Wingate**

Under the native despot the people keep and enjoy what they produce, though at times they suffer some violence. Under the British Indian despot, the man is at peace, there is no violence; his substance is drained away, unseen, peaceably and subtly—he starves in peace, and peaceably perishes in peace, with law and order.

Dadabhai Naoroji

effect of the railways was to enable foreign goods to outsell indigenous products. Further, the benefits from impetus to steel, machinery, and capital investment in railways accrued to the British. G.V. Joshi remarked, "Expenditure on railways should be seen as an Indian subsidy to British industries."

One-Way Free Trade and Tariff Policy

The nationalists claimed that one-way free trade was ruining the Indian handicrafts industry, exposing it to premature, unequal, and unfair competition, while tariff policy was guided by British capitalist interests. On the finance front, taxes were levied to overburden the poor, sparing British capitalists and the bureaucrats. They demanded reduction of land revenue, abolition of salt tax, imposition of income tax, and excise duties on consumer goods consumed by the rich middle classes. The government expenditure, it was argued, was meant to serve colonial needs only, while development and welfare were ignored.

Effect of Economic Drain

The drain theory incorporated all threads of the nationalist critique that it denuded India of its productive capital. According to nationalist estimates, the economic drain at that time was:

- more than the total land revenue, or

Views

There can be no denial that there was a substantial outflow which lasted for 190 years. If these funds had been invested in India they could have made a significant contribution to raising income levels.

—Angus Maddison

Taxation raised by the King, says the Indian poet, is like the moisture sucked up by the sun, to be returned to the earth as fertilising rain; but the moisture raised from the Indian soil now descends as fertilising rain largely on other lands, not on India.

—R.C. Dutt

Trade cannot thrive without efficient administration, while the latter is not worth attending to in the absence of profits of the former. So, always with the assent and often to the dictates of the Chamber of Commerce, the Government of India is carried on, and this is the 'White Man's Burden'.

—Sachidanand Sinha

- half the total government revenue, or
- one-third of the total savings (in today's terms, it amounted to 8 per cent of the national product).

The concept of drain—one country taking away wealth from another country—was easily grasped by a nation of peasants for whom exploitation was a matter of daily experience.

Economic Issue a Stimulant to National Unrest

The nationalist agitation on economic issues served to undermine the ideological hegemony of alien rulers over Indian minds that the foreign rule was in the interest of Indians, thus exposing the myth of its moral foundations. It was also shown clearly that India was poor because it was being ruled for British interests. This agitation was one of the stimulants for intellectual unrest and spread of national consciousness during the moderate phase of freedom struggle (1875–1905)—the seed-time of national movement.

Till the end of the 19th century, the nationalists had been demanding some share in political power and control over the purse. During the first decade of the 20th century, they started demanding self-rule, like the United Kingdom or the colonies, and prominent among such nationalists was Dadabhai Naoroji.

Stages of Colonialism in India

The fundamental character of British rule in India did not remain the same through its long history of nearly two centuries. The changing pattern of Britain's position in the world economy led to changes in the nature of British colonialism. Marxist Historians, especially Rajni Palme Dutt, identified three overlapping stages in the history of imperialist rule in India. He points out that each stage developed out of the conditions of the previous stage and the different modes of colonial exploitation overlapped—old forms of colonial exploitation never entirely ceased but got integrated into new patterns of exploitation. These stages are, however,

marked by distinct dominant features i.e., qualitative changes from one stage to another.

First Stage

The Period of Merchant Capital (Mercantilism), often described as the Period of Monopoly Trade and Direct Appropriation (or the Period of East India Company's Domination, 1757–1813), was based on two basic objectives: (i) to acquire a monopoly of trade with India, against other English or European merchants or trading companies as well as against the Indian merchants; (ii) to directly appropriate or take over governmental revenues through control over State power.

During this period, no basic changes were introduced in administration, judicial system, transport and communication, methods of agricultural or industrial production, forms of business management or economic organisation. Nor were any major changes made in education or intellectual field, culture or social organisation. In fact, the traditional Indian civilisation, religions, laws, caste system, family structure, etc., were not seen as obstacles in the colonial exploitation.

The only changes made were:

(i) in military organisation and technology which native rulers were also introducing in their armed forces, and

(ii) in administration at the top of the structure of revenue collection so that it could become more efficient and smooth.

In this phase there was large-scale drain of wealth from India which constituted 2–3 per cent of Britain's national income at the time. It was this wealth that played an important role in financing Britain's industrial revolution.

In this stage, there was no large-scale import of British manufactures into India, rather, the reverse occurred—there was an increase in export of Indian textiles, etc. The weavers were, however, ruined at this stage by the Company's monopoly and exploitation. They were forced to produce for the Company under uneconomic compulsions.

Second Stage

Owing to its mode of exploitation being trade, this stage is also termed as Colonialism of Free Trade. It started with the Charter Act of 1813 and continued till 1860s. Soon after the East India Company became the ruler over most parts of India, there was a debate in Britain as to whose interests the newly acquired colony would serve. The newly emerging industrial capitalists began to criticise the East India Company and its exploitation of India. They demanded that colonial administration and policy in India should now serve British capitalist interests which were very different from those of the East India Company. Now India was to serve as a market for the ever-increasing output of British-manufactured goods especially textiles. At the same time, the new capitalists in England, needed from India exports of raw materials, especially cotton and foodgrains. Moreover, India could buy more British goods only if it earned foreign exchange by enhancing its exports.

The export of raw materials was increased sharply to meet the dividends of the Company and profits of British merchants. Besides, there was a need of money to pay for pensions of British officials who would go to Britain after retirement.

In this phase, the following dominant features were visible:

(i) India's colonial economy was integrated with the British and the world capitalist economy. This was made possible with the introduction of free trade. All import duties in India were either totally removed or drastically reduced to nominal rates.

(ii) Free entry was also granted to the British capitalists to develop tea, coffee, and indigo plantations, trade, transport, mining, and modern industries in India. The British Indian Government gave active State help to such capitalists.

(iii) The Permanent Settlement and the Ryotwari system in agriculture were introduced to transform traditional agrarian structure into a capitalist one.

(iv) Administration was made more comprehensive and included villages and outlying areas of the country. These changes were brought about to make British goods reach, and

agricultural products drawn from, interior villages and remotest parts.

(v) Personal law was largely left untouched since it did not affect colonial transformation of the economy. However, the changes related to criminal law, law of contract and legal procedures were overhauled to promote capitalist commercial relations and maintain law and order.

(vi) Modern education was introduced to provide cheap manpower to the vastly expanded administration. However, it was also aimed at transforming India's society and culture for two reasons: (a) create an overall atmosphere of change and development; and (b) give birth to a culture of loyalty to the rulers.

(vii) The taxation and the burden on peasants rose sharply due to economic transformation and costly administration (civil as well as military).

(viii) India absorbed 10 to 12 per cent of British exports and nearly 20 per cent of Britain's textile exports. After 1850, engine coaches, rail lines, and other railway stores were imported into India at a large scale.

(ix) The Indian Army was used for British expansion of colonialism in Asia and Africa.

Third Stage

The third stage is often described as the Era of Foreign Investments and International Competition for Colonies. It began around the 1860s in India owing to several changes in the world economy. These changes were as follows:

(i) Britain's industrial supremacy was challenged by several countries of Europe, the United States, and Japan.

(ii) As a result of the application of scientific knowledge to industry, the pace of industrialisation increased sharply (use of petroleum as fuel for the internal combustion engine and the use of electricity for industrial purposes were significant innovations).

(iii) The world market became more unified due to revolution in the means of international transport.

During this stage, Britain made strenuous efforts to consolidate its control over India. Liberal imperialist policies got replaced with reactionary imperialist policies, which were reflected in the viceroyalties of Lytton, Dufferin, Lansdowne,

and Curzon. The strengthening of colonial rule over India was meant to keep out the rivals as well as to attract British capital to India and provide it security. As a result, a very large amount of British capital got invested in railways, loans (to the Government of India), trade and, to a lesser extent, in plantations, coal mining, jute mills, shipping, and banking in India.

The notion of training the Indian people for self-government vanished (revived only after 1918 because of the pressure exerted by the Indian national movement). Now, the aim of British rule was declared as permanent 'trusteeship' over the Indians. The Indians were declared to be permanently immature—a 'child' people—needing British control and trusteeship. Geography, climate, race, history, religion, culture, and social organisation were all cited as factors in making the Indians unfit for self-government or democracy. The British thus tried to justify their rule over Indians for centuries to come—all in the name of civilising a barbaric people—"the White Man's burden".

Summary

- **Economic Impact of British Rule**
  - Deindustrialisation—ruin of artisans and handicraftsmen
  - Impoverishment of peasantry—ruralisation of India
  - Emergence of new land relations—ruin of old zamindars
  - Stagnation and deterioration of agriculture
  - Commercialisation of Indian agriculture
  - Development of modern industry
  - Rise of Indian national bourgeoisie
  - Economic drain
  - Famine and poverty
- **Nationalist Critique**
  - India getting poorer due to colonial exploitation
  - Problem of poverty—a national problem of raising productive capacities and energy
  - Development equated with industrialisation, which should take place through Indian, not foreign capital
  - British policies on trade, finance, infrastructure development, expenditure designed to serve imperialist interests
  - Need for complete severance of India's economic subservience to Britain and development of an independent economy

CHAPTER 29

Development of Indian Press

James Augustus Hickey in 1780 started *The Bengal Gazette* or *Calcutta General Advertiser,* the first newspaper in India, which was seized in 1782 because of its outspoken criticism of the government. Later more newspapers/journals came up—*The Bengal Journal, The Calcutta Chronicle, The Madras Courier, The Bombay Herald.* The Company's officers were worried that these newspapers might reach London and expose their misdeeds. Thus, they saw the need for curbs on the press.

Early Regulations

Censorship of Press Act, 1799

Lord Wellesley enacted this, anticipating French invasion of India. It imposed almost wartime press restrictions including pre-censorship. These restrictions were relaxed under Lord Hastings, who had progressive views, and in 1818, pre-censorship was dispensed with.

Licensing Regulations, 1823

The acting governor general, John Adams, who had reactionary views, enacted these. According to these regulations, starting or using a press without licence was a penal offence. Later on, the act was extended to cover journals, pamphlets, and books. These restrictions were directed chiefly against Indian language newspapers or those edited by Indians. Rammohan Roy's *Mirat-ul-Akbar* had to stop publication.

Press Act of 1835 or Metcalfe Act
Metcalfe (governor general—1835–36*)* repealed the obnoxious 1823 ordinance and earned the epithet, "liberator of the Indian press". The new Press Act (1835) required a printer/publisher to give a precise account of premises of a publication and cease functioning, if required by a similar declaration.

The result of a liberal press policy was a rapid growth of newspapers.

Licensing Act, 1857
Due to the emergency caused by the 1857 revolt, this act imposed licensing restrictions in addition to the already existing registration procedure laid down by Metcalfe Act, and the government reserved the right to stop publication and circulation of any book, newspaper, or printed matter.

Registration Act, 1867
This replaced the Metcalfe's Act of 1835 and was of a regulatory, not restrictive, nature. As per the act, (i) every book/newspaper was required to print the name of the printer and the publisher and the place of the publication*;* and (ii) a copy was to be submitted to the local government within one month of the publication of a book.

Struggle by Early Nationalists to Secure Press Freedom

Right from the early 19th Century, defence of civil liberties, including the freedom of the press, had been high on nationalist agenda. As early as 1824, Raja Rammohan Roy had protested against a resolution restricting the freedom of the press.

The early phase of nationalist movement from around 1870 to 1918 focused more on political propaganda and education, formation, and propagation of nationalist ideology and arousing, training, mobilisation, and consolidation of public opinion, than on mass agitation or active mobilisation of masses through open meetings. For this purpose, the press proved a crucial tool in the hands of the nationalists. The Indian National Congress in its early days relied solely on the press to propagate its resolutions and proceedings.

Many newspapers emerged during these years under distinguished and fearless journalists. These included *The Hindu* and *Swadesamitran* under G. Subramania Aiyar, *The*

Bengalee under Surendranath Banerjea, *Voice of India* under Dadabhai Naoroji, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* under Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh, *Indian Mirror* under N.N. Sen, *Kesari* (in Marathi) and *Mahratta* (in English) under Bal Gangadhar Tilak, *Sudharak* under Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, and *Hindustan* and *Advocate* under G.P. Verma. Other main newspapers included, *Tribune* and *Akbhar-i-am* in Punjab, *Gujarati, Indu Prakash, Dhyan Prakash* and *Kal* in Bombay and *Som Prakash, Banganivasi* and *Sadharani* in Bengal.

These newspapers were not established as profit-making business ventures but were seen as rendering national and public service. In fact, these newspapers had a wide reach and they stimulated a library movement. Their impact was not limited to cities and towns; these newspapers reached the remote villages, where each news item and editorial would be read and discussed thoroughly in the 'local libraries' which would gather around a single newspaper. In this way, these libraries served the purpose of not only political education but also of political participation. In these newspapers, government acts and policies were put to critical scrutiny. They acted as an institution of opposition to the government.

The government on its part had enacted many strident laws, such as Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code, which provided that anyone trying to cause disaffection against the British Government in India was to be transported for life or for any term or imprisoned up to three years. But the nationalist-minded journalists had evolved many clever strategems to subvert these legal hurdles. For instance, writings hostile to the government used to be prefaced with sentiments of loyalty to the government or critical writings of socialists or Irish nationalists from newspapers in England used to be quoted. This was a difficult task which required an intelligent mix of simplicity with subtlety.

The national movement, from its very beginning, stood for the freedom of press. The Indian newspapers became highly critical of Lord Lytton's administration, especially regarding its inhuman treatment to victims of the famine of 1876–77. The government struck back with the Vernacular Press Act, 1878.

✠ Vernacular Press Act, 1878

A bitter legacy of the 1857 revolt was the racial bitterness between the ruler and the ruled. After 1858, the European

press always rallied behind the government in political controversies while the vernacular press was critical of the government. There was a strong public opinion against the imperialistic policies of Lytton, compounded by terrible famine (1876–77), on the one hand, and lavish expenditure on the imperial Delhi Durbar, on the other.

The Vernacular Press Act (VPA) was designed to 'better control' the vernacular press and effectively punish and repress "seditious writing" in "publications in oriental languages". The provisions of the act included the following:

1. The district magistrate was empowered to call upon the printer and publisher of any vernacular newspaper to enter into a bond with the government undertaking not to cause disaffection against the government or antipathy between persons of different religions, caste, race through published material; the printer and publisher could also be required to deposit security, which could be forefeited if the regulations were contravened, and press equipment could be seized if the offence re-occurred.
2. The magistrate's action was final and no appeal could be made in a court of law.
3. A vernacular newspaper could get exemption from the operation of the act by submitting proofs to a government censor.

The act came to be nicknamed "the gagging Act". The worst features of this act were—(i) discrimination between English and vernacular press, (ii) no right of appeal.

Under VPA, proceedings were instituted against *Som Prakash, Bharat Mihir, Dacca Prakash,* and *Samachar.*

(Incidentally, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* turned overnight into an English newspaper to escape the VPA.)

Later, the pre-censorship clause was repealed, and a press commissioner was appointed to supply authentic and accurate news to the press.

There was strong opposition to the act, and finally Ripon repealed it in 1882.

✠ Repression against Nationalist Journalists Continues

In 1883, **Surendranath Banerjea became the first Indian journalist to be imprisoned**. In an angry editorial in *The*

Bengalee, Banerjea had criticised a judge of Calcutta High Court for being insensitive to the religious sentiments of Bengalis in one of his judgements.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak is most frequently associated with the nationalist fight for the freedom of press. Tilak had been building up anti-imperialist sentiments among the public through Ganapati festivals (started in 1893), Shivaji festivals (started in 1896), and through his newspapers *Kesari* and *Maharatta*. He was among the first to advocate bringing the lower middle classes, the peasants, artisans, and workers into the Congress fold. In 1896, he organised an all-Maharashtra campaign for boycott of foreign cloth in opposition to imposition of excise duty on cotton. In 1896–97, he initiated a no-tax campaign in Maharashtra, urging farmers to withhold the payment of revenue if their crop had failed. In 1897, plague occurred in Poona. Although Tilak supported government measures to check plague, there was large-scale popular resentment against heartless and harsh methods such as segregation and house searches. The popular unrest resulted in the murder of the chairman of the Plague Committee in Poona by the Chapekar brothers. The government policies on tariff, currency, and famine were also behind this popular resentment.

The government had been looking for an opportunity to check this militant trend and hostility in the press. They decided to make Tilak a victim to set an example to the public. Tilak was arrested after the murder of Rand on the basis of the publication of a poem, 'Shivaji's Utterances', in *Kesari,* and a speech which Tilak had delivered at the Shivaji festival, justifying Afzal Khan's murder by Shivaji. Tilak's defence of Shivaji's killing of Afzal Khan was portrayed by the prosecution as an incitement to kill British officials. Tilak was held guilty and awarded rigorous imprisonment of 18 months. Simultaneously, several other editors in Bombay presidency were tried and given similar harsh sentences. There were widespread protests against these measures. Overnight Tilak became a national hero and was given the title of 'Lokmanya' (respected and honoured by the people)—a new leader who preached with his deeds.

In 1898, the government amended Section 124A and added another Section 153A to the Penal Code, which made it a criminal offence for anyone to bring into contempt the

Views

The government has converted the entire nation into a prison and we are all prisoners. Going to prison only means that from a big cell one is confined to a smaller one.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Government of India or to create hatred among different classes, that is, *vis-a-vis* the English in India. This also led to nation-wide protests. During the Swadeshi and Boycott Movement and due to rise of militant nationalist trends, several repressive laws were passed.

Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908 Aimed against Extremist nationalist activity, the act empowered the magistrates to confiscate press property which published objectionable material likely to cause incitement to murder/ acts of violence.

Tilak as the leader of militant nationalists was tried on charges of sedition and transported to Mandalay (Burma) for six years. This led to countrywide protests. In Bombay, textile workers and railway workshop workers took on the army in streets and went on strike for days. Lenin hailed this as the entrance of the Indian working class on the political stage.

Indian Press Act, 1910 This act revived the worst features of the VPA—local government was empowered to demand a security at registration from the printer/publisher and fortfeit/deregister if it was an offending newspaper, and the printer of a newspaper was required to submit two copies of each issue to the local government free of charge. According to Reba Chaudhuri, "The Press Association of India in a memorandum on the operation of the Press Act of 1910 stated that nearly 1,000 papers had been prosecuted under the act. The total amount of securities and forfeitures which went into the hands of government during the first five years of the act was nearly Rs 5 lakh according to another official return made in 1918. Over 500 publications were proscribed under the Act."

During and After the First World War

Defence of India Rules were imposed for repression of political agitation and free public criticism during the First

World War. In 1921, on the recommendations of a Press Committee chaired by Tej Bahadur Sapru, the Press Acts of 1908 and 1910 were repealed.

Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, 1931 This act gave sweeping powers to provincial governments to suppress propaganda for Civil Disobedience Movement. It was further amplified in 1932 to include all activities calculated to undermine government authority.

During the Second World War

Under the Defence of India Rules, pre-censorship was imposed and amendments made in Press Emergency Act and Official Secrets Act. At one time, publication of all news related to Congress activity was declared illegal.

Summary

- First newspapers in India
- Early Regulations – Censorship of Press Act 1799; Licensing Regulations 1823; Press Act of 1835; Licensing Act 1857; Registration Act 1867
- Early Nationalists' Struggle for Free Press – focus on political propaganda and education; emergence of many nationalist oriented newspapers; journalism for public service and not for profit; government efforts to suppress nationalist press
- Vernacular Pres Act 1878: features designed to control the vernacular newspapers; nicknamed 'gagging act'; discriminated between the English language and vernacular press; pre-censorship (later repealed); action against nationalist journals and journalists; Ripon repeals the act
- Indian journalists continued to face repression; Surendranath Banerjea first Indian journalist to be imprisoned; Bal Gangadhar Tilak as fighter for press freedom and government action against him; further steps to suppress nationalist press – the Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act 1908 and Indian Press Act 1910.

CHAPTER 30

Development of Education

Under Company Rule

For the first 60 years of its dominion in India, the East India Company, a trading and profit-making concern, took no interest in the promotion of education. Some minor exceptions were efforts by individuals:

- The Calcutta Madrasah was established by Warren Hastings in 1781 for the study of Muslim law and related subjects.
- The Sanskrit College was established by Jonathan Duncan, the resident, at Benaras in 1791 for the study of Hindu law and philosophy.
- Fort William College was set up by Wellesley in 1800 for training of civil servants of the Company in languages and customs of Indians (closed in 1802).

The Calcutta Madrasah and the Sanskrit College were designed to provide a regular supply of qualified Indians to help the administration of law in the Company's court, and the knowledge of classical languages and vernaculars was useful in correspondence with Indian states.

Enlightened Indians and missionaries started exerting pressure on the government to promote modern, secular, Western education, as they thought that Western education was the remedy for social, economic, and political ills of the country. Missionaries thought that modern education

would destroy the faith of Indians in their own religions and they would take to Christianity. Serampore missionaries were, in particular, very enthusiastic about the spread of education.

A Humble beginning by Charter Act of 1813

The Charter Act of 1813 incorporated the principle of encouraging learned Indians and promoting knowledge of modern sciences in the country. The act directed the Company to sanction one lakh rupees annually for this purpose. However, even this petty amount was not made available till 1823, mainly because of the controversy raged on the question of the direction that this expenditure should take.

Meanwhile, efforts of enlightened Indians such as Raja Rammohan Roy bore fruit and a grant was sanctioned for Calcutta College set up in 1817 by educated Bengalis, imparting English education in Western humanities and sciences. The government also set up three Sanskrit colleges at Calcutta, Delhi, and Agra.

Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy

Within the General Committee on Public Instruction, the Anglicists argued that the government spending on education should be exclusively for modern studies.

The Orientalists said while Western sciences and literature should be taught to prepare students to take up jobs, emphasis should be placed on expansion of traditional Indian learning.

Even the Anglicists were divided over the question of medium of instruction—one faction was for English language as the medium, while the other faction was for Indian languages (vernaculars) for the purpose.

Unfortunately, there was a great deal of confusion over English and vernacular languages as media of instruction and as objects of study.

Lord Macaulay's Minute (1835)

The famous Lord Macaulay's Minute settled the row in favour of Anglicists—the limited government resources were to be devoted to teaching of Western sciences and literature

through the medium of English language alone. Lord Macaulay held the view that "Indian learning was inferior to European learning"—which was true as far as physical and social sciences in the contemporary stage were concerned.

The government soon made English as the medium of instruction in its schools and colleges and opened a few English schools and colleges instead of a large number of elementary schools, thus neglecting mass education. The British planned to educate a small section of upper and middle classes, thus creating a class "Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" who would act as interpreters between the government and masses and would enrich the vernaculars by which knowledge of Western sciences and literature would reach the masses. This was called the '**downward filtration theory**'.

Modern ideas, if not education, did filter down to the masses, though not in a form desired by the rulers, but through political parties, press, pamphlets, public platforms, etc. Modern education only helped this process by making available the basic literature on physical and social sciences to nationalists, thus stimulating their capacity to make social analysis—otherwise the content, structure, and curricula of modern education served colonial interests.

Efforts of Thomson

James Thomson, lieutenant-governor of NW Provinces (1843–53), developed a comprehensive scheme of village education through the medium of vernacular languages. In these village schools, useful subjects such as mensuration and agriculture sciences were taught. The purpose was to train personnel for the newly set up Revenue and Public Works Department.

Wood's Despatch (1854)

In 1854, Charles Wood prepared a despatch on an educational system for India. Considered the "Magna Carta of English Education in India", this document was the first comprehensive plan for the spread of education in India.

1. It asked the government of India to assume responsibility for education of the masses, thus repudiating the 'downward filtration theory', at least on paper.

2. It systematised the hierarchy from vernacular primary schools in villages at bottom, followed by Anglo-Vernacular High Schools and an affiliated college at the district level, and affiliating universities in the presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras.

3. It recommended English as the medium of instruction for higher studies and vernaculars at school level.

4. It laid stress on female and vocational education, and on teachers' training.

5. It laid down that the education imparted in government institutions should be secular.

6. It recommended a system of grants-in-aid to encourage private enterprise.

Developments

In 1857 universities at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras were set up, and later, departments of education were set up in all provinces. The Bethune School founded by J.E.D. Bethune at Calcutta (1849) was the first fruit of a powerful movement for education of women which arose in 1840s and 1850s. Bethune was the president of the Council of Education. Mostly due to Bethune's efforts, girls' schools were set up on a sound footing and brought under government's grants-in-aid and inspection system.

An Agriculture Institute at Pusa (Bihar) and an Engineering Institute at Roorkee were started.

The ideals and methods of Wood's Despatch dominated the field for five decades, which saw rapid westernisation of education system in India, with educational institutions run by European headmasters and principals. Missionary enterprises played their own part. Gradually, private Indian effort appeared in the field.

After the Crown Takeover

Hunter Education Commission (1882–83)

Earlier schemes had neglected primary and secondary education. When education was shifted to provinces in 1870, primary and secondary education further suffered because the provinces already had limited resources at their disposal. In 1882, the government appointed a commission under the chairmanship of W.W. Hunter to review the progress of

education in the country since the Despatch of 1854. The Hunter Commission mostly confined its recommendations to **primary** and **secondary** education. The commission:

(i) emphasised that state's special care is required for extension and improvement of primary education, and that primary education should be imparted through vernacular.

(ii) recommended transfer of control of primary education to newly set up district and municipal boards.

(iii) recommended that secondary (high school) education should have two divisions:
- literary—leading up to university
- vocational—for commercial careers

(iv) drew attention to inadequate facilities for female education, especially outside presidency towns and made recommendations for its spread.

The next two decades saw rapid growth and expansion of secondary and collegiate education with the participation of Indians. Also, more teaching-cum-examining universities were set up like the Punjab University (1882) and the Allahabad University (1887).

Indian Universities Act, 1904

The dawn of 20th century saw political unrest. The official view was that under private management the quality of education had deteriorated and educational institutions acted as factories producing political revolutionaries. Nationalists accepted the decline in quality but accused the government of not doing anything to eradicate illiteracy.

In 1902, **Raleigh Commission** was set up to go into conditions and prospects of universities in India and to suggest measures for improvement in their constitution and working. The commission precluded from reporting on primary or secondary education. Based on its recommendations, the Indian Universities Act was passed in 1904. As per the act,

(i) universities were to give more attention to study and research;

(ii) the number of fellows of a university and their period in office were reduced, and most fellows were to be nominated by the government;

(iii) government was to have powers to veto universities' senate regulations and could amend these regulations or pass regulations on its own;
(iv) conditions were to be made stricter for affiliation of private colleges; and
(v) five lakh rupees were to be sanctioned per annum for five years for improvement of higher education and universities.

Curzon justified greater control over universities in the name of quality and efficiency, but actually sought to restrict education and to discipline the educated towards loyalty to the government.

The nationalists saw in it an attempt to strengthen imperialism and to sabotage nationalist feelings. Gokhale called it a "retrograde measure".

Government Resolution on Education Policy—1913

In 1906, the progressive state of Baroda introduced compulsory primary education throughout its territories. National leaders urged the government to do so for British India.

Gokhale, as a member of the Imperial Legislative Council, raised the issue in his Resolution of 1910; he called for primary education to be made compulsory in those areas where at least 35 per cent of 6-to-7-year-old boys were receiving instruction; state governments and local authorities to decide cost of education; the need to establish a separate department of education under the central government for taking necessary steps to introduce compulsory education; and for a secretary to be appointed for education to monitor the progress and prepare budget report. The government assured him that the idea would be considered, upon which Gokhale withdrew the resolution.

Though the government established the education department under the central government and appointed a secretary for education, the main demand for free and compulsory primary education was ignored. Gokhale then raised the issue by bringing in a bill in March 1911 calling

for the introduction of free and compulsory primary education in a phased manner. The bill was, however, rejected by a select committee.

The government came up with its Resolution on Education Policy in 1913.

The government refused to take up the responsibility of compulsory education, but accepted the policy of removal of illiteracy and urged provincial governments to take early steps to provide free elementary education to the poorer and more backward sections. Private efforts were to be encouraged for this and the quality of secondary schools was to be improved. A university, it was decided, was to be established in each province and teaching activities of universities were to be encouraged. Regarding women's education, it was suggested that there should be curriculum of practical utility for girls, and that examination of girls should not get much importance; however, there should be an increase in the number of women teachers and inspectors.

Sadler University Commission (1917–19)

In 1917, the Government of India appointed the Calcutta University Commission, commonly called the Sadler Commission after its chairman, Michael Sadler. The commission was set up to study and report on problems of Calcutta University, but its recommendations were applicable more or less to other universities also. It reviewed the entire field from school education to university education. It held the view that for the improvement of university education, improvement of secondary education was a necessary pre-condition. Its observations were as follows:

1. School course should cover 12 years. Students should enter university after an intermediate stage (rather than matric) for a three-year degree course in university. This was done to:
   (a) prepare students for university stage;
   (b) relieve universities of a large number of below-university standard students; and
   (c) provide collegiate education to those not planning to go through university stage.

A separate board of secondary and intermediate education should be set up for administration and control of secondary and intermediate education.

2. There should be less rigidity in framing university regulations.

3. A university should function as a centralised, unitary residential-teaching autonomous body, rather than as scattered, affiliated colleges.

4. Female education, applied scientific and technological education, teachers' training, including those for professional and vocational colleges, should be extended.

In 1920, the government recommended the Sadler Report to the provincial governments.

The Sadler Commission recommendations had a great influence on the development of education in the next few decades. In the period from 1916 to 1921, seven new universities came up: Mysore, Patna, Benaras, Aligarh, Dacca, Lucknow, and Osmani soon after, came more universities such as Delhi, Agra, and Annamalai (in Madras).

Teaching so far had been the function of degree colleges, and there was no provision for post-graduate education. The functions of the Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras universities were to provide affiliation, conduct examinations, and confer degrees. But now, the number of teaching universities and residential universities increased. With the introduction of Honours courses, there was an increase in academic activities in the universities and colleges. Studies of different Indian languages began. Facilities for higher studies and research were also created. The post of professor was created in the universities. The department of education was opened in Calcutta and Dacca universities. Internal administration of the universities improved. The Academic Council was created to deal with such matters as curriculum construction, examination, and research. This helped to improve the academic standard of the universities. In 1925, an Inter University Board was set up to coordinate among the different Indian universities. For the first time students' welfare became an important matter in universities, and a board of students' welfare was formed in each university.

However, the recommendations of the commission have been criticised for being too advanced for the time, and that many of the new things suggested were not suitable in the circumstances existing at the time.

Education Under Dyarchy

Under Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, education was shifted to provincial ministries and the government stopped taking direct interest in educational matters, while government grants, liberally sanctioned since 1902, were now stopped. Financial difficulties prevented any substantial expansion but still education grew, especially under philanthropic efforts.

Hartog Committee (1929)

An increase in the number of schools and colleges had led to deterioration of education standards. The Hartog Committee was set up by the Simon Commission as an auxiliary committee under the chairmanship of Phillip Hartog to prepare a report on education.

The main findings and recommendations of the committee were as follows:

Primary Education There were serious shortcomings in the primary education system as it existed. Quantitative expansion of primary schools was not enough; improvement in their quality was necessary. There was a lot of wastage and stagnation. The withdrawal of children from a school at any stage constituted wastage as the money and time spent had failed to give the children literacy. The reasons for children being withdrawn were mainly poverty, ignorance, caste barriers, religious conservatism, seasonal diseases, and agricultural failure. Stagnation meant the detention of children in the same classes for more than one academic year. This, in turn, led to withdrawal of the children from schools. The reasons for such stagnation were that most schools were run by just one teacher, teachers were not well qualified, there was a lack of women teachers, schools were often short-lived, and there was a lack of school inspection.

Recognising that primary school education was of national importance, the committee recommended that the

government should be responsible for the control and inspection of primary schools. It said that primary education should be for four years. The school timings and the curriculum should be such as to suit the environment and conditions of the locality where they are, and the subjects selected should have practical value for the students.

There should be refresher courses and training programmes to improve the quality of primary school teachers. School inspection should increase in number as well as in efficiency. Primary schools should serve as community centres that could provide adult education, medical relief, and facilities for recreation to the people of rural areas.

- **Secondary School Education** The defects of secondary education included the fact that it was highly examination oriented, and there was a large number of failures in the matriculation examination. It recommended the introduction of a more diversified curriculum. Students would benefit from the introduction of alternative courses in the high schools as the students could then choose courses according to their aptitude. The committee recommended the inclusion of industrial and commercial subjects.
- **Higher Education** Though the focus of the committee was on primary education, it also evaluated the condition of higher education. It found that the standard of education was low, there was overcrowding in universities, and libraries were not well equipped. The committee suggested that affiliated universities be established besides unitary and residential universities, the condition of university libraries be improved, honours courses be opened, and students be admitted on the basis of abilities and aptitudes. The committee asserted the importance of developing learned and liberal-minded individuals who would be capable of undertaking responsibilities.
- **Women's Education** Regarding women's education, the committee recommended that the education of boys and girls should get equal importance; more primary schools for girls should be established; and the curriculum should include

hygiene, home science, and music in secondary schools. Attention should also be given to the training of women for teaching jobs.

The report of the Hartog Committee was effective to an extent in improving the quality of primary education. However, the quantitative expansion suffered. Secondary school education improved. The number of affiliated colleges also went up.

Sargent Plan of Education

Sir John Sargent, the Educational Advisor to the Government of India, was deputed to draw up a memorandum for the development of Indian education after the Second World War. His memorandum was submitted to the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944.

The report analysed the prevailing situation in education and provided a long-term plan for educational development in India. It gave details of programmes and schemes directed towards reconstructing the education system. The aim of the plan was to bring about universal literacy in India within 40 years of its introduction.

The main recommendations made in the report were as follows:

- There should be free pre-primary education for children between the years of 3 and 6, the objective being to give the children social experience. The teachers in these nursery schools should be women adequately trained for the work.
- There should be universal, compulsory, and free education for the 6 to 14 years age group. This group would be divided into two stages, namely Junior Basic (6-11) and Senior Basic (11–14). The fundamental principle of education at this level should be "learning through activity". There should be an emphasis on learning some basic craft or crafts suited to local needs and conditions. Activities at the senior basic level should include physical training and organised games.
- High school education should be for a period of six

years for selected children from the age of 11 years. The selected students must be well above the average ability and have exceptional aptitude for higher studies. Fees may be charged, but there would also be studentships, and the poor could get scholarships. There were to be two streams in high schools: academic and technical/vocational. The high schools in the academic sphere will impart instruction in the Arts and pure sciences, while the high school in the technical sphere will provide training in applied sciences and industrial and commercial subjects. The curriculum in both spheres will include art and music, and all girls should be taught domestic science. The mother tongue would be the medium of instruction in all high schools while English would be a compulsory second language. Students were not to leave school till the age of 14.

- As for university education, in the absence of suitable method of selection, many students not fit for it got admitted to university education. Too much importance was attached to examinations. In the circumstances, the university degree course after the higher secondary examination should be for three years; the existent intermediate course should be abolished; university education standard must be improved, and admission method must be changed in order that university course could be taken by capable students; poor students should be given financial assistance; teachers should be competent and their service conditions improved; a high standard in post-graduate studies and in pure applied research should be focused on; an all-India organisation on the lines of the University Grants Committee of England should be set up to coordinate the activities of the different universities.

The Sargent report made many other recommendations such as liquidation of adult illiteracy in 20 years; adult education which would include general or technical/vocational education, not just literacy; medical check up for students in schools; special education for the physically handicapped and mentally retarded children; setting up of employment bureaus.

Wardha Scheme of Basic Education (1937)

The Congress had organised an all India Education Conference in October 1937 in Wardha. In the light of the resolutions passed there, the **Zakir Hussain committee** formulated a detailed national scheme for basic education. (It came to be known as *Nai Talim*.) The main principle behind this scheme was 'learning through activity'. It was based on Gandhi's ideas published in a series of articles in the weekly *Harijan*. Gandhi thought that Western education had created a gulf between the educated few and the masses and had also made the educated elite ineffective. Gandhi said: "I am fully convinced that present system of education is not only wasteful but positively harmful. They would pick up evil habits. English has created a permanent bar between the highly educated few and the uneducated many."

The scheme, which advocated free and compulsory education for all from the years of 7 to 14, had the following provisions:

(i) Inclusion of a basic handicraft in the syllabus

(ii) First seven years of schooling to be an integral part of a free and compulsory nationwide education system (through mother tongue)

(iii) Teaching to be in the mother tongue; Hindi to be taught in areas where it was not the mother tongue.

(iv) Ways to be devised to establish contact with the community around schools through service

(v) A suitable technique to be devised with a view to implementing the main idea of basic education—educating the child through the medium of productive activity of a suitable craft such as spinning and weaving, carpentry, agriculture, pottery, leather work, home science for girls, etc.

(vi) The social and scientific implications of a craft to be studied

(vii) Mathematics, general science, social studies, painting, music, and physical education to be part of the curriculum.

(viii) No religious and moral education included

The system, rather than being a methodology for education, was an expression of an idea for a new life and a new society. The basic premise was that only through such a scheme could India be an independent and non-violent society. This scheme was child-centred and cooperative.

There was not much development of this idea, because of the start of the Second World War and the resignation of the Congress ministries (October 1939).

The Sargent plan was not acceptable to many lndian educationists who felt that the projected period of forty years for attaining the universalisation of primary education was too long. The cost of implementing the plan also seemed to be exorbitant. The idea of creating the same level of educational attainment in India as prevailed in England was considered to be utopian and impracticable, besides being unsuitable for Indian conditions. With hindsight one may say that the plan was realistic and had several good points about it. But the plan was a little ahead of its times.

Development of Vernacular Education

During the early 19th century, vernacular education was in a sorry state of affairs. It was mostly dependent on contributions from wealthy zamindars.

1835, 1836, 1838 : William Adam's reports on vernacular education in Bengal and Bihar pointed out defects in the system of vernacular education.

1843–53 : James Jonathan's experiments in North-West Provinces (UP), as the lieutenant-governor there, included opening one government school as model school in each tehsildari and a normal school for teachers' training for vernacular schools.

1853 : In a famous minute, Lord Dalhousie expressed strong opinion in favour of vernacular education.

1854 : Wood's Despatch made the following provisions for vernacular education:

1. Improvement of standards
2. Supervision by government agency
3. Normal schools to train teachers

These gave impetus to the cause of vernacular education

1854–71 : The government paid some attention to secondary and vernacular education. The number of vernacular schools increased by more than five-fold.

1882 : The Hunter Commission held that State should make special efforts for extension and improvement of

vernacular education. Mass education was to be seen as instructing masses through vernaculars.

1904 : Education policy put special emphasis on vernacular education and increased grants for it.

1929 : Hartog Committee presented a gloomy picture of primary education.

1937 : These schools received encouragement from Congress ministries.

Development of Technical Education

The Engineering College at Roorkee was set up in 1847; the Calcutta College of Engineering came up in 1856. In 1858, Overseers' School at Poona was raised to the status of Poona College of Engineering and affiliated to Bombay University. Guindy College of Engineering was affiliated to Madras University.

Medical training started with the establishment of a medical college in Calcutta in 1835. Lord Curzon did much to broaden the whole basis of professional courses—medicine, agriculture, engineering, veterinary sciences, etc. He established an agriculture college at Pusa, which acted as a parent institution of similar institutions in other provinces.

Evaluation of British Policy on Education

1. Even the inadequate measures the government took for the expansion of modern education were guided by concerns other than philanthropic. The government measures for promotion of education were influenced by:

- agitation in favour of modern education by enlightened Indians, Christian missionaries, and humanitarian officials;
- the need to ensure a cheap supply of educated Indians to man an increasing number of subordinate posts in administration and in British business concerns—thus there was an emphasis on English medium as the language of administration and of education;

- the hope that educated Indians would help expand market for British manufactures in India; and
- an expectation that Western education would reconcile Indians to British rule, particularly as it glorified British conquerors and their administration.

The British thus wanted to use modern education to strengthen the foundations of their political authority in India.

2. Traditional system of Indian learning gradually declined for want of support, and specially after 1844 when it was declared that applicants for government employment should possess knowledge of English.

3. Mass education was neglected leading to widespread illiteracy (1911—84 per cent and in 1921—92 per cent), which created a wide linguistic and cultural gulf between the educated few and the masses.

4. Since education was to be paid for, it became a monopoly of upper and richer classes and city dwellers.

5. There was an almost total neglect of women's education because: (i) the government did not want to arouse wrath of orthodox sections; and (ii) it had no immediate utility for the colonial rule.

6. Scientific and technical education was by and large neglected. By 1857, there were only three medical colleges at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, and only one good engineering college at Roorkee, which was open only to Europeans and Eurasians.

Summary

- Steps taken under Company rule: various colleges established; under Charter Act of 1813; Orientalist-Anglican Controversy; Macaulay's Minute; Efforts of Thomson; Wood's Despatch of 1854
- After the Crown Took Over: Hunter Education Commission; Indian Universities Act of 1904; Government Resolution on Education Policy 1913; Sadler University Commission 1917-19; Education under Dyarchy; Hartog Committee 1929; Wardha Scheme; Sargent Plan 1944;
- Development of Vernacular Education
- Development of Technical Education
- Evaluation of British Policy

CHAPTER 31

Peasant Movements 1857–1947

Peasantry Under Colonialism

The impoverishment of the Indian peasantry was a direct result of the transformation of the agrarian structure due to:

- colonial economic policies;
- ruin of the handicrafts leading to overcrowding of land;
- the new land revenue system; and
- colonial administrative and judicial system.

The peasants suffered from high rents, illegal levies, arbitrary evictions, and unpaid labour in zamindari areas. In Ryotwari areas, the government itself levied heavy land revenue. The overburdened farmer, fearing loss of his only source of livelihood, often approached the local moneylender who made full use of the former's difficulties by extracting high rates of interests on the money lent. Often, the farmer had to mortgage his land and cattle. Sometimes, the moneylender seized the mortgaged belongings. Gradually, over large areas, the actual cultivators were reduced to the status of tenants-at-will, sharecroppers, and landless labourers.

The peasants often resisted the exploitation, and soon they realised that their real enemy was the colonial state. Sometimes, the desperate peasants took to crime to come out of intolerable conditions. These crimes included robbery, dacoity, and what has been called social banditry.

A Survey of Early Peasant Movements

Indigo Revolt (1859–60)

In Bengal, the indigo planters, nearly all Europeans, exploited the local peasants by forcing them to grow indigo on their lands instead of the more paying crops like rice. The planters forced the peasants to take advance sums and enter into fraudulent contracts which were then used against the peasants. The planters intimidated the peasants through kidnappings, illegal confinements, flogging, attacks on women and children, seizure of cattle, burning and demolition of houses, and destruction of crops.

The anger of the peasants exploded in 1859 when, led by Digambar Biswas and Bishnu Biswas of Nadia district, they decided not to grow indigo under duress and resisted the physical pressure of the planters and their *lathiyals* (retainers) backed by police and the courts. They also organised a counter force against the planters' attacks. The planters also tried methods like evictions and enhanced rents. The ryots replied by going on a rent strike, by refusing to pay the enhanced rents, and by physically resisting the attempts to evict them. Gradually, they learned to use the legal machinery and initiated legal action supported by fund collection.

The Bengali intelligentsia played a significant role by supporting the peasants' cause through newspaper campaigns, organisation of mass meetings, preparing memoranda on peasants' grievances, and supporting them in legal battles.

The government appointed an indigo commission to enquire into the problem of indigo cultivation. Based on its recommendations, the government issued a notification in November 1860 that the ryots could not be compelled to grow indigo and that it would ensure that all disputes were settled by legal means. But the planters were already closing down factories and indigo cultivation was virtually wiped out from Bengal by the end of 1860.

Pabna Agrarian Leagues

During the 1870s and 1880s, large parts of Eastern Bengal witnessed agrarian unrest caused by oppressive practices of

the zamindars. The zamindars resorted to enhanced rents beyond legal limits and prevented the tenants from acquiring occupancy rights under Act X of 1859. To achieve their ends, the zamindars resorted to forcible evictions, seizure of cattle and crops, and prolonged, costly litigation in courts where the poor peasant found himself at a disadvantage.

Having had enough of the oppressive regime, the peasants of Yusufshahi Pargana in Pabna district formed an agrarian league or combination to resist the demands of the zamindars. The league organised a rent strike—the ryots refused to pay the enhanced rents, challenging the zamindars in the courts. Funds were raised by ryots to fight the court cases. The struggles spread throughout Pabna and to other districts of East Bengal. The main form of struggle was that of legal resistance; there was very little violence.

Though the peasant discontent continued to linger on till 1885, most of the cases had been solved, partially through official persuasion and partially because of zamindars' fears. Many peasants were able to acquire occupancy rights and resist enhanced rents. The government also promised to undertake legislation to protect the tenants from the worst aspects of zamindari oppression. In 1885, the Bengal Tenancy Act was passed.

Again, a number of young Indian intellectuals supported the peasants' cause. These included Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, R.C. Dutt, and the Indian Association under Surendranath Banerjea.

Deccan Riots

The ryots of Deccan region of western India suffered heavy taxation under the Ryotwari system. Here again the peasants found themselves trapped in a vicious network with the moneylender as the exploiter and the main beneficiary. These moneylenders were mostly outsiders—Marwaris or Gujaratis. The conditions had worsened due to a crash in cotton prices after the end of the American Civil War in 1864, the government's decision to raise the land revenue by 50 per cent in 1867, and a succession of bad harvests.

In 1874, the growing tension between the moneylenders and the peasants resulted in a social boycott movement organised by the ryots against the "outsider" moneylenders.

The ryots refused to buy from their shops. No peasant would cultivate their fields. The barbers, washermen, shoemakers would not serve them. This social boycott spread rapidly to the villages of Poona, Ahmednagar, Sholapur, and Satara. Soon, the social boycott was transformed into agrarian riots with systematic attacks on the moneylenders' houses and shops. The debt bonds and deeds were seized and publicly burnt.

The government succeeded in repressing the movement. As a conciliatory measure, the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act was passed in 1879.

This time also, the modern nationalist intelligentsia of Maharashtra supported the peasants' cause.

Changed Nature of Peasant Movements after 1857

- Peasants emerged as the main force in agrarian movements, fighting directly for their own demands.
- The demands were centred almost wholly on economic issues.
- The movements were directed against the immediate enemies of the peasant—foreign planters and indigenous zamindars and moneylenders.
- The struggles were directed towards specific and limited objectives and redressal of particular grievances.
- Colonialism was not the target of these movements.
- It was not the objective of these movements to end the system of subordination or exploitation of the peasants.
- Territorial reach was limited.
- There was no continuity of struggle or long-term organisation.
- The peasants developed a strong awareness of their legal rights and asserted them in and outside the courts.

Weaknesses

- There was a lack of an adequate understanding of colonialism.
- The 19th-century peasants did not possess a new ideology and a new social, economic, and political programme.
- These struggles, however militant, occurred within the

framework of the old societal order lacking a positive conception of an alternative society.

Later Movements

The peasant movements of the 20th century were deeply influenced by and had a marked impact on the national freedom struggle. (Refer to the chapters on Freedom Movement for 'Champaran' and 'Kheda Satyagraha'.)

The Kisan Sabha Movement

After the 1857 revolt, the Awadh taluqdars had got back their lands. This strengthened the hold of the taluqdars or big landlords over the agrarian society of the province. The majority of the cultivators were subjected to high rents, summary evictions (*bedakhali*), illegal levies, renewal fees or *nazrana*. The First World War had hiked the prices of food and other necessities. This worsened the conditions of the UP peasants.

Mainly due to the efforts of the Home Rule activists, kisan sabhas were organised in UP. The United Provinces Kisan Sabha was set up in February 1918 by Gauri Shankar Mishra and Indra Narayan Dwivedi. Madan Mohan Malaviya supported their efforts. By June 1919, the UP Kisan Sabha had 450 branches. Other prominent leaders included Jhinguri Singh, Durgapal Singh and Baba Ramchandra. In June 1920, Baba Ramchandra urged Nehru to visit these villages. During these visits, Nehru developed close contacts with the villagers.

In October 1920, the Awadh Kisan Sabha came into existence because of differences in nationalist ranks. The Awadh Kisan Sabha asked the kisans to refuse to till *bedakhali* land, not to offer *hari* and *begar* (forms of unpaid labour), to boycott those who did not accept these conditions, and to solve their disputes through panchayats.

From the earlier forms of mass meetings and mobilisation, the patterns of activity changed rapidly in January 1921 to the looting of bazaars, houses, granaries, and clashes with the police. The centres of activity were primarily the districts of Rai Bareilly, Faizabad, and Sultanpur.

The movement declined soon, partly due to government repression and partly because of the passing of the Awadh Rent (Amendment) Act.

Eka Movement

Towards the end of 1921, peasant discontent resurfaced in some northern districts of the United Provinces—Hardoi, Bahraich, Sitapur. The issues involved were:

(i) high rents—50 per cent higher than the recorded rates;
(ii) oppression of *thikadars* in charge of revenue collection; and
(iii) practice of share-rents.

The meetings of the Eka or the Unity Movement involved a symbolic religious ritual in which the assembled peasants vowed that they would:

- pay only the recorded rent but would pay it on time;
- not leave when evicted;
- refuse to do forced labour;
- give no help to criminals; and
- abide by panchayat decisions.

The grassroot leadership of the Eka Movement came from Madari Pasi and other low-caste leaders, and many small zamindars.

By March 1922, severe repression by authorities brought the movement to an end.

Mappila Revolt

The Mappilas were the Muslim tenants inhabiting the Malabar region where most of the landlords were Hindus. The Mappilas had expressed their resentment against the oppression of the landlords during the 19th century also. Their grievances centred around lack of security of tenure, high rents, renewal fees, and other oppressive exactions.

The Mappila tenants were particularly encouraged by the demand of the local Congress body for a government legislation regulating tenant-landlord relations. Soon, the Mappila movement merged with the ongoing Khilafat agitation. The leaders of the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation Movement like Gandhi, Shaukat Ali, and Maulana Azad addressed Mappila meetings. After the arrest of national leaders, the leadership passed into the hands of local Mappila leaders.

Things took a turn for the worse in August 1921 when the arrest of a respected priest leader, Ali Musaliar, sparked off large-scale riots. Initially, the symbols of British

authority—courts, police stations, treasuries, and offices—and unpopular landlords (*jenmies* who were mostly Hindus) were the targets. But once the British declared martial law and repression began in earnest, the character of the rebellion underwent a definite change. Many Hindus were seen by the Mappilas to be helping the authorities. What began as an anti-government and anti-landlord affair acquired communal overtones. The communalisation of the rebellion completed the isolation of the Mappilas from the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation Movement. By December 1921, all resistance had come to a stop.

Bardoli Satyagraha

The Bardoli *taluqa* in Surat district had witnessed intense politicisation after the coming of Gandhi on the national political scene. The movement sparked off in January 1926 when the authorities decided to increase the land revenue by 30 per cent. The Congress leaders were quick to protest and a Bardoli Inquiry Committee was set up to go into the issue. The committee found the revenue hike to be unjustified. In February 1926, Vallabhbhai Patel was called to lead the movement. The women of Bardoli gave him the title of "Sardar". Under Patel, the Bardoli peasants resolved to refuse payments of the revised assessment until the government appointed an independent tribunal or accepted the current amount as full payment. To organise the movement, Patel set up 13 *chhavanis* or workers' camps in the *taluqa*. *Bardoli Satyagraha Patrika* was brought out to mobilise public opinion. An intelligence wing was set up to make sure all the tenants followed the movement's resolutions. Those who opposed the movement faced a social boycott. Special emphasis was placed on the mobilisation of women. K.M. Munshi and Lalji Naranji resigned from the Bombay Legislative Council in support of the movement.

By August 1928, massive tension had built up in the area. There were prospects of a railway strike in Bombay. Gandhi reached Bardoli to stand by in case of any emergency. The government was looking for a graceful withdrawal now. It set the condition that first the enhanced rent be paid by all the occupants (not actually done). Then, a committee went into the whole affair and found the revenue hike to be unjustified and recommended a rise of 6.03 per cent only.

During the 1930s, the peasant awakening was influenced by the Great Depression in the industrialised countries and the Civil Disobedience Movement, which took the form of no-rent, no-revenue movement in many areas. Also, after the decline of the active phase movement (1932), many new entrants to active politics started looking for suitable outlets for release of their energies and took to organisation of peasants.

The All India Kisan Congress/Sabha

This sabha was founded in Lucknow in April 1936 with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati as the president and N.G. Ranga as the general secretary. A kisan manifesto was issued and a periodical under Indulal Yagnik started. The AIKS and the Congress held their sessions in Faizpur in 1936. The Congress manifesto (especially the agrarian policy) for the 1937 provincial elections was strongly influenced by the AIKS agenda.

Under Congress Ministries

The period 1937–39 was the high watermark of the peasant movements and activity under the Congress provincial rule. The chief form of mobilisation was through holding kisan conferences and meetings where demands were aired and resolutions were passed. Mobilisation campaigns were carried out in the villages.

Peasant Activity in Provinces

Kerala

In the Malabar region, the peasants were mobilised mainly by the Congress Socialist Party activists. Many "Karshak Sanghams" (peasants' organisations) came into existence. The most popular method was the marching of *jaths* or peasants groups to the landlords to get their demands accepted. One significant campaign by the peasants was in 1938 for the amendment of the Malabar Tenancy Act, 1929.

Andhra

This region had already witnessed a decline in the prestige of zamindars after their defeat by Congressmen in elections. Anti-zamindar movements were going on in some places.

Many provincial ryot associations were active. N.G. Ranga had set up, in 1933, the India Peasants' Institute. After 1936, the Congress socialists started organising the peasants. At many places, the summer schools of economics and politics were held and addressed by leaders like P.C. Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh, and R.D. Bhardwaj.

Bihar

Here, Sahjanand Saraswati was joined by Karyanand Sharma, Yadunandan Sharma, Rahul Sankritayan, Panchanan Sharma, Jamun Karjiti, etc. In 1935, the Provincial Kisan Conference adopted the anti-zamindari slogan. The Provincial Kisan Sabha developed a rift with the Congress over the '*bakasht* land' issue because of an unfavourable government resolution which was not acceptable to the sabha. The movement died out by August 1939.

Punjab

The earlier peasant mobilisation here had been organised by the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha, the Kirti Kisan Party, the Congress, and the Akalis. A new direction to the movement was given by the Punjab Kisan Committee in 1937. The main targets of the movement were the landlords of western Punjab who dominated the unionist ministry. The immediate issues taken up were resettlement of land revenue in Amritsar and Lahore and increase in water rates in canal colonies of Multan and Montgomery where feudal levies were being demanded by the private contractors. Here, the peasants went on a strike and were finally able to win concessions.

The peasant activity in Punjab was mainly concentrated in Jullundur, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Lyallpur, and Shekhupura. The Muslim tenants-at-will of west Punjab and the Hindu peasants of south-eastern Punjab (today's Haryana) remained largely unaffected.

Peasant activity was also organised in Bengal (Burdwan and 24 Parganas), Assam (Surma Valley), Orissa, Central Provinces, and NWFP.

During the War

Because of a pro-War line adopted by the communists, the AIKS was split on communist and non-communist lines and many veteran leaders like Sahjanand, Indulal Yagnik, and N.G.

Ranga left the sabha. But the Kisan Sabha continued to work among the people. It did notable work during the famine of 1943.

Post-War Phase

Tebhaga Movement

In September 1946, the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha gave a call to implement, through mass struggle, the Flood Commission recommendations of *tebhaga*—two-thirds' share—to the bargardars, the sharecroppers also known as *bagchasi* or *adhyar*, instead of the one-half share. The bargardars worked on lands rented from the *jotedars*. The communist cadres, including many urban student militias, went to the countryside to organise the bargardars. The central slogan was "*nij khamare dhan tolo*"—i.e., sharecroppers taking the paddy to their own threshing floor and not to the *jotedar's* house, as before, so as to enforce *tebhaga*.

The storm centre of the movement was north Bengal, principally among Rajbanshis—a low caste of tribal origin. Muslims also participated in large numbers. The movement dissipated soon, because of the League ministry's sop of the Bargardari Bill, an intensified repression, the popularisation of the Hindu Mahasabha's agitation for a separate Bengal and renewed riots in Calcutta which ended the prospects of sympathetic support from the urban sections.

Telangana Movement

This was the biggest peasant guerrilla war of modern Indian history affecting 3,000 villages and 3 million population. The princely state of Hyderabad under Asajahi Nizams was marked by a combination of religious-linguistic domination (by a mall Urdu-speaking Muslim elite ruling over predominantly Hindu-Telugu, Marathi, Kannada-speaking groups), total lack of political and civil liberties, grossest forms of forced exploitation by *deshmukhs, jagirdars, doras* (landlords) in forms of forced labour *(vethi*) and illegal exactions.

During the war, the communist-led guerrillas had built a strong base in Telangana villages through Andhra Mahasabha and had been leading local struggles on issues such as

wartime exactions, abuse of rationing, excessive rent, and *vethi*.

The uprising began in July 1946 when a *deshmukh's thug* murdered a village militant in Jangaon taluq of Nalgonda. Soon, the uprising spread to Warrangal and Khammam.

The peasants organised themselves into village *sanghams* and attacked using lathis, stone slings, and chilli powder. They had to face brutal repression. The movement was at its greatest intensity between August 1947 and September 1948. The peasants brought about a rout of the Razaqars—the Nizam's stormtroopers. Once the Indian security forces took over Hyderabad, the movement fizzled out.

The Telangana movement had many positive achievements to its credit.

- In the villages controlled by guerrillas, *vethi* and forced labour disappeared.
- Agricultural wages were raised.
- Illegally seized lands were restored.
- Steps were taken to fix ceilings and redistribute lands.
- Measures were taken to improve irrigation and fight cholera.
- An improvement in the condition of women was witnessed.
- The autocratic-feudal regime of India's biggest princely state was shaken up, clearing the way for the formation of Andhra Pradesh on linguistic lines and realising another aim of the national movement in this region.

Balance-Sheet of Peasant Movements

These movements created an atmosphere for post-independence agrarian reforms, for instance, abolition of zamindari.

They eroded the power of the landed class, thus adding to the transformation of the agrarian structure.

These movements were based on the ideology of nationalism.

The nature of these movements was similar in diverse areas.

Summary

- Peasantry under colonialism
- Early Peasant Movements: Indigo Revolt; Pabna Agrarian Leagues; Deccan Riots
- Change in Nature of Movements after 1857
- Weaknesses
- Latter Movements; Kisan Sabha; Eka; Mappila Revolt; Bardoli Satyagraha; All India Kisan Congress, under Congress Ministries;
- Peasant Activity in the Past: During the War; Post-War Period;
- Balance-Sheet

CHAPTER 32

The Movement of the Working Class

The beginning of the second half of the 19th century heralded the entry of modern industry into India. The thousands of hands employed in construction of railways were harbingers of the modern Indian working class. Further industrialisation came with the development of ancillary industries along with the railways. The coal industry developed fast and employed a large working force. Then came the cotton and the jute industries.

The Indian working class suffered from the same kind of exploitation witnessed during the industrialisation of Europe and the rest of the West, such as low wages, long working hours, unhygienic and hazardous working conditions, employment of child labour, and the absence of basic amenities. The presence of colonialism in India gave a distinctive touch to the Indian working class movement. The Indian working class had to face two basic antagonistic forces—an imperialist political rule and economic exploitation at the hands of both foreign and native capitalist classes. Under the circumstances, inevitably, the Indian working class movement became intertwined with the political struggle for national emancipation.

Early Efforts

The early nationalists, especially the Moderates,

- were indifferent to the labour's cause;
- differentiated between the labour in the Indian-

owned factories and those in the British-owned factories;
- believed that labour legislations would affect the competitive edge enjoyed by the Indian-owned industries;
- did not want a division in the movement on the basis of classes; and
- did not support the Factory Acts of 1881 and 1891 for these reasons.

Thus, earlier attempts to improve the economic conditions of the workers were in the nature of the philanthropic efforts which were isolated, sporadic, and aimed at specific local grievances.

1870 Sasipada Banerjea started a workingmen's club and newspaper *Bharat Shramjeevi.*

1878 Sorabjee Shapoorji Bengalee tried to get a bill, providing better working conditions to labour, passed in the Bombay Legislative Council.

1880 Narayan Meghajee Lokhande started the newspaper *Deenbandhu* and set up the Bombay Mill and Millhands Association.

1899 The first strike by the Great Indian Peninsular Railways took place, and it got widespread support. Tilak's *Kesari* and *Maharatta* had been campaigning for the strike for months.

There were many prominent nationalist leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal and G. Subramania Aiyar who demanded better conditions for workers and other pro-labour reforms.

During Swadeshi Upsurge

Workers participated in wider political issues. Strikes were organised by Ashwini Coomar Banerjee, Prabhat Kumar Roy Chaudhuri, Premtosh Bose, and Apurba Kumar Ghosh. These strikes were organised in government press, railways, and the jute industry.

There were attempts to form trade unions, but these were not very successful.

Subramaniya Siva and Chidambaram Pillai led strikes in Tuticorin and Tirunelvelli and were arrested.

The biggest strike of the period was organised after Tilak's arrest and trial.

During the First World War and After

The War and its aftermath brought a rise in exports, soaring prices, massive profiteering opportunities for the industrialists but very low wages for the workers. This led to discontent among workers.

The emergence of Gandhi led to a broad-based national movement, and the emphasis was placed on the mobilisation of the workers and peasants for the national cause.

A need was felt for the organisation of the workers in trade unions.

International events like the establishment of a socialist republic in the Soviet Union, formation of the Comintern, and setting up of International Labour Organisation (ILO) lent a new dimension to the movement of the working class in India.

The AITUC

The All India Trade Union Congress was founded on October 31, 1920. The Indian National Congress president for the year, Lala Lajpat Rai, was elected as the first president of AITUC and Dewan Chaman Lal as the first general secretary. Lajpat Rai was the first to link capitalism with imperialism—"imperialism and militarism are the twin children of capitalism".

The prominent Congress and swarajist leader C.R. Das presided over the third and the fourth sessions of the AITUC. The Gaya session of the Congress (1922) welcomed the formation of the AITUC, and a committee was formed to assist it. C.R. Das advocated that the Congress should take up the workers' and peasants' cause and incorporate them in the struggle for swaraj or else they would get isolated from the movement. Other leaders who kept close contacts with the AITUC included Nehru, Subhas Bose, C.F. Andrews, J.M. Sengupta, Satyamurthy, V.V. Giri, and Sarojini Naidu. In the beginning, the AITUC was influenced by social democratic ideas of the British Labour Party. The Gandhian philosophy of non-violence, trusteeship, and class-collaboration had great influence on the movement. Gandhi helped organise the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (1918) and through a protest secured a 27.5 per cent wage hike. (Later, the arbitrator's award ensured a 35 per cent raise.)

The Trade Union Act, 1926

The Trade Union Act, 1926:

- recognised trade unions as legal associations;
- laid down conditions for registration and regulation of trade union activities; and
- secured immunity, both civil and criminal, for trade unions from prosecution for legitimate activities, but put some restrictions on their political activities.

Late 1920s

A strong communist influence on the movement lent a militant and revolutionary content to it. In 1928, there was a six-month-long strike in Bombay Textile Mills led by the Girni Kamgar Union. The whole of 1928 witnessed unprecedented industrial unrest. This period also saw the crystallisation of various communist groups, with leaders like S.A. Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, P.C. Joshi, Sohan Singh Joshi, etc.

Alarmed at the increasing strength of the trade union movement under extremist influence, the government resorted to legislative restrictions. It passed the Public Safety Ordinance (1929) and the Trade Disputes Act (TDA), 1929. The TDA, 1929:

- made compulsory the appointment of Courts of Inquiry and Consultation Boards for settling industrial disputes;
- made illegal the strikes in public utility services like posts, railways, water and electricity, unless each individual worker planning to go on strike gave an advance notice of one month to the administration; and
- forbade trade union activity of coercive or purely political nature and even sympathetic strikes.

Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929)

In March 1929, the government arrested 31 labour leaders, and the three-and-a-half-year trial resulted in the conviction of Muzaffar Ahmed, S.A. Dange, Joglekar, Philip Spratt, Ben Bradley, Shaukat Usmani, and others. The trial got worldwide publicity but weakened the working class movement.

The workers participated during 1930 in the Civil Disobedience Movement, but after 1931, there was a dip in

the working class movement because of a split in 1931 in which the corporatist trend led by N.M. Joshi broke away from the AITUC to set up the All India Trade Union Federation. In 1935, the communists rejoined the AITUC. Now, the left front consisted of the communists, Congress socialists, and the leftist nationalists like Nehru and Subhas.

Under Congress Ministries

During the 1937 elections, the AITUC had supported the Congress candidates. The Congress governments in provinces gave a fillip to the trade union activity. The Congress ministries were generally sympathetic to the workers' demands. Many legislations favourable to the workers were passed.

During and After the Second World War

Initially, the workers opposed the War, but after 1941, when Russia joined the war on behalf of the Allies, the communists described the war as a "peoples' war" and supported it. The communists dissociated themselves from the Quit India Movement. A policy of industrial peace was advocated by the communists.

In the period 1945 to 1947, workers participated actively in the post-War national upsurges. In 1945, the dock workers of Bombay and Calcutta refused to load ships taking supplies to the warring troops in Indonesia. During 1946, the workers went on a strike in support of the Naval Ratings. During the last year of foreign rule, there were strikes by workers of posts, railways, and many other establishments.

After Independence

The working class movement came to be associated with the various political ideologies.

Summary

- Early Efforts
- During Swadeshi Movement
- First World War and After
- During and After the Second World War

UNIT 10

Independence and After

Chapters 33 to 39

CHAPTER 33

Challenges before the Newborn Nation

First Day of Independent India

August 15, 1947 started an epoch that ended India's colonial subjugation and looked forward to a new India—India as an independent country. The Constituent Assembly of India met at 11 p.m. on August 14, 1947. Rajendra Prasad presided over the session. In a ceremony held in the Constituent Assembly (in Parliament House) at midnight of August 14–15, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking as the first prime minister of Independent India, gave his historic speech. Nehru said, "Long

years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will wake to life and freedom..."

On August 15, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru, as Prime Minister of India, hoisted the Indian national flag above the Lahori Gate of Red Fort in Delhi.

First Government after Independence

The governor general and the ministers were sworn in. Jawaharlal Nehru took charge as the first Prime Minister of India on August 15, 1947, and was assisted by 15 other members. Sardar Patel served as the deputy prime minister till his death in December 1950. Lord Mountbatten, and later C. Rajagopalachari served as governor-general till January 26, 1950, when India became a republic and elected Rajendra Prasad as its first president.

The first Council of Ministers of Independent India was as follows:

1. **Jawaharlal Nehru**: Prime Minister; Minister of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations; Minister of Scientific Research
2. **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**: Deputy Prime Minister; Minister of Home Affairs and States; Minister of Information and Broadcasting
3. **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**: Minister of Education
4. **John Mathai**: Minister of Railways and Transport
5. **Sardar Baldev Singh**: Minister of Defence
6. **Jairamdas Daulatram**: Minister of Food and Agriculture
7. **Jagjivan Ram**: Minister of Labour
8. **C.H. Bhabha**: Minister of Commerce
9. **Amrit Kaur**: Minister of Health
10. **Rafi Ahmad Kidwai**: Minister of Communications
11. **Narhar Vishnu Gadgil**: Minister of Works, Mines and Power
12. **R.K. Shanmukham Chetty**: Minister of Finance
13. **K.C. Neogy**: Minister of Relief and Rehabilitation
14. **B.R. Ambedkar**: Minister of Law (belonged to the

Scheduled Castes Federation; resigned in 1951)

15. **Shyama Prasad Mookherjee**: Minister of Industries and Supplies [Hindu Mahasabha; first to resign from the cabinet in April 1950]
16. **Narasimha Gopalaswami Ayyangar**: Minister without portfolio; assigned the task to act as a link between the union government and the cabinet of East Punjab government
17. **Mohanlal Saxena**: Minister without portfolio

Challenges

Independent India, however, had to face several challenges.

Immediate Challenges—territorial and administrative integration of princely states, communal riots, rehabilitation of nearly 60 lakh refugees migrated from Pakistan, protection of Muslims living in India as well as those going to Pakistan from communal gangs, need to avoid war with Pakistan, Communist insurgency, etc.

Medium-term Challenges—framing of the Constitution for India, building of a representative, democratic, and civil libertarian political order, elections, and abolition of feudal set-up in agriculture, etc.

Long-term Challenges—national integration, economic development, poverty alleviation, etc.

India, as well as Pakistan, faced the consequences of partition. The Independence Act had laid the procedure for the resolution of three major problems—(i) the settlement of boundaries between the two nations; (ii) the division of apparatus and personnel of Indian Civil Services and some other services; and (iii) division of military assets and formations.

Radcliffe's Boundary Award and the Communal Riots

In accordance with the partition plan, the respective legislative assemblies of Punjab and Bengal met in two sections (one representing the Muslim majority districts and other of the rest of the province) and decided by simple majority in favour of the partition of the two provinces. West Punjab which went

to Pakistan received 62,000 square miles of territory and 15.7 million people (census 1941), of whom 11.85 million were Muslims. East Punjab (India's share) received 37,000 square miles of land area, with a population of 12.6 million, of whom 4.37 million were Muslims. Likewise, West Bengal became part of India with a territory of 28,000 square miles, and a population of 21.2 million, of whom 5.3 million were Muslims. East Bengal, which constituted East Pakistan, got 49,400 square miles of territory and 39.10 million people (27.7 million Muslims and the rest non-Muslims). Thus, on both sides of the Radcliffe Line, sizeable sections of populations became minority (religion-wise)—20 million non-Muslims in Pakistan and 42 million (later reduced to 35 million) Muslims in India.

Challenges before the Boundary Commission

In absurd hurry, the British government appointed the Boundary Commission under the chairmanship of Sir Cyril Radcliffe. The Boundary Commission consisted of two Muslims and two non-Muslim judges in each case, and worked under serious constraints. Radcliffe, with very limited knowledge of India, and with the use of out-of-date maps and census materials, was required to draw the boundaries and decide disputed points within a period of six weeks.

Although the religious demography was the deciding factor, other factors such as rivers as natural boundaries, administrative units, economic viability, railway and roadway connectivity, and other infrastructural facilities such as the canal system were also to be taken into consideration. The Sikhs, as a third party (Hindus and Muslims being two parties), were demographically scattered throughout Punjab. Their demand that all Sikh holy shrines be included in East Punjab (part of India) further complicated the situation. In the face of such legal intricacies, a rational approach gave way to political considerations. The census of 1941, the basis of decisions, was also faulty. So, the resultant boundary lines were bound to create several problems and leave many people unhappy.

The report of the Boundary Commission was ready by August 12, but Lord Mountbatten intentionally made it

public after August 15, so that the responsibility of the consequences—communal riots and its repercussions—would not fall on the British.

The way in which the British government decided to demarcate the boundary and leave the country amidst unrest was a most callous way to behave.

Regions Most Affected by Riots

The communal riots had started in August 1946 itself, but with the announcement of partition and independence, the situation became more inflamed. The regions through which the Radcliffe Line was drawn became most violent, and maximum number of murders, rapes, and abduction of women and children took place. Armed bands of Sikhs (and Hindus) and Muslims roamed the cities and countryside of Punjab, committing unbelievable crimes.

A war of extermination was launched on both sides of the border, when refugee trains are reported to have arrived, sometimes carrying only dead bodies. According to an estimate, around 180,000 were killed (60,000 from the west and 120,000 from the east).

The regions of Bengal, due to the presence of Gandhi and his efforts through fasts, experienced less violence in comparison to Punjab.

Riots began in Delhi, with a massacre of Muslims in revenge for Punjab (Gandhian fasts had a temporary impact).

In Bihar, prior to partition, in October 1946, Hindu peasants, allegedly instigated by Hindu landlords to divert attention from agrarian problems, killed Muslims. This was followed by violence in Garhmukteswar in the United Province where Hindu pilgrims killed thousand Muslims. But after partition, due to Gandhi's initiatives, no massacres took place in these regions.

Why so many casualties The governor general anticipated the danger of riots and assembled a boundary force of 50,000 men. But Nehru's decision to not allow British troops into the matter proved devastating—the boundary force themselves got divided along communal affiliations. Further, the European officers were busy preparing to leave India. According to Lockhart, the Commander-in-Chief of the

Views

The systematic failure of British governments to contemplate or prepare for any planned transfer of power to India is epitomised by the fact that a man of Radcliffe's background and lack of experience (he had never been east of Gibraltar before he came to India) should have been asked to embark on such a fundamental task so very late in the day.

—**Walter Reid**, *Keeping the Jewel in the Crown*

With limitations of time, knowledge and understanding, it was virtually impossible to deal adequately with the often vital accessories of a boundary line—such as the location of the canal head waters in relation to the canals themselves, communications by road and rail, the fate of mixed or isolated populations and such 'invisible' problems as the location of pasture lands in relation to villagers' flocks and herds.

—Percival Spear

He (Radcliffe) tried to take account of irrigation canals and water supplies so that there was enough water in the central Punjab, but on the scale with which he was dealing, he was bound to make mistakes. If villages weren't bisected by the boundary they were separated from the villagers' fields, railway stations from the towns they served and communities from the resources on which they relied.

—Walter Reid, *Keeping the Jewel in the Crown*

They had absolutely no conception. They asked me to come in and do this sticky job for them, and when I had done it they hated it. But what could they expect in the circumstances? Surely, they must have realised what was coming to them once they had decided on partition. But they had made absolutely no plans for coping with the situation.

—**Radcliffe**, quoted by Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*

Indian Army (August 15–December 31, 1947), the widespread disorder would have been under control if all the personnel from civil and armed services had been placed in their respective new countries.

Challenges Associated with Division of Resources

The partition of India was accompanied by division of resources of the civil government as well as division of the military forces and equipment.

Division of Civil Government

To resolve the division of civil government amicably, a partition council, presided over by the governor general and consisting of two representatives each of India and Pakistan, was set up. The council was helped by a steering committee, consisting of H.M. Patel and Muhammad Ali, at operational level. All civil servants were offered to give their option about the Dominion they wanted to serve. Around 1,60,000 employees opted for transfer from India to Pakistan or from Pakistan to India.

For the personnel of the Indian Civil Services, a distinction was made between the Europeans and the Indians. The Indian members were to continue in service in their country of choice (India or Pakistan) on the existing scale of service. The European officers could continue in service on their existing pay, leave, pension rights, etc., but if they wished to retire, they were entitled to special compensation and early retirement.

Division of Finances

The division of cash balances as well as allocation of public debt created tensions between the two countries. Pakistan wanted a one-fourth share of the total cash balances, but India had to point out that only a small portion of the cash balances represented the real cash needs of the undivided India and the rest was maintained only as an anti-inflationary mechanism. Ramachandra Guha writes in his *India After Gandhi* that the Indian government had withheld Pakistan's share of the 'sterling balance' which the British owed jointly to the two dominions, a debt incurred on account of Indian contributions to the Second World War. The amount was some Rs 550 million. The Indian government was not keen to release the money due to Pakistan as it was angry with Pakistan for having attempted to seize Kashmir by force. Gandhi saw this as being unnecessarily spiteful. He went on a fast and made the ending of the fast conditional on the transfer of the money owed to Pakistan. He succeeded in pressurising the Congress leadership to decide to give more cash resources to Pakistan. (According to some scholars, this became one of the reasons for the assassination of Gandhi by a Hindu fanatic.)

Division of Defence Personnel and Equipment

For a smooth division of the armed forces and their plants, machinery, equipment and stores, a joint defence council, headed by Auchinleck as its Supreme Commander, was set up. The council decided that Muslim-majority units should be transferred to Pakistan and non-Muslim units to India, but due to serious differences between the two parties, the post of Supreme Commander was abolished. Amidst serious chaos, the British troops started to leave India from August 17, 1947 and the process was completed by February 1948.

Assassination of Gandhi

On the evening of January 30, 1948, as he carried on his usual prayer meeting at Birla mansion (New Delhi), Mahatma Gandhi was shot dead by Nathuram Godse. The event sent shock waves through the nation in making. Communalism and misinterpretation of nationalism were two fundamental factors under whose influence Godse killed Gandhi.

In an address to the nation on the All India Radio, Nehru summed up the mood and spirit of the time, "The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere… The best prayer we can offer him and his memory is to dedicate ourselves to truth and to the cause for which the great countryman of ours lived and for which he died."

Sardar Patel appealed to the people not to seek revenge but to follow Gandhi's message of love and non-violence. He said, "It is a shame for us that the greatest man of the world has had to pay with his life for the sins which we have committed. We did not follow him when he was alive; let us at least follow his steps now he is dead."

Nathuram Godse was tried and sentenced to death. At his trial he declared that he had acted as he had because of Gandhi's consistent pandering to the Muslims, "culminating in his last pro-Muslim fast [which] at last goaded me to the conclusion that the existence of Gandhi should be brought to an end immediately".

On February 4, 1948, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was banned by the government. It was felt by the

government that the right wing extremism which the RSS was seen to represent would be very harmful for the unity of the nation. Though not directly involved in the assassination of Gandhi, the organisation was seen to have a hand in the Punjab violence. It also attracted the support of many of the refugees. It was also rumoured that the members of the RSS had celebrated the death of Gandhi. Nehru considered that groups such as the RSS had "the blood of Mahatma Gandhi on their hands" even though they dissociated themselves from his killing. The ban was lifted in July 1949, when the RSS accepted the conditions laid down by the government. These conditions were that the Sangh would restrict itself to cultural activities and not meddle with politics; renounce its agenda of violence and secrecy; profess publicly loyalty to the Indian Constitution and flag (tri-colour); and organise itself on democratic principles.

Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Refugees

The people displaced by partition were 'refugees' in the sense that they had not left their homes voluntarily. The two new governments did not organise an orderly exchange of population. Refugee resettlement became the immediate challenge for both governments (India and Pakistan). The Indian government established an emergency committee of the cabinet to deal with the crisis in Delhi, and a Ministry of Relief and Rehabilitation to look after the refugees. In view of large-scale influx of displaced people, the notion of 'evacuee property' to be protected by government, for any future return of those who had left for Pakistan, became an empty rhetoric because it was almost impossible to force the refugees who settled in the empty houses of Muslims. (This, at a later time, made the return of the refugees impossible.)

East Punjab

Some refugees were accommodated temporarily in refugee camps, which were run till 1949. For urban refugees, the government started industrial and vocational training schemes,

and even grants were given to start small businesses or industries. The rural refugees were given land, agricultural loans, and housing subsidies. Although, the state government and the central government mobilised massive resources, it was still not adequate and a general trend of differentiated entitlements to such benefits was observed. For example, refugees with social and cultural capital—class and caste status and political connections—often got the better deal, while the depressed classes were given little or no consideration.

Bengal

The problem was much more prolonged and complicated in Bengal. By 1948, only a small group of high-caste, landed or middle-class Hindus migrated to West Bengal by arranging exchange of property or jobs on individual levels. But during December 1949 and January 1950, due to a fresh outbreak of violence in Khulna, a large number of peasants started to leave East Pakistan. In revenge, anti-Muslim riots started in February 1950 and forced about one million Muslims to leave West Bengal. This further aggravated anti-Hindu violence in East Pakistan and by 1951, about 15 lakh Hindu refugees arrived in West Bengal. But the Indian government did not recognise these migrants as refugees and Nehru tried to send them back.

Delhi Pact on Minorities

To resolve the problems of refugees and restore communal peace in the two countries, especially in Bengal (East Pakistan as well as West Bengal), the Indian prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Pakistani prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, signed an agreement on April 8, 1950. The agreement, known as the Delhi Pact on Minorities or Nehru-Liaquat Pact, envisaged the appointment of ministers from minority communities in both Pakistan and India at both central and provincial levels. Under the pact, minority commissions were to be set up, together with the Commissions of Inquiry to look into the probable causes behind the communal riots on both sides of border (in Bengal) and to recommend steps to prevent recurrence of such incidents. Under the pact, India and Pakistan also agreed to include

representatives of the minority community in the cabinets of East Pakistan and West Bengal and decided to depute two central ministers, one from each government, to remain in the affected regions for such period as might be necessary.

The pact provided for the creation of an agency entrusted with the task of recovering and rehabilitating 'abducted' women (the idea was criticised by many scholars). The idea to encourage refugees to return to their original homes failed, because the two governments failed to restore confidence among the refugees. Further, the properties of the refugees were declared as enemy property. [India brought amendments in the Enemy Property Act, 1968 in 2016 also.]

The provisions of the Nehru-Liaquat Pact were severely criticised by Hindu nationalists like Syama Prasad Mukherjee (also spelt Shyama Prasad Mookerjee) and K.C. Neogy. Mukherjee resigned from the Nehru cabinet in protest, as he believed that the refugee problem could only be solved through a transfer of population and acquisition of certain territories from Pakistan to rehabilitate the people who came into India.

Centres of Refugee Settlements in India

In Delhi, Lajpat Nagar, Rajinder Nagar, Punjabi Bagh, Nizamuddin East, and Kingsway Camp were some areas developed into housing complexes to settle the refugees permanently. People who came from West Pakistan settled in states like Punjab (which at the time included the present day Haryana) and Himachal Pradesh. The Sindhi Hindus settled in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh. Ulhasnagar (city of joy), in Maharashtra, was especially developed to settle refugees from Sindh areas.

West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, and other north-eastern states accommodated the refugees from East Pakistan (present Bangladesh). The government settled some refugees in the Andaman Islands too (at present, Bengalis form the largest linguistic group in some parts of Andaman Islands).

Communists and Independence

On September 1948, on the pretext of maintaining law and order situation in South India, the Indian army intervened and

took control of Hyderabad without much resistance from the Nizam. But the internal politics of Hyderabad became complicated due to the Telangana movement led by the communists. The alliance between the Congress and the communists had broken before the accession of Hyderabad into India.

In December 1947, the Communist Party of India (CPI) had denounced the Indian independence as 'fake'—with the slogan, '*ye azadi jhooti hai*'—and termed the Congress government led by Nehru as the stooges of Anglo-American imperialism and the feudal forces within the country. In February–March 1948, in its Second Congress in Calcutta, the CPI adopted its 'Political Thesis', which formally declared that the national government established on August 15, 1947 was indeed the major enemy of the Indian people and hence required to be changed through general revolution. To achieve this goal, the communist leaders decided to follow what popularly came to be known as the B.T. Ranadive line (after the name of CPI's then general secretary). They declared, "The present state will be replaced by a people's democratic republic—a republic of workers, peasants and oppressed middle classes." The Communist insurgency spread to other parts of India, especially in West Bengal, which saw the revival of the Tebhaga Movement and an urban insurgency in Calcutta.

Why Communists were Sceptical about Independence

1. They believed that a policy of class struggle and armed insurgency against the State run by the Congress, alleged as collaborationist bourgeoisie, was necessary to shift the attention of the masses from the politics of communal hatred that shrouded the country after partition.

2. The late 1940s and the early 1950s witnessed communist successes in Asian countries like China, Malaya, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Burma (Myanmar). In September 1947, Russia announced its 'A. Zhdanov thesis' as an answer to the Marshall Plan, encouraging more activism on the part of the international communist parties. The Indian communists thus geared up for an armed insurgency.

3. According to Ramachandra Guha, the CPI leadership, encouraged by the initial successes of the Telangana Movement, misconceived the scattered disillusionment with the Congress as revolutionary potential and thought this as the 'beginning of Red India'.

Shift from Antagonistic Strategy to Constitutional Democracy

The communist movement remained localised in Hyderabad and West Bengal. The mass support was sporadic and conditional as people were not ready to reject the Congress so soon after Independence. The government also decided to take stern action; while in the Hyderabad region, the Indian armed forces continued its 'police action', in West Bengal the CPI was banned in March 1948 and in January, a security act was passed to imprison the communist leaders without trial. Within the Communist leadership, there were divisions on the 'Chinese line' and the 'Russian line' which became wider after the failure of a proposed railway strike on May 9, 1949.

In September 1950, the prominent communist leaders like Ajoy Ghosh, S.A. Dange, and S.V. Ghate criticised the organisation for its faulty strategies and its failure to take notice of the true picture of independent India. Consequently, in October 1951, at the Third Party Congress of the CPI, held in Calcutta, a significant shift in its policy was endorsed. It decided to withdraw the Telangana Movement and forge an inclusive front of the peasants, workers, and middle classes. Consequently, the ban was lifted by the government, and the Indian communists participated in the general election of 1951–52, thus moving from an insurrectionist path to the path of constitutional democracy.

CHAPTER 34

The Indian States

The princely states, also called the Indian states, which covered a total area of 7,12,508 square miles and numbered no fewer than 562, included tiny states such as Bilbari with a population of 27 persons only and some big ones like Hyderabad (as large as Italy) with a population of 14 million. The East India Company acquired, in the process of conquest, important coastal tracts, the valleys of the great navigable rivers and such tracts which were rich in agricultural products and densely populated by prosperous people, while, generally, the Indian states were "the inaccessible and less fertile tracts of the Indian peninsula".

The making of Indian states was largely governed by the same circumstances which led to the growth of East India Company's power in India. The evolution of relations between the British authority and states can be traced under the following broad stages.

I. The Company's Struggle for Equality from a Position of Subordination (1740–1765)

Starting with Anglo-French rivalry with the coming of Dupleix in 1751, the East India Company asserted political identity with the capture of Arcot (1751). With the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the East India Company acquired political

power next only to the Bengal nawabs. In 1765, with the acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, the East India Company became a significant political power.

II. Policy of Ring Fence (1765–1813)

This policy was reflected in Warren Hastings' wars against the Marathas and Mysore, and aimed at creating buffer zones to defend the Company's frontiers. The main threat was from the Marathas and Afghan invaders (the Company undertook to organise Awadh's defence to safeguard Bengal's security). Wellesley's policy of subsidiary alliance was an extension of ring fence—which sought to reduce states to a position of dependence on British Government in India. Major powers such as Hyderabad, Awadh, and the Marathas accepted subsidiary alliance. Thus, British supremacy was established.

III. Policy of Subordinate Isolation (1813–1857)

Now, the imperial idea grew and the theory of paramountcy began to develop—Indian states were supposed to act in subordinate cooperation with the British government and acknowledge its supremacy. The states surrendered all forms of external sovereignty but retained sovereignty in internal administration. British Residents were transformed from diplomatic agents of a foreign power to executive and controlling officers of a superior government.

In 1833, the Charter Act ended the Company's commercial functions even as it retained political functions. It adopted the practice of insisting on prior approval/sanction for all matters of succession. In 1834, the Board of Directors issued guidelines to annex states wherever and whenever possible. This policy of annexation culminated in usurpation of eight states by Dalhousie, including some big states such as Satara and Nagpur.

IV. Policy of Subordinate Union (1857–1935)

The year 1858 saw the assumption of direct responsibility by the Crown. Because of the states' loyalty during the 1857 revolt and their potential use as breakwaters in political storms of the future, the policy of annexation was abandoned. The new policy was to punish or depose but not to annex. After 1858, the fiction of authority of the Mughal emperor ended; sanction for all matters of succession was required from the Crown since the Crown stood forth as the unquestioned ruler and the paramount power. Now the ruler inherited the *gaddi* not as a matter of right but as a gift from the paramount power, because the fiction of Indian states standing in a status of equality with the Crown as independent, sovereign states ended with the Queen adopting the title of '*Kaiser-i-Hind*' (Queen Empress of India). The paramount supremacy of the Crown presupposed and implied the subordination of states. The British government exercised the right to interfere in the internal spheres of states—partly in the interest of the princes, partly in the interest of people's welfare, partly to secure proper conditions for British subjects and foreigners, and partly in the interest of the whole of India.

The British government was further helped in this encroachment by modern developments in communication—railways, roads, telegraph, canals, post offices, press, and public opinion. The Government of India exercised complete and undisputed control in international affairs—it could declare war, peace, or neutrality for states. According to the Butler Commission in 1927, "For the purpose of international relations, state territory is in the same position as British territory and state subjects in the same position as British subjects."

Curzon's Approach

Curzon stretched the interpretation of old treaties to mean that the princes, in their capacity as servants of people, were supposed to work side-by-side with the governor general in

the scheme of Indian government. He adopted a policy of patronage and 'intrusive surveillance'. He thought the relations between the states and government were neither feudal nor federal, but a type not based on a treaty but consisting of a series of relationships having grown under different historical conditions that, in the course of time, gradually conformed to a single line.

The new trend seemed to reduce all states to a single type—uniformly dependent on the British government and considered as an integral part of the Indian political system.

Post-1905

A policy of cordial cooperation began to counter progressive and revolutionary developments in the face of large-scale political unrests.

According to the recommendations of the Montford Reforms (1921), a Chamber of Princes (Narendra Mandal) was set up as a consultative and advisory body having no say in the internal affairs of individual states and having no powers to discuss matters concerning existing rights and freedoms. For the purpose of the chamber, the Indian states were divided into three categories:

1. Directly represented—109
2. Represented through representatives—127
3. Recognised as feudal holdings or *jagirs*

Butler Committee

The question of extent of sovereignty and paramountcy was still undefined. The Butler Committee (1927) was set up to examine the nature of relationship between the princely states and the government. It gave the following recommendations:

1. Paramountcy must remain supreme and must fulfil its obligations, adopting and defining itself according to the shifting necessities of time and progressive development of states.

2. States should not be handed over to an Indian Government in British India, responsible to an Indian legislature, without the consent of states.

Thus, **paramountcy** was left undefined and this hydra-headed creature was left to feed on usage, Crown's prerogative and the princes' implied consent.

V. Policy of Equal Federation (1935–1947): A Non-Starter

The Government of India Act, 1935 proposed a Federal Assembly with 125 out of 375 seats for the princes and the Council of States with 104 out of 160 seats for the princes, under its scheme of an all-India federation, which was subject to ratification by states representing more than half of the population and entitled to more than half of the seats in the Council of States.

This scheme never came into existence and after the outbreak of World War II (September 1939), it was dropped altogether.

VI. Integration and Merger

After World War II began and a position of non-cooperation was adopted by the Congress, the British government tried to break the deadlock through the Cripps Mission (1942), Wavell Plan (1945), Cabinet Mission (1946), and Attlee's Statement (February 1947).

Cripps held that the British government did not contemplate transferring paramountcy of Crown to any other party in India. The states tried various schemes to forge a union of their own, envisaging themselves as sovereign in status or as a third force in the Indian political scene. The June 3 Plan and Attlee's Statement made it clear that the states were free to join either of the two dominions, and Mountbatten refused to give a sovereign status to the states.

Sardar Patel, who was in charge of the states' ministry in the interim cabinet, helped by V.P. Menon, the secretary in the ministry, appealed to the patriotic feeling of rulers to join the Indian dominion in matters of defence, communication, and external affairs—the three areas which had been part of the paramountcy of the Crown and over which the states had anyway no control. By August 15, 1947, 136 states had joined the Indian Union but others remained precariously outside.

Plebiscite and Army Action

1. Junagarh The Muslim Nawab wanted to join Pakistan, but a Hindu majority population wanted to join the Indian Union. In the face of the repressive attitude of the nawab, there was a plebiscite which decided in favour of India.

2. Hyderabad Hyderabad wanted a sovereign status. It signed a Standstill Agreement with India in November 1947. Indian troops withdrew and the Nizam's police and stormtroopers (*Razakkars*) took over. The Nizam wanted an outlet to the sea (Goa). The violence and supply of foreign arms prompted Indian troops to move in again in 1948—described as "a police action to restore law and order". Hyderabad acceded in November 1949.

3. Kashmir The state of Jammu and Kashmir had a Hindu prince and a Muslim majority population. The prince envisaged a sovereign status for the state and was reluctant to accede to either of the dominions. As he procrastinated, the newly established state of Pakistan sent its forces behind a front of tribal militia and moved menacingly towards Srinagar. It was now that the prince was forced to sign an Instrument of Accession (October 1947) with the Indian Union, endorsed by the popular leader Sheikh Abdullah. Indian troops were despatched to defend the state against the raiders from Pakistan. India's complaints to the UN Security Council regarding raids from Pakistan and the Indian offer to settle the status of the state through a plebiscite led to a ceasefire but left 84,000 square km of area under Pakistani occupation. The special status of Jammu and Kashmir was recognised under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which implied a limited jurisdiction of the Indian Union over the state as compared to other states.

Gradual Integration

The problem now was two-fold:

(i) of transforming the states into viable administrative units, and

(ii) of absorbing them into the constitutional units.

This was sought to be solved by:

1. incorporating smaller states (216 such states) into contiguous provinces and listed in Part A; for

instance, 39 states of Orissa and Chhattisgarh were incorporated into Central Provinces, Orissa. Gujarat states were incorporated into Bombay;

2. making some states as centrally administered for strategic or special reasons, listed in Part-C (61 states)— Himachal Pradesh, Vindhya Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Bhopal, etc.; and
3. creating five unions—United States of Kathiawar, United States of Matsya, Patiala and East Punjab States Union, Rajasthan, and United States of Travancore-Cochin (later Kerala).

Initially, these states acceded with respect to defence, communication, external affairs; later they felt that a closer association was necessary. The five unions and Mysore accepted Indian jurisdiction in Union, concurrent subjects except taxation and subject to differences as under Article 238 and the supervisory power of Union for 10 years.

The Seventh Amendment (1956) abolished Part-B states as a class and formed one class out of Parts A and B; thus special provisions relating to Part B states were deleted.

The Indian states thus became part of one uniform political set-up.

CHAPTER 35

Making of the Constitution for India

The Indian Constitution, which came into effect on January 26, 1950, has the distinction of being the longest in the world in terms of its length, content, the and complexity owing to the country's size and diversity. At the time of framing of the constitution, India was deeply divided besides being large and diverse, and hence it was designed in a way to keep the country together. If in one way, it sought to make Indians of different classes, castes, and communities come together for a shared vision, in another way it sought to nurture democratic institutions in what had long been a culture of hierarchy and deference.

Background

Although the Constitution of India was framed between December 1946 and December 1949, its roots lie deep in the Indian national movement against the colonial rule as well as in the movements for responsible and constitutional government in the princely states.

Mridula Mukherjee, in her work, *India Since Independence*, has rejected the idea that the British initiated a modern, responsible, and constitutional government in India and that the 1950 Constitution was merely the culmination of the series of constitutional initiatives made by the British in 1861, 1892, 1909, 1919, and 1935. The fact that British

concessions, at every stage, fell far short of what nationalists were demanding for.

In the modern sense, there appeared the Constitution of India Bill, also known as the Home Rule Bill in 1895, which envisaged basic human rights such as freedom of expression, equality before the law, right to the inviolability of one's home, right to property, etc., for all citizens of India. Although, there is no conclusive evidence to prove the authorship of the Home Rule Bill, Annie Besant believed that the bill was inspired by Tilak.

In 1922, Mahatma Gandhi, in an article titled 'Independence' published in *Young India,* wrote that Swaraj would not be a free gift of the British Parliament but a declaration of India's full self-expression—the Constitution of India would be framed as per the wishes of the Indians.

The Commonwealth of India Bill, which was drafted in India and to which Annie Besant, Tej Bahadur Sapru, V.S. Srinivasa Shastri made important contributions, was accepted unanimously by the executive committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party. The bill had its first reading in the House of Commons in December 1925; it was defeated, but it proved crucial as it had the support of very wide sections of Indian opinion, and it specified in clear words that "India shall be placed on an equal footing with the self-governing dominions".

After the Non-Cooperation Movement, Motilal Nehru in February 1924 introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly a resolution that gave due regard to minority rights and interests and came to be known as the **National Demand**. It was passed by a large majority in the Assembly. For the first time, a demand for a constitution and the procedure for its adoption were expounded in clear terms.

Britain, in response to the National Demand, appointed the all-white Simon Commission in November 1927 to recommend further constitutional changes.

In response to Lord Birkenhead's challenge, the Nehru Report, submitted on August 1928, was an outline of a draft constitution for India. Most of its features were later incorporated in the Constitution of independent India.

The report embodied not only the perspective of the contemporary nationalist opinion but also an outline of a draft

constitution for India. The latter was based on the principle of dominion status with full responsible government on the parliamentary pattern. It asserted the principle that sovereignty belongs to the Indian people, laid down a set of fundamental rights and provided for a federal system with maximum autonomy granted to the units but residuary powers vesting in the central government and joint electorates for elections to the federal lower house and the provincial legislatures with reservation of seats for minorities in certain cases for a limited period.

In the aftermath of the Nehru Report, the Simon Commission was boycotted, and in December 1929, the Congress declared complete independence as its ultimate goal. The idea that India's Constitution should be framed via a Constituent Assembly elected for this very purpose and based on the widest possible franchise gained support. Although, M.N. Roy had made such a suggestion earlier, Jawaharlal Nehru was the first national leader to enunciate the idea in 1933.

The Congress took up the demand for a constituent assembly as a part of its official policy in 1934 after refusing the Simon Commission's recommendations of 1933 as not expressive of the will of the people. Jawaharlal Nehru declared that the Congress had proposed "the Constitution of India must be framed, without outside interference, by a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult franchise", and, the Working Committee of the Congress reiterated the stand. At the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1936, it was declared that "no constitution imposed by an outside authority and no constitution which curtails the sovereignty of the people" would be acceptable to the Congress.

In July 1937, after the Congress accepted office in a majority of provinces, Nehru pressed the legislators to introduce resolutions in the assemblies rejecting the present constitution and demanding a Constituent Assembly. In August, the CWC accepted a draft resolution prepared under Acharya Kripalani. Between August and October 1937, all the Congress-ruled provinces and Sind passed this resolution and demanded repealment of the Government of India Act, 1935. In September 1937 itself, a resolution recommending the

replacement of the 1935 Act by a constitution framed by a constituent assembly was introduced in the Central Legislative Assembly by S. Satyamurti. The same demand was reiterated in the Haripura session of 1938.

The **Cripps Proposals of 1942**, though rejected by the Congress as unacceptable, had one redeeming feature in that it conceded the request of Indians to frame their own constitution through a constituent assembly.

In September 1945, the newly elected Labour government in England announced that it planned to create a constituent assembly in India. On March 15, 1946, the **Cabinet Mission** came to India and, in the course of its stay, recommended the forming of (a) the Constituent Assembly, and (b) an interim government.

Constituent Assembly

Formation

It was decided that the Constituent Assembly was to be elected indirectly by the Provincial Assemblies. According to the plan, the provinces of British India were grouped into three categories, A, B, and C. Each province was allotted seats on the basis of the population, in the ratio of one member for a million. The seats given to a province were decided among three communities on the basis of their number, the three communities being the Muslims, Sikhs, and General including Hindus and all others who were not Muslims and Sikhs. They were to be elected by the representatives of each community in their respective legislative assemblies by the method of proportional representation with single transferable vote. The number of members allotted to the Indian states was also to be fixed on the same basis of population as adopted for British India, but the method of their selection was to be settled later by consultation. The strength of the constitution-making body was to be 389. Of these, 296 representatives were to be from British India, (292 representatives drawn from the eleven Governors' Provinces of British India and a representative each from the four Chief Commissioners' Provinces of Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg, and British Baluchistan) and

93 representatives from the Indian states. The states' representatives were to be nominated by the respective rulers.

Elections for the 296 seats assigned to the British Indian Provinces were completed by July–August 1946. The Congress won 208 seats including all the General seats except 9 and the Muslim League 73 seats, that is, all but 5 of the seats allotted to Muslims.

The 93 seats meant for the states' representatives remained vacant and the princely states decided not to participate in the Constituent Assembly. However, representatives of some of the states (Baroda, Bikaner, Jaipur, Patiala, Rewa, and Udaipur) entered the Assembly by April 1947 and by August 15, 1947 and, soon after, all the states had sent their representatives to the Assembly.

The Assembly was, however, not able to start its work immediately as Jinnah withdrew his acceptance and caused the Muslim League to boycott it. The Congress went ahead with its plan and appointed an expert committee to draft Fundamental Rights and arrange an early session of the Assembly. The party also accepted the viceroy's invitation to form an interim government, with Jawaharlal Nehru as prime minister. The Constituent Assembly opened on December 9, 1946 in the Constitution Hall—now the Central Hall of Parliament House at New Delhi. Jawaharlal Nehru moved the historic Objectives Resolution on 13 December 1946, after it had been in session for some days. The resolution envisaged a federal polity with the residuary powers vesting in the autonomous units and sovereignty belonging to the people. The resolution gave to the Assembly its guiding principles and the philosophy of constitution-making.

Two Constituent Assemblies: India and Pakistan

By the end of January 1947, it was clear that there was no possibility of the Muslim League's joining the Assembly; an uncompromising call for a separate constituent assembly for Pakistan had been given by Jinnah. On June 26, 1947, Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India, announced the setting up of a separate Constituent Assembly for Pakistan.

The Indian Independence Act, 1947, passed with surprising speed, came into force on July 18, 1947.

The Indian Independence Act, 1947 declared the Constituent Assembly of India to be a fully sovereign body, and on the midnight of August 14–15, 1947, the Assembly assumed full powers of the governance of the country. Section 8 of the act conferred on the Constituent Assembly full legislative power.

Evaluation of the Assembly for India

The assembly, set up under the Cabinet Mission Plan, was a result of compromises made by the Congress on its ideological and philosophical sphere. The assembly was not fully sovereign despite the efforts of the Congress, whereas the Congress' demand was for a fully sovereign assembly. Nor was it elected on the basis of universal adult franchise as the Congress had demanded. The Congress caved in to accept communal representation too, and the grouping plan for the provinces. It also went along with the limits imposed on the powers of the central government. So, the Constituent Assembly set up was quite far from what the Congress had demanded in the later years of the freedom struggle.

The Constituent Assembly was indirectly elected by the provincial assemblies, which themselves were elected on the basis of a limited franchise established by the Government of India Act of 1935. The 1935 Act imposed qualifications on the basis of tax, property, and education. This kept out more than 70 per cent of the adult population from the voting. The Constituent Assembly thus reflected the composition of the provincial assemblies in which the Congress had a comfortable majority (which rose to more than 80 per cent after partition).

The composition of the Assembly reflected the different ideological views present in the country at the time. There were Socialists, the Marxian as well as the democratic variety. Both groups were opposed to private ownership of important means of production and wanted an egalitarian society, while the Marxian variety wanted a revolutionary reconstruction. It was the more moderate group (of which Nehru was a member) preferring peaceful parliamentary

methods that held sway. Sardar Patel may be considered a leader of the Rightist views supporting private enterprise. The rightist point of view was also represented by Purushottam Das Tandon and S.P. Mukherjee. There were also the Gandhians proposing decentralised village government through panchayats. All these viewpoints influenced the Constitution, to an extent, but the dominant influence was that of the liberals and the democratic socialists.

After Independence

With the independence of India on August 15, 1947, the Constituent Assembly became a sovereign body responsible for framing the Constitution as well as making ordinary laws. Now the work of Constituent Assembly was organised into five stages: **first**—committees were required to present reports on basic issues; **second**—Benegal Narsing Rau, a judge of the Calcutta High Court and also the constitutional adviser of the constituent assembly, prepared an initial draft on the basis of the reports of these committees and on his own research into the constitutions of other countries; **third**—the drafting committee, under the chairmanship of Dr B.R. Ambedkar, presented a detailed draft constitution which was published for public discussion and comments. Criticisms and counter-criticisms in the press in turn moulded the nature of the consensus that was ultimately reached on specific issues; **fourth**—the draft constitution was debated and amendments proposed; **fifth**—the Constitution of India was adopted.

Drafting Committee

(1) Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (Chairman) (2) G.B. Pant (3) K.M. Munshi (4) Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer (5) N. Gopalaswami Ayengar (6) B.L. Mitra (later replaced with Madhav Rao) (7) Sayyid Muhammad Sadullah (7) D.P. Khaitan died in 1948 and hence T.T. Krishnamachari was appointed.

Work : Committees and Consensus

When the Constituent Assembly first met on December 9, 1946, J.B. Kripalani, the then Congress president, proposed

the name of Dr Sachhidanand Sinha, the oldest member of the Assembly, for the post of the provisional president. Later, on December 11, Dr Rajendra Prasad was elected as the President of the Constituent Assembly.

The Constituent Assembly appointed several committees for framing the Constitution.

These committees submitted their reports between April and August 1947, and on the basis of these reports, Dr B.N. Rau, the Constitutional Adviser, submitted a draft of the Constitution by the end of October 1947. This draft contained 240 Clauses and 13 Schedules. In order to consider this Draft Constitution, a Drafting Committee under the chairmanship of Dr B.R. Ambedkar (the law minister at the time) was set up. (The other members were: Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer, N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, K.M. Munshi, Saiyad Mohammad Saadulla, Sir B.L. Mitter, and D.P. Khaitan. After the first meeting Sir B.L. Mitter resigned and in his place N. Madhava Rao was nominated, and T.T. Krishnamachari took the place of D.P. Khaitan on the latter's death in 1948.)

The Drafting Committee prepared the first draft of the Constitution. This was then circulated for the comments of jurists, lawyers, judges, and other publicmen. In the light of their comments and criticism, the Drafting Committee prepared a second draft which consisted of 315 Articles and 9 Schedules. This second draft was placed before the Constituent Assembly on February 21, 1948. The draft was then considered clause by clause by the Assembly. The third reading commenced on November 14 and was finished on November 26, 1949. The Preamble was adopted last. It had taken 2 years, 11 months, and 18 days to complete the task. As many as 7,000 odd amendments had been proposed and nearly 2,500 were actually discussed before the Draft Constitution was accepted.

Dr Ambedkar then moved a motion that the Constitution, as settled by the Constituent Assembly, be passed. On November 26, 1949, the people of India in the Constituent Assembly adopted, enacted, and gave to themselves the Constitution of the Sovereign Democratic Republic of India. Dr Rajendra Prasad, as president of the assembly, signed the document.

The members of the Constituent Assembly appended

View

[a]ny claim for the sharing of power by the minority...[is] called communalism while the monopolising of the whole power by the majority...[is] called Nationalism.

—B.R. Ambedkar

their signatures to it on January 24, 1950—the last day of the Assembly. In all, 284 members actually signed the Constitution.

The Constituent Assembly, besides drafting the Constitution of India, adopted the National Flag on July 22, 1947, and adopted the National Anthem and National Song on January 24, 1950—the last day of its session.

The Constituent Assembly elected Dr Rajendra Prasad as the first President of India on January 24, 1950.

Late in the evening of August 14, 1947, the Assembly met in the Constitution Hall, and at the stroke of midnight, took over as the Legislative Assembly of an Independent India.

The Assembly continued as the provisional Parliament of India from January 26, 1950 till the new Parliament was installed after the first general elections.

It must, however, be noted that while the formal centres of the work of drafting the Constitution were, no doubt, the Constituent Assembly and the Drafting Committee, the Congress leaders held the important powers of decision-making. In a way, the Congress Working Committee was the real architect of the Constitution in that most of the important decisions were arrived at on the basis of what the Congress leaders suggested. Granville Austin points out that four men—Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, and Abul Kalam Azad—constituted a virtual oligarchy in the Assembly and dominated the proceedings by virtue of the prestige and power they enjoyed both in the Congress and in the government.

The manner in which the Constituent Assembly arrived at decisions was that of consensus, defined by Granville Austin as "the manner of making decisions by unanimity or near unanimity". An effort was made to smoothen differences and arrive at compromises and agreement. The objective was to overcome the biases, and an element of overruling dissent, ingrained in decision by majority.

CHAPTER 36

The Evolution of Nationalist Foreign Policy

One of the factors that facilitated India's ready interaction with the world outside, immediately on independence, was the already well-established diplomatic engagement even under colonial rule. At independence, India was a member of 51 international organisations and a signatory to 600 odd treaties. India had signed the Versailles Treaty after the First World War, largely as a result of having contributed more than a million soldiers to that war. In the 1920s, it was a founding member of the League of Nations, the International Labour Organisation, and the International Court of Justice. It participated in the Washington Conference on Naval Armaments in 1921–22. From 1920, there was an Indian high commissioner in London. Even before the First World War, Indian nationals were staffing a few diplomatic posts. It was no accident that Indians formed the largest and most influential non-Western contingent in the United Nations and allied agencies very soon after independence.

The basic framework of India's foreign policy was structured much before 1947.

A significant and inevitable fallout of the Western influence on the nationalist intelligentsia was a growing interest in and contact with the dominant international currents and events. Gradually, the nationalist thinkers came to realise that colonialism and imperialism had an international

character and much wider implications. With the development and crystallisation of an anti-imperialist nationalist ideology, there emerged a nationalist foreign policy perspective. The evolution of this policy perspective can be traced under these broad phases.

From 1880 to First World War: Anti-imperialism and Pan-Asian Feeling

After 1878, the British undertook a number of expansionist expeditions which were opposed by the nationalists. These expeditions included:

- the Second Afghan War (1878–80);
- the dispatch of troops by England in 1882, to suppress the nationalist uprising by Colonel Arabi in Egypt;
- annexation of Burma in 1885;
- invasion of Tibet under Curzon in 1903; and
- a number of annexations during the 1890s in the north-west to stop the Russian advance. The nationalists supported the tribal resistance to these adventures by the British.

In place of an aggressive imperialism, the nationalists advocated a policy of peace. C. Sankaran Nair, the Congress president in 1897, said, "Our true policy is a peaceful policy." So, the emerging themes during 1880–1914 were:

1. Solidarity with other colonies fighting for freedom, such as Russia, Ireland, Egypt, Turkey, Ethiopia, Sudan, Burma, and Afghanistan;

2. Pan-Asian feeling reflected in:

- condemnation of annexation of Burma in 1885;
- inspiration from Japan as an example of industrial development;
- condemnation of the participation of Japan in the international suppression of the I-Ho-Tuan uprising (1895);
- condemnation of the imperialist efforts to divide China;

- defeat of the Czarist Russia by Japan which exploded the myth of European superiority; and
- Congress support for Burma's freedom.

World War I

The nationalists supported the British Indian Government in the belief that Britain would apply the same principles of democracy for which they were supposed to be fighting. After the conclusion of the War, the Congress insisted on being represented at the Peace Conference. In 1920, the Congress urged the people not to join the army to fight in the West. In 1925, the Congress condemned the dispatch of Indian Army to suppress the Chinese nationalist army under Sun-Yat-Sen.

1920s and 1930s—Identifying with Socialists

In 1926 and 1927, Nehru was in Europe where he came in contact with the socialists and other leftist leaders. Earlier, Dadabhai Naoroji attended the Hague session of the International Socialist Congress. He was a close friend of H.M. Hyndman, the famous socialist. Lajpat Rai also made contacts with the American socialists during his visit to the USA from 1914 to 1918. Gandhi had close relations with Tolstoy and Rolland Romain. In 1927, Nehru attended the Congress of Oppressed Nationalists at Brussels on behalf of the Indian National Congress. The conference was organised by political exiles and revolutionaries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, suffering from political and economic imperialism. Nehru was one of the honorary presidents along with Einstein, Madam Sun-Yet-Sen, Rolland Romain, and George Lansbury. Nehru came to understand the international character of US imperialism during his European experience. Nehru was also nominated to the executive council of the League Against Imperialism. The Congress also decided to open a foreign department to be in touch with the other peoples' movements. In 1927, Nehru also visited the Soviet

Union and was very impressed by the achievements of the infant socialist state. He saw Russia as a bulwark against imperialism.

After 1936—Anti-Fascism

The 1930s saw the rise of Fascism in Europe and the struggle against it. The nationalists saw imperialism and fascism as organs of capitalism. They lend support to the struggle against fascism in other parts of the world in Ethiopia, Spain, China, and Czechoslovakia. In 1939, at the Tripuri session, the Congress dissociated itself from the British policy which supported fascism in Europe.

In 1939, the Japanese attack on China was condemned by the nationalists. The Congress also sent a medical mission under Dr Atal to China.

On the Palestine issue, the Congress lent support to the Palestinians. It expressed sympathy with the Jews, but urged that the Palestinians not be displaced and that the issue be settled by direct dealing between the Jews and the Arabs without Western intervention. It also opposed the partition of Palestine.

After Independence

Nehru is often called the architect of independent India's foreign policy. He realised the importance of the need to have direct contact with other nations and to cooperate with them in enhancing world peace and freedom; he also understood the importance of maintaining an identity as a free nation and not become a satellite of any other nation, however mighty. In his address to the Constituent Assembly on December 4, 1947, Nehru laid the foundations of India's foreign policy: "....the art of conducting the foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. We may talk about peace and freedom and earnestly mean what we say. But in the ultimate analysis, a government functions for the good of the country it governs, and no government dare do anything which in the short or long run is manifestly to the disadvantage of the country."

The main challenge to Nehru was to evolve a policy that could help India compete on the world arena with the modern states, and for that, he realised, a drastic socio-economic and technological transformation of the country was required. His objective was to transform India without becoming dependent on any particular country or group of countries to the extent of losing independence of thought or policy. What India needed was peaceful relations with all nations so that it could concentrate on its developmental efforts, and relations good enough for it to get the necessary help in that direction without compromising its freedom. In the circumstances, non-alignment seemed to be the right policy.

Panchsheel and Non-Alignment

Panchsheel and Non-Alignment are the foundations of India's foreign policy.

Panchsheel

It was on April 29, 1954, that Panchsheel, or the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, were first formally enunciated in the Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India. It was stated in the preamble to this agreement that the two governments had resolved to enter into the agreement on the basis of five principles, namely,

(i) Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
(ii) Mutual non-aggression
(iii) Mutual non-interference
(iv) Equality and mutual benefit
(v) Peaceful co-existence

In June 1954, when the Chinese premier, Zhou Enlai visited India, he and his Indian counterpart, Jawaharlal Nehru in a joint statement elaborated their vision of Panchsheel as the framework for the relations between the two countries as well as the basis on which relations with other countries should be maintained. The two leaders expressed the hope that Panchsheel "will also help in creating an area of peace which as circumstances permit can be enlarged thus lessening the chances of war and strengthening the cause of peace all over the world".

Historical Perspective on Panchsheel

In the classical language, the word 'sheel' doesn't mean 'principle' but 'character'. The term is taken from the Indonesian usage of the word — and Indonesians may have been influenced by the Buddhist use of the word 'sheel'. Most Indians think 'Panchsheel' was Jawaharlal Nehru's valuable contribution to the world, as it first received world attention when he and Zhou Enlai issued a joint statement in Delhi on June 18, 1954. In fact, the credit for formulating these principles should go to Zhou. While receiving the Indian delegation to the Tibetan trade talks on December 31, 1953, he enunciated them as "five principles governing China's relations with foreign countries".

T.N. Kaul, a joint secretary in the external affairs ministry at the time or Director General for Asian Affairs in Delhi, was impressed and conveyed his appreciation and the significance of these principles to Nehru, with whom he enjoyed a close rapport. Nehru agreed and Kaul took the initiative to mention them at the very outset of his draft text of agreement. That was in January 1954. However, the response from the Chinese foreign office was in the negative. At the time Zhou wasn't in China.

When Zhou returned to Peking, he, with his native genius for compromise, found a via-media. He suggested that the five principles may not be included in the main text prominently, but could appear in the preamble. India accepted the compromise. But two months later, when Zhou visited Delhi, Nehru and Kaul emphasised these principles in the joint statement issued on June 18, 1954. China's hesitant formulation caught worldwide attention because of Indian sponsorship. Zhou propounded the principles, but Kaul picked them up and Nehru propagated them. Nehru enjoyed high regard in the NAM, and soon, other Asian countries like Burma and Indonesia followed suit.

Nehru and Zhou were leaders who strove hard to forge close ties between India and China and usher in a better world order through Panchsheel. Their efforts, however, were undermined and undone by the machinations of self-seeking or vindictive colleagues and they died disenchanted men.

Source: An article by V.V. Paranjpe, formerly Chinese language expert to the Government of India, in *The Hindustan Times* of June 2004.

As per the documents of the Ministry of External Affairs, Panchsheel was incorporated into the Ten Principles of International Peace and Cooperation put forward in the Declaration issued by the April 1955 Bandung Conference of 29 Afro-Asian countries. The universal relevance of Panchsheel was emphasised when its tenets were incorporated in a resolution on peaceful co-existence presented by India, Yugoslavia, and Sweden, and unanimously adopted on December 11, 1957, by the United Nations General Assembly. And in 1961, the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations in Belgrade accepted Panchsheel as the basic principles at the centre of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Non-Alignment

The global environment that India faced after independence was very different from what existed before the Second World War. The major players on the world stage before the War, namely, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Japan, lay subdued, their vast empires shrunken or shrinking fast. The United States, which had followed an isolationist policy, keeping aloof from active international involvement, became dramatically active. The Soviet Union had acquired unprecedented influence in Eastern Europe besides gaining recognition as a powerful state for crushing the German might on the Eastern Front where most of the German military casualties had occurred. If the US demonstrated its nuclear weapon capability in 1945, the USSR followed suit with its own nuclear test in 1949. The Cold War that began in the wake of the Second World War had no precedent in history. Almost the entire developed world was divided into two opposing nuclear-armed blocs, with the US and the USSR leading as 'superpowers'. The balance of power diplomacy of the pre-war years thus disappeared from the industrialised countries. The Third World became a surrogate field for superpower competition. Meanwhile, decolonisation was proceeding apace, and more and more independent countries were emerging, mostly in Asia and Africa. China was aligned with the Soviet Union till the mid-1950s. India found itself the largest country with the ability to manoeuvre between the two blocs.

At this point of time, the Soviet Union did not possess the economic or military support capability to influence the countries emerging from the colonial yoke. It was the West, which tried to incorporate the newly independent countries into its strategic grouping. Alignment with the West was economically attractive, but it would have created a dependent relationship, which was seen by most of the newly independent countries as obstructive to a self-reliant development. The idea of aligning with the communist bloc was not possible for India, in spite of its socialist leanings; it could not visualise a Chinese-type restructuring of the society and economy, being basically attuned to a liberal democratic political vision. Political non-alignment was, therefore, prudent as well as pragmatic.

The principles of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and maintenance of one's own sovereignty (which are the basic postulates of India's foreign policy) evolved into the crystallisation of the concept of non-alignment. The term 'non-alignment' got currency in the post-**Bandung Conference** (1955). Non-alignment implies

Five Criteria of Non-alignment

The Preparatory Committee of the first non-aligned conference laid down the following five criteria of non-alignment:

(i) A country should follow an independent policy based on peaceful co-existence and non-alignment.
(ii) It should have consistently supported national freedom movements in other countries.
(iii) It should not be a member of multilateral military alliances concluded in the context of superpower conflicts.
(iv) If it has conceded military bases, these concessions should not have been made in the context of superpower conflicts.
(v) If it is a member of a bilateral or regional defence arrangements, this should not be in the context of superpower politics.

Five Pioneering Leaders of the NAM

(i) President Tito (original name Josip Broz) of Yugoslavia
(ii) President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt
(iii) President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana
(iv) President Sukarno of Indonesia
(v) Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India

the active refusal of a state to align itself with either party in a dispute between two power blocs. In the conference of non-aligned powers—**the first non-aligned movement or NAM summit**—held in Belgrade in 1961 and attended by 36 Mediterranean and Afro-Asian powers, Jawaharlal Nehru explained the essence of non-alignment: "We call ourselves the conference of non-aligned countries. Now the word *non-aligned* may be differently interpreted but basically it was used and coined almost with the meaning: non aligned with greater power blocs of the world. Non-aligned has a negative meaning but if you give it a positive connotation it means nations which object to this lining up for war purpose, military blocs, military alliances and the like. Therefore, we keep away from this and we want to throw our weight, such as it is, in favour of peace."

Non-alignment is the characteristic feature of India's foreign policy. India was one of the founder-members of NAM. In the Cold War era, India refused to favour any super power and remained non-aligned. Non-alignment, however, is not to be confused with neutrality. A neutral state remains inactive or passive during hostilities between two blocs. Neutrality is maintained basically; in times of war, whereas non-alignment has relevance both in times of war and peace. Neutrality is equivalent to passivity, a neutral country has no opinions (positive or negative) on issues at all. However, adherence to non-alignment is to have positive and constructive opinions on international issues. India has firmly and convincingly asserted its 'non-aligned' and not 'neutral' stand on various issues. Non-alignment as one of the principles of India's foreign policy attempts to promote international peace, disarmament, and territorial independence. It aims at democratisation of international relations by putting an end to imperialism and hegemony and establishing a just and equal world order.

CHAPTER 37

First General Elections

With the Constitution coming into force in 1950, India no longer had a dominion status and could sever any remaining links with Britain; it was a sovereign democratic republic. The provisions of the Constitution relating to citizenship and Article 324 (the Election Commission) were brought into force on November 26, 1949, while the rest of the Constitution came into force on January 26, 1950. The next year, the government wanted to go in for general elections to constitute the House of the People—the Lok Sabha—as provided for in the Constitution.

The founding fathers of the Indian Constitution incorporated certain aspects of the electoral procedure in the Constitution itself (Part XV, Articles 324 to 329).

Groundwork for the Elections

The Election Commission

The office of the Election Commission had been set up in a small way on January 25, 1950. The first Chief Election Commissioner of India was Sukumar Sen, an ICS officer, who assumed office on March 21, 1950. Although the Constitution provides for the appointment of other members of the Election Commission as and when necessary, for long after India became a republic the commission was a single-member one.

The Election Commission of India is a permanent constitutional body, established in accordance with the Constitution. It has been made independent of the government

of the day. Under Article 324, the Election Commission of India has been vested with the power of the superintendence, direction, and control of the entire process for conduct of elections to Parliament and legislature of every state and to the offices of President and Vice-President of India. The Election Commission had to do a lot of ground work before the first polls were held.

Legislation for Polls

Two major measures were passed by Parliament which provided the detailed law under which elections were to be held. The first of these measures was the Representation of the People Act, 1950, which provided for the qualifications of voters and matters connected with the preparation and publication of electoral rolls. It also allocated the number of seats in the House of the People to the several states and fixed the number of seats in each state legislature. The second legislation was the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which laid down other provisions relating to qualifications and disqualifications of members, the conduct of elections, poll expenses, the poll itself, counting of votes, etc.

It was only after these laws were passed that the electoral machinery could be put in place. So, though the government was in a hurry to hold the elections as early as 1950 and then by the spring of 1951, the first phase of the elections could be held only from October 15, 1951.

Of the 489 seats in the House of the People to be filled by election, 72 seats were reserved for candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes, and 26 for candidates belonging to the Scheduled Tribes.

The total number of seats in the Legislative Assemblies of the states was 3,283. Out of these, 477 seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes, and 192 for the Scheduled Tribes.

Independent India Goes to the Polls for the First Time

The elections were held based on universal adult franchise, with all those 21 years of age or older having the right to vote. The total number of voters enrolled in the whole of India (excluding Jammu and Kashmir) was 17,32,13,635

(roughly more than 173 million). Of these, approximately 45 per cent were women voters. The total population of India (excluding Jammu and Kashmir) according to the 1951 census was 35,66,91,760. As much as 49 per cent of the total population was thus enrolled as voters.

Challenges

Most of the voters were poor, illiterate, and came from rural areas, and had no experience of elections. There was much scepticism about such an electorate being able to exercise its right to vote in a politically mature and responsible manner. The electoral exercise was described by some as 'a leap in the dark' and by others as 'fantastic' and as 'an act of faith' before the elections took place.

The Election Commission faced many challenges. There was a house-to-house survey to register the voters. Many eligible voters could not be included in the electoral rolls despite much effort on the part of the Election Commission because of (i) ignorance and apathy of the common voter; (ii) lack of adequate organisation and experience on the part of the political parties; and (iii) inexperience and poor organisation of the governmental machinery in some of the states.

According to the report by Sukumar Sen after the elections were over, a large number of women voters had been enrolled in some states not by their own names but by the description of the relationship they bore to their male relations, e.g., as the mother of so and so or the wife of so and so; this was because local custom dictated that women do not disclose their proper names to strangers. The Election Commission had to issue firm instructions that, as the name of an elector was an essential part of his or her identity, the correct name must be included in the electoral rolls and that no elector should be enrolled unless sufficient particulars, including the name, were given. If a woman did not give her proper name, she was not to be registered as a voter. As a result, the names of nearly two to three million out of a total of nearly 80 million women voters in the country were unable to be registered as they failed to disclose their proper names, and these women could not exercise their vote. Most of these women, says the report, were from the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Bharat, Rajasthan, and Vindhya Pradesh.

The Election Commission also faced a major problem with regard to the displaced persons (who had migrated from Pakistan in the wake of partition) in West Bengal, Punjab, Delhi and, to some extent, in Assam. These migrants constituted a considerable floating population, and it was very difficult to register those of them that were eligible for registration under the law.

Political parties in a mature democracy participate in all stages of the process of elections. The parties could be of great help in the preparation of electoral rolls. However, India was a nascent democracy and political parties lacked experience; they took little interest in doing their bit. As it was, the huge task of preparing the electoral rolls in a country of some 173 million voters had to be borne almost entirely by the governmental machinery in the states acting under the directions of the Election Commission.

With over 70 per cent of the voters being illiterate, it was necessary for candidates to be identified by symbols. The Election Commission had to allot a symbol to each major party and independent candidate. At the time of allotment of symbols, the political parties became more active. Indeed, according to the Sen report, a remarkable feature of the increasing tempo was the formation of new political parties all over the country, some of them ultimately proving to be a mushroom growth. There were as many as 178 parties, but most of these parties virtually disappeared after the elections, with many of their candidates forfeiting their deposits.

The symbols were painted on the ballot-boxes (this was later changed to symbols on the ballot papers). "A voter had to simply insert the ballot paper given to him in the ballot box of the candidate of his choice in the voting compartment," writes former Chief Election Commissioner S.Y. Quraishi in his book, *An Undocumented Wonder: The Making of the Great Indian Election*. The ballot was secret.

Parties in the Fray for the Lok Sabha

Though it was generally accepted that the Congress had the largest following, various other political strands in India were also beginning to take shape. Just before the first elections, Syama Prasad Mukherjee (industries minister under Nehru) broke away to set up the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (a proto-BJP) in October 1951. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar revived the Scheduled

Castes Federation (which was later named the Republican Party). Another high-profile Congress leader, J. B. (Acharya) Kripalani, founded the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party. Ram Manohar Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan, were the forces behind the Socialist Party. And the communists (then united), having just abandoned an armed struggle in Telangana, too contested.

There were 53 political parties participating in the first general elections for the Lok Sabha seats. These included the 14 national parties, according to the report by the Election Commission of India. Besides, there were the independents. There were a total number of 1,874 candidates, including 533 independents.

The national parties were:

1. All India Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS)
2. Bolshevik Party of India (BPI)
3. Communist Party of India (CPI)
4. Forward Bloc (Marxist Group) FBL (MG)
5. Forward Bloc (Ruikar Group) FBL (RG)
6. Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha (HMS)
7. Indian National Congress (INC)
8. Krishikar Lok Party (KLP)
9. Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP)
10. Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI)
11. Akhil Bharatiya Ram Rajya Parishad (RRP)
12. Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP)
13. All India Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF)
14. Socialist Party (SP)

Conduct of Elections

In the first general elections of the nation, there were three types of constituencies: 314 with single seats, 86 with two seats, and one with 3 seats. The total seats thus were 489 from 401 constituencies.

There were over 224,000 polling booths, one for almost every 1,000 voters, and these were equipped with over 2 million steel ballot-boxes, one box for every candidate. About a million officials supervised the conduct of the polls.

Indelible ink was introduced as a precautionary step: a mark was put on the voter's finger as he/she went in to vote so as to prevent impersonation. (The practice continues to this day.)

The first-past-the-post system was the mode, so of the many candidates, whoever got the plurality or the largest number of votes would be elected; the winning candidate did not need to have a majority.

The voter turnout for the elections was 45.7 per cent. The people demonstrated their ability to vote with knowledge even though the majority of them were illiterate. The number of invalid votes was as low as 3 to 4 per cent. The participation of women was significant with some 40 per cent of the eligible women voters exercising their vote.

Results

Lok Sabha

The Indian National Congress contested 472 seats and won 364, a stupendous majority of the seats to the Lok Sabha. The CPI won 16 and the Socialist Party won 12—the only other parties to get two-digit number of seats. The KMPP won 9 seats.The BJS won 3 seats. The independents got the highest number of seats after the Congress.

The Congress polled close to 45 per cent of the total vote. The CPI got about 3.29 per cent votes. The Socialist Party got 10.59 per cent votes.

Some prominent winners were: Gulzari Lal Nanda and Lal Bahadur Shastri who were to be future prime ministers; Delhi's first chief minister to be, Chaudhry Brahm Prakash; Humayun Kabir, A.K. Gopalan, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, K.D. Malviya, and Subhadra Joshi.

Dr B. R. Ambedkar was defeated in the Bombay (North Central), which was a reserved constituency, as a candidate of the Scheduled Castes Federation by his little-known former assistant and Congress candidate, Narayan Sadoba Kajrolkar. (Dr Ambedkar later entered Parliament as a Rajya Sabha member.)

Acharya Kripalani as the KMPP candidate lost from Faizabad in UP, but his wife Sucheta Kripalani defeated the Congress candidate, Manmohini Sahgal, in Delhi.

After the votes were counted and results declared, the first Lok Sabha or the House of the People was constituted by the Election Commission on April 2, 1952. Until this point, the Indian Constituent Assembly had served as an interim legislature.

First General Elections: Winners

Winning Parties	Percentage of Votes	Seats
Indian National Congress (INC)	44.99	364
Communist Party of India (CPI)	3.29	16
Socialist Party	10.59	12
Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP)	5.79	9
Peoples Democratic Front (PDF)	1.29	7
Ganatantra Parishad	0.91	6
Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha	0.95	4
Shiromani Akali Dal	0.99	4
Tamil Nadu Toilers Party	0.84	4
Akhil Bharatiya Ram Rajya Parishad	1.97	3
Bharatiya Jan Sangh	3.06	3
Revolutionary Socialist Party	0.44	3
Commonwealth Party	0.31	3
Jharkhand Party	0.71	3
Scheduled Caste Federation	2.38	2
Lok Sevak Sangh	0.29	2
Peasants and Workers Party of India	0.94	2
Forward Bloc (Marxist Group)	0.91	1
Krishikar Lok Party	1.41	1
Chhota Nagpur Santhal Parganas Janta Party	0.22	1
Madras State Muslim League Party	0.08	1
Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress Party	0.11	1
Independents	15.9	37
Anglo-Indians (Nominated)		2

The Speaker of the first Lok Sabha was Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar.

Jawaharlal Nehru became the first prime minister after the general elections.

State Leislatures

In the state legislature elections, too, the Indian National Congress swept the polls. The party won 2,248 seats on the whole. It formed the government in all the states, though it did not get the majority on its own in four states, namely, Madras, Travancore-Cochin, Orissa, and PEPSU.

CHAPTER 38

Developments under Nehru's Leadership (1947–1964)

Jawaharlal Nehru, as the first prime minister of independent India, along with other leaders, laid the foundation of a new India. The period between India's independence and the death of Nehru, in May 1964, has been often termed as 'Nehruvian Era' due to Nehru's influence on almost all aspects of decisions taken in India during that time.

Nehru was influenced by many streams of thought, some imported from his association with Europe and some imbibed from his close association with Gandhi, besides what he perceived in the nation on his tours across its regions. As a result, he enunciated a framework of democracy committed to secularism, socialistic approach, and social justice, besides the creation of an institutional base for speedy development of the country not only large but marked by huge diversity. He never forgot the idea of keeping the country united. He tried his best to arouse in his people an awareness of the need for social concern for the poor and the marginalised and a respect for democratic values. Nehru is noted for having tried to impart modern values and ways of thinking that were adapted to Indian conditions. He was committed to carry India into an age of scientific discovery and technological development.

A brief survey of different events and aspects of the Nehruvian period follows.

Political Developments

In the first general elections in 1952, the Congress won a huge majority and formed the government at the Centre headed by Jawaharlal Nehru. Rajendra Prasad was elected president by the electoral college of the first Parliament of India.

Nehru led the Congress to major election victories in 1957 and 1962, though the winning majority was reduced towards the end.

Parliament in this period legislated various noteworthy laws that were directed towards social change and equity. (These aspects are dealt with under separate headings later.)

Debate over National Language

At the time of Independence, there were eleven major languages in India, each spoken by more than a million people. In colonial India, English was used as the official language, but with the attainment of independence, the question arose about having a 'national' or 'official' language, replacing English. Gandhi had recommended the use of Hindustani as the national language of the country for the sake of national integration. Nehru too acknowledged the potential of Hindustani—not too Sanskritised, not too Persianised—to become the national language. On the whole, the idea of Hindi as a national language was not appreciated by the non-Hindi speaking southern and eastern regions of India. In the wake of serious resistance, the Language Committee of Constituent Assembly came up with a compromise formula. The Committee decided that the Hindi in Devanagari script was to be the 'official' language, but transition to Hindi would be gradual. For the first fifteen years, English would continue to be used for all official purposes, and each province could choose one of the regional languages, for official work within the province, which were to be listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Thus, by referring to Hindi as the official language rather than national, the committee hoped to placate the opposition.

The language issue was further clarified by Parliament in 1963 through the Official Languages Act, which stated that Hindi was to become the official language in India from

1965. But as a concession to the non-Hindi speakers, English was accorded the status of 'associate additional official language'. Despite this, among non-Hindi speakers, especially in South India, the resentment against Hindi continued, and in late 1964 and in early 1965, violent demonstrations erupted over the language issue. The Official Languages (Amendment) Act of 1967 provided a bilingual (English-Hindi) solution for any official communication between the Centre and states, and gave a concession to the diverse multiplicity of languages by recognising regional languages in provincial administration and in public service examinations.

Linguistic Reorganisation of the States

The demand for reorganisation of the states on the basis of language was an outcome of linguistic pluralism in India. The demand surfaced immediately after independence. The boundaries of provinces in pre-independent India were the outcome of the British conquest of India. The state boundaries were drawn either for administrative convenience or simply coincided with the territories annexed by the British government or the territories ruled by the princely states.

The Congress in its 1920's session in Nagpur had made efforts to recognise regional linguistic identities and divided India into 21 linguistic units for its organisational set-up. Many provincial Congress committees were set up on the basis of linguistic zones, which often did not coincide with the administrative divisions of British India.

However, when demands for the linguistic reorganisation of the provinces came up in the Constituent Assembly in 1946 and after independence, the national leadership under the Congress opposed it on the ground of national unity. The situation in the newly independent country was difficult. India's partition had created serious administrative, economic, and political challenges. The post-War world faced serious economic and law and order problems. The Kashmir problem and a war-like situation with Pakistan needed urgent attention.

However, due to continuous demands, the Constituent Assembly, in June 1948, appointed the Linguistic Provinces Commission, headed by Justice S.K. Dhar, to enquire into the need of linguistic provinces. The Dhar Commission, however, opposed such a move in the interest of national

integration. Consequently, the Constituent Assembly decided not to include the linguistic principle in the Constitution.

In December 1948, to pacify the vocal votaries of linguistic states, the Congress appointed a committee (JVP), with Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, and Pattabhi Sitaramayya as its members. Its report which is known as the **JVP Report**—also went against the creation of linguistic states in the interests of national unity. There was widespread agitation, especially in southern India, in the wake of the JVP report.

The first demand for a linguistic province was seen in the Telugu-speaking region of Andhra. In August 1951, Swami Sitaram, a Congressman and Gandhian leader, started a fast unto death. While he broke his fast after 35 days, the movement was renewed in December 1952, by another Gandhian follower, Potti Sriramulu who died after fasting for 56 days. Sriramulu's death was followed by rioting, demonstrations, hartals, and violence all over the Andhra region. The government conceded the demand for a separate state of Andhra, which finally came into existence on October 1, 1953, with the region being separated from the Tamil-speaking Madras state.

The creation of Andhra encouraged other linguistic groups to intensify their movements for their own state or for rectification of their boundaries on a linguistic ground. Under popular pressure, Nehru government appointed the States Reorganisation Commission (SRC) in August 1953. The commission, comprising Justice Fazl Ali, K.M. Panikkar, and Hridaynath Kunzru as members, submitted its report in October 1955; its recommendations were accepted with some modifications and implemented quickly.

In November 1956, the States Reorganisation Act was passed which provided for 14 states and 6 centrally administered territories, but many of these states still contained sizeable linguistic minorities and regional economic disparities. The Telangana region of Hyderabad state was merged into Andhra; Kerala was formed by merging the Malabar district of the old Madras Presidency with Travancore-Cochin. Bombay state was enlarged further by merging the states of Kutch and Saurashtra and the Marathi-speaking

regions of Hyderabad state. The Mysore state was enlarged by adding Kannada-speaking areas of adjoining states—Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad, and Coorg.

As the SRC had opposed the splitting of Bombay and Punjab, a widespread rioting broke out in January 1956 in Bombay city. The government finally agreed in May 1960 to bifurcate the state of Bombay into Maharashtra and Gujarat, with Bombay city being included in Maharashtra and Ahmedabad being made the capital of Gujarat.

The Nagas, the first to raise the issue of ethnic identity, forced the Government of India to concede to demand for a separate state of Nagaland in 1960, inaugurated in 1963.

In an exception to the linguistic principle, in 1956, the states of PEPSU were merged with Punjab. Punjab remained a trilingual state having three language speakers—Punjabi, Hindi, and Pahari. The demand for a separate Punjabi Suba (Punjabi-speaking state) assumed communal overtones because of the Sikh and Hindu communalists. The problem remained unsolved in Nehru's time. It was to be addressed later by Indira Gandhi. Over the years since then, many new states have been formed, not necessarily along linguistic lines.

Growth of Other Political Parties

Through the 1950s and 1960s, the Congress party ruled at the Centre and in most of the states. The people voted for the Congress mainly because they saw it as the legatee of the freedom struggle and because its leaders were perceived to be individuals of character and integrity. Perhaps the first time people exercised their right of choice for a party other than the Congress was when they voted the Communists into power in Kerala in 1957. Then, in 1963, three notable opponents of the Congress were elected to the Lok Sabha, namely, the socialist Ram Manohar Lohia, the liberal M.R. Masani, and the Gandhian Acharya Kripalani. All this signified that the people of India were getting well acquainted with the mores of democracy.

The period also saw the start and growth of political parties other than the Congress and the Communist Party of India and notable changes within the communist groups.

The Socialist Party

Formed in 1934 as Congress Socialist Party (SP), with its own constitution, membership, discipline, and ideology, it

remained within the Congress Party till March 1948. Their disassociation as a protest against the Congress's move towards the right and its growing authoritarian tendencies was announced at a meeting in Nashik on March 28, 1948.

In September 1952, the CSP merged with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) to form a new party—**Praja Socialist Party (PSP)**.

Praja Socialist Party

In September 1952, the Socialist Party and the KMPP merged to form Praja Socialist Party (PSP), with J.B. Kripalani as the chairman and Ashoka Mehta as the general secretary. With the merger, it became the largest opposition party to the Congress with all-India presence. But the party could not maintain its cohesion for long.

In June 1953, at the party's Betul conference, Ashok Mehta called for support to the ruling party, as he believed that in a backward country like India the crucial task was economic development—a common challenge for all political parties. Mehta's thesis was rejected by the rest of the party, which accepted Ram Manohar Lohia's approach.

Lohia believed in a position of equidistance from both the Congress and the Communists, and supported the organisation of militant mass movements.

Lohia and his group left the PSP at the end of 1955. While Acharya Narendra Dev died in 1956, Jayaprakash Narayan, in 1954, announced that he would dedicate his life to Bhoodan and other constructive activities. In 1957, after the general elections, Jayaprakash Narayan left active politics, declaring that party politics was not suitable for India and campaigned for 'partyless democracy'. Kripalani, in 1960, left the party too, and three years later, Ashok Mehta agreed to become the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission. Ashok Mehta joined the Congress Party with almost one-third of PSP cadres with him.

Lohiya formed the Socialist Party, which in 1964, merged with the PSP to form the Samyukta (or United) Socialist Party (SSP). In 1965, the party split again—Lohia's group kept the SSP label, while his critics started a fresh PSP.

The Communist Party

In the period following independence, the official stand taken by the Communist Party of India towards the changing socio-political dynamics went through alterations. It first accepted India's independent foreign policy though it still considered the government to be an agent of imperialism. It later went on to accept that India had become a sovereign republic but also felt its policies were pro-capitalist and anti-people. The communists would offer a 'democratic front' to replace the Congress Party. In 1958, at its Amritsar meeting, the party declared that it was possible to advance to socialism through peaceful and parliamentary means. And, if the party came to power, it would grant full civil liberties, including the right to oppose the socialist government and the socialist system through constitutional mechanisms. Then, in 1961, at Vijayawada, it was decided to follow a policy of struggle as well as unity towards Congress—progressive policies were to be supported, while struggle against other policies were to continue.

Split in CPI Within the party, there were several differences on issues like attitude towards the Soviet critique of Stalin, Russia-China ideological differences, and Sino-India War of 1962. Some communists supported the government fully against the Chinese invasion, while others, though opposed to the Chinese stand on the question of India-China frontiers, also opposed the unqualified support to the Nehru government because of its class character.

The Sino-Soviet ideological split also witnessed a great deal of resonance on the Indian Communists—many sympathetic to the Chinese position. In fact, the Chinese call, which asked the revolutionary elements in the communist parties of the world to distance themselves from those supporting the 'revisionist' soviet line, had great influence on the Indian Communists. In 1964, the party got divided into, **CPI—**representing the earlier 'right' and 'centrist' trends, and **CPM** or the Communist Party (Marxist)—representing the earlier 'left' trend.

The CPM believed that the Indian State was being ruled by big bourgeoisie who collaborated with foreign finance capital and hence have to be destroyed. They had contempt

for Indian Constitution as they thought it to be anti-democratic and hence did not believe in peaceful and parliamentary means. For them, an agrarian revolution coupled with an armed struggle led by the working class and the CPM was necessary to bring changes in the social relations.

Bharatiya Jan Sangh

The Bharatiya Jan Sangh, founded on October 21, 1951, was based on right wing ideology. According to Bipan Chandra, the Jana Sangh was a communal party, and to understand its basic character and politics, the genesis of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is to be analysed first. The Jan Sangh was a creation of the RSS and drew its organised strength, centralised character, and ideological homogeneity from it.

The party in the beginning was strongly anti-Pakistan. The propagation of Bharatiya culture and the establishment of Bharatiya nationalism were its core agenda, and it gave the slogan of 'one country one culture, one nation'. Similarly, it took a strident stand in favour of Sanskritised Hindi as an official link language of India. (In 1965, it gave up this demand in view of expansion of party in non-Hindi belt and accepted the decision to retain English along with Hindi so long as the non-Hindi states wanted this.)

Dr Syama Prasad Mukherjee, who had resigned from the Nehru cabinet in April 1951 over the Nehru–Liaquat Pact, was the main force behind the formation of the Jana Sangh. Mukherjee claimed it to be a non-communal party aiming to build a broad-based democratic opposition to the Congress. But in the absence of any effective alternative ideology or programme, and mass support, the party became a subsidiary of the RSS. It won 3 Lok Sabha seats, with 3.06 per cent of votes. Incidentally, Mauli Chandra Sharma, the second president of the Jana Sangh, resigned in protest against the RSS domination of the party.

In later years, the party was to be a part of the coalition Janata Party against the Emergency.

The Swatantra Party

Founded in August 1959, the Swatantra Party was a non-socialist, constitutionalist, and secular conservative party having distinguished leaders like C. Rajagopalachari (who resigned from the Congress), Minoo Masani, N.G. Ranga, and

K.M. Munshi, most of them being veteran Congress leaders. The social base of the party was narrow and consisted of: (i) a section of industrialists and business class discontented with government control, quotas and licences, and fearful of nationalisation; (ii) landlords, jagirdars, and princes, annoyed due to loss of fiefdoms, social power and status, and deteriorating economic conditions; (iii) ex-landlord-turned-capitalist farmers and rich and middle peasants, who had welcomed the abolition of landlordism but were fearful of losing part of their land; and (iv) a few retired civil servants.

The Swatantra Party favoured the notion of the 'night watchman' or *laissez-faire* State and stood for free, private enterprise. It opposed the active role of the State in economic development and nationalisation of private enterprises and extension of land reforms.

In international relations, the party denounced non-alignment as well as Indo-Soviet collaboration and wanted a close relation with the US and countries of Western Europe. In fact, it advocated for a defence coalition with non-communist countries of Asia including Pakistan, under the capitalist superpower, United States.

In the 1962 elections, it won 18 seats in the Lok Sabha and emerged as the main opposition party in four states (Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Orissa).

Factions, defections, and death of C. Rajagopalachari in 1967, proved detrimental to the Swatantra Party. Most of the party leaders joined the Bharatiya Lok Dal in 1974, while a small group led by Masani tried to survive the party.

Communal and Regional Parties

- The Hindu Mahasabha, which was founded in 1915 at Haridwar by Madan Mohan Malaviya, gradually disappeared from the political scene after 1952 and lost its support base to the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.
- The Muslim League, owing to its association with the demand for Pakistan, lay dormant and many of its leaders joined the Congress Party and other parties. Later, it revived in parts of Tamil Nadu and in Kerala and was to become coalition partners of the Congress, CPI, and CPM in the coming years.
- The Akali Dal gave way to Shiromani Akali Dal and remained limited to Punjab.

● The other regional parties which came into prominence were—The DMK (Tamil Nadu), the Jammu and Kashmir National conference (J & K), Jharkhand Party (in undivided Bihar), Ganatantra Parishad (Orissa), All Parties Hill Leaders' Conference (Assam), Scheduled Castes Federation (Maharashtra), etc. Forward Bloc (West Bengal) and Peasants and Workers' Party (Maharashtra) were parties inclined towards left ideology but restricted to only one state.

An Undemocratic Deed

In 1957, the Congress Party faced an unexpected defeat in the State of Kerala when the CPI emerged as the largest single party in the legislative assembly. E.M.S. Namboodiripad formed the government with the support of some independents. It was perhaps the first time that a communist government was formed on the basis of democratic elections.

Trouble began with the introduction of the Education Bill, which was, in actuality, a progressive measure. It was vehemently opposed by the Catholic Church in the state which ran several educational institutions and saw the bill as an encroachment on its power. Seeing in this situation an apt opportunity, the local Congress party members who had lost in the elections, organised state-wide protests. There were strikes as well. The government resorted to lathi-charges and firing. Several persons were jailed.

Nehru, though he had little objection to the education bill, maintained a neutral front in public. He admonished the state government for its excessive use of force even as he tried to rein in the Congress workers. But he failed to change anything on the ground. In the end, he succumbed to pressure from within and outside his party and advised the dismissal of the EMS government and imposition of President's Rule in Kerala in July 1959. A democratically elected government was thus, for the first time in independent India, dismissed under emergency powers.

Concept of Planning for Economic Development

Nehru believed in effective planning through the democratic process for extensive land reforms, industrialisation, and

development of various infrastructural facilities like power plants, transport projects, irrigation dams, etc. In his ideas on economic development, he was not in favour of Gandhi's ideas. So, he envisaged the State intervening in the economy, and guiding its growth and acting directly to promote the welfare of the population. Nehru, together with several national leaders, was fascinated with the success of economic planning in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s. The genesis of the Planning Commission could be traced to the National Planning Committee established in 1938 by Congress, and the Bombay Plan of 1944.

The **Planning Commission,** an extra-constitutional body, was set up in March 1950 by a simple resolution of the Government of India. The body was assigned the task of economic planning in the form of five-year plans. The prime minister, himself, was the ex-officio chairman of the commission. The National Development Council (NDC), which was to give final approval to the plans, was established on August 6, 1952.

The **First Five-Year Plan** (1951–56), based on Harrod–Domar model, sought to get the nation's economy out of the cycle of poverty. It addressed, mainly, the agrarian sector including investments in dams and irrigation. Huge allocations were made for large-scale projects like the Bhakhra Nangal Dam. It also focused on land reforms.

The **Second Plan**, drafted under the leadership of P.C. Mahalanobis, stressed on heavy industries. The plan reflected the 'socialistic pattern of society', as the government imposed substantial tariffs on imports in order to protect domestic industries.

The **Third Plan** was not significantly different from the Second. However, the plan strategies, according to critics, from this time around displayed an unmistakable 'urban bias' as well as the industry was wrongly given priority over agriculture.

Under the guidance of Nehru, who believed in 'democratic socialism', India opted for a **'mixed economy'**, i.e., elements from the capitalist model and socialist model were taken and mixed together. Much of the agriculture, trade, and industry were left in private hands. The State

controlled key heavy industries, provided industrial infrastructure, regulated trade, and made some important interventions in agriculture. However, a mixed model like this was open to criticism from both the left and the right.

According to the critics, the five-year plans did not provide the private sector with enough space and the stimulus to grow. Further, the systems of licences and permits for investment discouraged private sector and gave rise to corruption and red tapism. On the other hand, the sympathisers of the socialist model alleged that the State did not spend significant amounts on public education and health care. The State intervention ended up creating a new 'middle class' that enjoyed the privileges of high salaries without much accountability, according to critics.

Despite criticism of the shortfalls in plan targets, none can deny that a solid industrial base and infrastructure facilities were created under the plans.

Bhakhra-Nangal, Damodar Valley Corporation, and Hirakud mega-dams were constructed for irrigation and power generation. Some of the heavy industries in the public sector—steel plants, oil refineries, manufacturing units, defence production, etc., were started. The Hindustan Machine Tools, Sindri Fertiliser, Chittaranjan Rail Factory, Integral Coach Factory, Hindustan Antibiotics, etc., proved to be of great help to the new nation.

Progress of Science and Technology

Nehru believed that science and technology were crucial to the solution of India's problems. The Scientific Policy Resolution, acknowledging the role of science and technology in the economic, social, and cultural advancement of the country, was passed by the Lok Sabha in March 1958. But prior to the passing of SPR in 1958, many scientific and technological institutes were set up in the country. To emphasise the value of science and scientific research, Nehru himself assumed the chairmanship of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Some of the strides taken in this direction are given below.

● In January 1947, to promote self-sustaining, scientific, and technological growth, the National Physical Laboratory—India's first national laboratory—was set up, which was followed by the setting up of a network of 17 national laboratories, focusing on different areas of research.

● In 1952, the first of the five institutes of technology, patterned after the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was set up at Kharagpur.

● The Atomic Energy Commission, headed by Homi J. Bhabha, was set up in August 1948. Nehru personally encouraged Bhabha to do his best. In 1954, the government created a separate Department of Atomic Energy with Homi Bhabha as secretary. In August 1956, India's first nuclear reactor in Trombay (Asia's first also), became critical.

● In 1962, the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), together with a Rocket Launching Facility at Thumba (TERLS), was established.

● Steps were taken to increase India's capacity in the production of defence equipment.

● A changeover to decimal coinage and a metric system of weights and measures, in line with international standards, was made in phases between 1955 and 1962.

Social Developments

Developments in Education

In 1951, only 16.6 per cent of the total population was literate and the percentage was much lower in rural areas. Between 1951 and 1961, school enrolment doubled for boys and tripled for girls. Through the personal interest and efforts of Nehru, several policies were introduced to improve the educational situation. By 1964, the number of universities increased from 18 (in 1947) to 54.

In 1949, the Indian University Education Commission, under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was set up. On the recommendation of the commission, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was set up in 1953, and University Grants Commission Act was passed in 1956.

For improvements in the secondary education, the government appointed Mudaliar Commission in 1952, with Dr. A. Lakshmanswami Mudaliar as chairperson. Further, to

assist and advise the Central and state governments on academic matters related to school education, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was established in September 1961 as a literary, scientific, and charitable society.

Social Change under Nehru

The Constitution of India ensured that Indian social organisation underwent change, leading to the social liberation of the hitherto socially backward and suppressed sections of society. In 1955, the government passed the Anti-Untouchability Law, making the practice of untouchability punishable and a cognisable offence. The clauses mentioned in the Constitution regarding reservations in educational institutions and government employment in favour of weaker sections of the society were implemented.

For women's equal rights in the society, the Hindu Code Bill was moved in Parliament in 1951. Despite facing sharp opposition from conservative sections of society, the bill was passed in the form of four separate acts. These acts introduced monogamy and the right of divorce to both men and women, raised the age of consent and marriage, and gave women the right to maintenance and to inherit family property. But unfortunately, in the absence of a uniform civil code, the revolutionary step benefited only Hindu women. There was much more that needed to be done for Hindu women too.

Foreign Policy

To pursue an independent foreign policy, for a nascent nation, was a great challenge for the leaders of independent India. The broad parameters which had evolved during the freedom struggle had to be kept at the core while taking any decisions on international affairs. Nehru gave this voice a shape in the form of the idea of non-alignment and an organisational structure through the non-aligned movement (NAM).

The basic principles of India's foreign policy, during the Nehruvian Era, broadly revolved around the premises given below.

(i) Disapproval of participation in any military alliance either bilaterally or multilaterally

(ii) An independent foreign policy not tied to any of the two contending power blocs, though this was not a synonym for a neutral foreign policy
(iii) A policy of friendship with every country, whether of the American bloc or of the Soviet bloc
(iv) An active anti-colonial policy which supported decolonisation in Asian-African-Latin American countries
(v) Open support to the policy of anti-apartheid
(vi) Promotion of disarmament as the key to world peace

[The basic principles of non-alignment and NAM have already been discussed at length in the chapter, 'The Evolution of Nationalistic Foreign Policy'.]

India's commitment to disarmament at the international level could be seen in the time of framing of UN's Charter. Article 11 of the Charter advocates international disarmament. India supported the formation of the Atomic Energy Commission in 1947 and sponsored the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Conference in 1962.

Relations with Neighbours

India and Pakistan

The unnaturalness and artificiality of partition impelled Pakistan to try and establish its identity independent of India, of which it was till 1947 a part by geography, history, tradition, and culture. Pakistan, since its birth, has the aspiration for achieving parity with India in all fields. Thus, Pakistan started competing with India at all international fora and used all kinds of means to acquire prominence.

Kashmir Issue

Pakistan refused to accept Kashmir's accession to India on October 26, 1947. In response to the Pakistan-sponsored tribal attack, India, supported by the local population under Sheikh Abdullah, undertook a swift military action. But, unfortunately, before the task of rescuing the territory could be accomplished, a complaint was lodged by Nehru with the Security Council in January 1948. This resulted in a ceasefire on January 1, 1949. India also agreed to hold a plebiscite

in 1947 under international supervision, but due to changed circumstances, India finally withdrew from the offer in 1955. Although diplomatic battles for Kashmir were fought in the UNO and other international forums, no actual war took place between the two countries up to 1964.

Indus River Water Dispute

Equitable sharing of the waters of the Indus system had been an issue of discord since partition. The partition gave India 5 million of the 28 million acres of land irrigated by the Indus. Most of the waters of the western parts of the Indus system went into the Arabian Sea. Some canals in Pakistan depended on the eastern rivers flowing through the East Punjab (India) for supplies. The headworks of some vital canals in Pakistan come within the Indian territory. The successive governments in Pakistan blamed India for any calamity created by natural factors like droughts and floods in Pakistan. So, under the guidance of the World Bank, an interim agreement on canal waters was signed on April 17, 1959. Subsequently, a comprehensive agreement between the two countries was signed on September 19, 1960 in Karachi. Unfortunately, till today, on several occasions, the Indus Water Treaty has caused discord between the two nations.

India and China

One of the first countries with which independent India established diplomatic relations was the Nationalist Government of China led by Chiang Kaishek. When the Nationalist Government was overthrown by the Communists in 1949, India was once more among the first countries to recognise the new government led by Mao Tse Tung. India consistently supported the efforts of the People's Republic of China to get admitted to the United Nations. But the results of all these efforts proved frustrating for India.

Developments in Tibet and Panchsheel

The Chinese army entered Tibet in 1950 and occupied it. India, apart from sharing about 2000 miles of frontier in the Tibet region, had inherited several rights and obligations over Tibet from the British rule. However, to maintain peace, Nehru in 1954 concluded an agreement with China, which formalised the Chinese occupation of Tibet. The agreement is popularly known as **Panchsheel**.

In 1959, a popular uprising took place in Tibet against Chinese dominance. Though the upsurge was suppressed by China, the religious head of Tibet, Dalai Lama fled and took asylum in India. Taking this as an excuse, China in 1959 occupied Longju and 12,000 square miles of Indian territory in Ladakh. This followed a series of protest notes, memorandums, and aide memoires being exchanged between the two countries. In the next move, China laid claims on large parts of Indian territories, after which the Chinese prime minister, Chou-En-Lai came to New Delhi in April 1960 to negotiate border disputes. Official teams of the two countries also visited each other, but no agreement could be reached and the border dispute continued.

Sino-Indian War, 1962

In October 1962, China attacked India in NEFA (Arunachal Pradesh) and Ladakh. Thus, a war between the two countries started, which ended in a military debacle for India. The Chinese had a geographical advantage as well as superior arms. Nehru turned to the USA and Britain for help. The Western powers—the USA as well as Britain—pledged support to India and were already flying arms to India. In November 1962, China made a unilateral declaration of its withdrawal. But China continued its occupation of a large chunk of Ladakh—a much coveted strategic link between Sin Kiang and southern China.

India's diplomatic efforts to pressurise China to return the territories yielded no results. Even the Afro-Asian mediation by Indonesia, Cambodia, Burma, UAR, Ghana, and Ceylon to find a peaceful solution of Sino-Indian border dispute, at Colombo in December 1962, failed to get a favourable response from China. In 1964, China tested its first nuclear explosion, further alarming India.

Consequences of Sino-Indian War

(i) The war gave a big blow to the self-respect of India.
(ii) The policy of non-alignment came under question.
(iii) The Congress lost three parliamentary by-elections in a row and Nehru had to face the first no-confidence motion of his life.
(iv) The Third Five-Year Plan was badly affected as resources were diverted for defence.

(v) India's foreign policy took a change, as the US and the UK had responded positively in the crisis, they were to be considered in future. US intelligence agencies developed links in the name of countering the Chinese threat and even planted a nuclear-powered device in the Himalayas.

(vi) Pakistan, encouraged by the Indian debacle in the war, was to attack India in 1965, covertly helped by China.

India and Nepal

The geographical location of Nepal has made it inseparable from India from the point of view of India's external security. Being conscious of this factor, India signed a treaty with Nepal in July 1950 by which it recognised Nepal's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence. The two countries made a commitment to each other to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding arising on any problem.

India and Bhutan

In August 1949, the two countries signed a treaty for perpetual peace and friendship. India undertook to exercise non-interference in the internal administration of Bhutan, while Bhutan agreed to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations.

India and Sri Lanka

The Tamil-Sinhalese riots of 1958 and thereafter attracted the sympathy of some Indian leaders for the Tamilian population of Sri Lanka. This open sympathy, inside and outside Indian Parliament, was disliked by the Sri Lankan government. But the Indian government, considering the ethnic disputes in Sri Lanka to be an internal matter of that country, remained friendly towards Sri Lanka. Both nations forged mutually beneficient economic and trade relations. In fact, Sri Lanka supported NAM and did not join any military alliance.

CHAPTER 39

After Nehru. . .

Towards the last years of Nehru's prime ministership itself, there were serious debates on what would happen to India after him. And when he died in May 1964, many in India and abroad were almost sure that the Indian political system would be severely and adversely affected, and could even collapse, with a fight within the Congress party over who would take charge. However, there was no such turmoil; a smooth succession took place. Indeed, since the Nehruvian era, India has seen not only several prime ministers but also certain changes in its political history. Down the years there have been some upheavals to threaten the smooth functioning of a vibrant democracy, but these challenges have been met and overcome. Amidst the coups and military takeovers in the neighbouring countries, India has managed to survive as a democracy and witness smooth change of government from time to time though democratic elections.

Immediately after Nehru's death, Gulzarilal Nanda was appointed as the interim prime minister, pending the election of a new parliamentary leader of the Congress party who would then become prime minister.

The Lal Bahadur Shastri Years
(June 1964 – January 1966)

It is generally accepted that a group within the Congress, formed in 1963, which came to be known as the Syndicate and included the president of the party, K. Kamaraj, and some

others, guided the succession to the prime minister's post after Jawaharlal Nehru. The choice was between Morarji Desai and Lal Bahadur Shastri. The former was the senior and experienced Congressman who was known for his administrative skills and honesty but also considered to be conservative, somewhat rigid, and leaning towards the 'right'; the latter was seen to be mild, soft-spoken, and flexible even though a man of integrity and of incorruptible nature. Shastri was supported more widely across the party than was Desai. In the end, Shastri was chosen by the party as the next parliamentary leader, hence the prime minister, as Desai decided not to contest.

Early Life

Lal Bahadur Shastri was born on October 2, 1904, in Uttar Pradesh (known as United Provinces at the time). Firmly opposed to the caste system, he decided to leave out his surname of Srivastava. 'Shastri' was a title he got on completing his graduation at Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi, in 1928. When he married Lalita Devi in 1928, Lal Bahadur Shastri, very much opposed to the idea of dowry, is said to have accepted just five yards of khadi and a spinning wheel on the insistence of his father-in-law to accept something.

Swayed by Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri joined the freedom movement; in the Non-cooperation Movement of 1921, he was arrested for taking part in a demonstration but, as he was then a minor, he was let off. Later he was part of the major movements of the struggle against the British rule, such as the Salt Satayagraha and the individual satyagraha movement, and then in the 1942 Quit India Movement. Imprisoned several times, he made use of his time in prison reading the works of the social reformers and western philosophers.

Shastri was very much part of the Congress political organisation, becoming the secretary of the local unit of the party and later the president of the Allahabad Congress Committee. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly of the United Provinces in 1937.

Political Journey after Independence

After independence, Shastri became a minister in Uttar Pradesh state, in charge of the Police and Transport portfolio

in Govind Ballabh Pant's cabinet. Among his initiatives in that position were the appointment of women as bus conductors, and a direction to the police that water jets be used instead of lathis to disperse unruly mobs.

Shastri was made the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee, with Jawaharlal Nehru as the President, in 1951. The same year he was nominated to the Rajya Sabha. Nehru drew him into the union cabinet. Shastri was the railways minister, though he resigned in 1956, taking moral responsibility for a serious rail accident. But he was soon drawn back into the cabinet, and in 1961, he was appointed home minister; in this capacity he achieved a reputation of being a skilful mediator, and he also formed the Committee on Prevention of Corruption headed by K. Santhanam—on the basis of whose recommendations the Central Vigilance Commission was established. He had also been Minister for Transport and Communications; Minister for Commerce and Industry; and, during Nehru's illness, Minister without Portfolio.

Prime Minister: Continuing Nehru's Legacy but with Change

Lal Bahadur Shastri was sworn in as the second prime minister of India on June 9, 1964. He kept with himself the portfolios of external affairs and atomic energy, though he later transferred the external affairs ministry to Swaran Singh.

In his first broadcast to the nation as prime minister, Shastri said: "There comes a time in the life of every nation when it stands at the cross-roads of history and must choose which way to go. But for us there need be no difficulty or hesitation, no looking to right or left. Our way is straight and clear—the building up of a socialist democracy at home with freedom and prosperity for all, and the maintenance of world peace and friendship with all nations."

A true secularist at heart, Shastri said: "The unique thing about our country is that we have Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, and people of all other religions. We have temples and mosques, gurdwaras, and churches. But we do not bring all this into politics. This is the difference between India and Pakistan. Whereas Pakistan proclaims herself to be an Islamic State and uses religion as a political factor, we

Indians have the freedom to follow whatever religion we may choose, and worship in any way we please. So far as politics is concerned, each of us is as much an Indian as the other."

As prime minister, Shastri retained the main ministers of Nehru's cabinet, but also drew Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, into his cabinet as information and broadcasting minister. He respected Nehru and kept true to the general policies created by the first prime minister of India, but he was not a blind follower of Nehru. In several ways, he showed he had a mind of his own.

Shastri was the first prime minister to have a secretary to the prime minister when he drew upon L.K. Jha, a senior ICS officer, to advise him. He thus laid the foundation of what later took the form of the Prime Minister's Secretariat or the Prime Minister's Office.

Challenges

Shastri's short tenure saw some major developments. It also showed that Shastri was no weakling but had a vision of his own besides being capable of taking tough decisions quickly. He said: "Perhaps due to my being small in size and soft of tongue, people are apt to believe that I am not able to be very firm. Though not physically strong, I think I am internally not so weak." The three major crises that his government faced were the violent anti-Hindi demonstrations in the state of Madras (later to be named Tamil Nadu), the widespread food shortages, and the second war with Pakistan.

The country was disturbed in 1965 by major protests in the non-Hindi speaking states against the possibility of Hindi being imposed as the only national language of India. The agitation was especially intense and violent in Madras state. There were agitations by students and even riots in some places over the issue. Shastri brought peace to prevail by assuring the people that English would continue to be used as the official language as long the non-Hindi speaking states wanted, though the army had to be called in to quell riots in some places.

Economic Ideas

Though few people seem to have realised it, Lal Bahadur Shastri took some important steps to meet the challenges

that faced the country, steps that were very different from Nehruvian economics.

A Forerunner of Economic Reform

Not many seem to know that Shastri tried to decentralise governance by moving decision-making on projects from the Planning Commission to the ministries dealing with economic subjects. Indeed, there was an attempt to reduce the dominance of the Planning Commission by the setting up of a national planning council. In 1965, Shastri announced in Parliament that there would be a reconsideration of government controls over the economic activities; consequently, there was a relaxation in regulations for some sectors, such as steel and cement. Shastri's economic team comprised people like L.K. Jha, I.G. Patel, Dharma Vira, and S. Bhoothalingam who were tilted towards reforming the economy through modernising agriculture and allowing more private sector freedom. Even the decision to devalue the rupee was taken in principle by Shastri though the actual step was implemented by Indira Gandhi. Unfortunately, Shastri died before effective steps could be taken in all the fields. If he had lived longer, it is possible, as P.N. Dhar says, that Shastri might have pursued "an agenda of economic reform of the kind that was taken up only twenty-five years later" (under the prime ministership of Narasimha Rao).

The slogan that he gave India during the war with Pakistan aptly reflected his view: "*Jai Jawan Jai Kisan*" showed Shastri's firm belief that the security of the nation upheld by the soldier was closely linked with food security,

Views

He (Shastri) wore no ideological blinkers; he saw facts as they were in all their starkness. Chronic food shortages made him sift from basic industries to agriculture. Roaring black markets persuaded him to make relative shift from controls to incentives, and the glaring inefficiency of the public sector made him accept a larger role for the private sector and foreign investment. He also took measures to shift the locus of economic decision-making from the Planning Commission to the ministries and from the Centre to the states.

P.N. Dhar

food production that was the farmer's forte. The slogan implied that the farmers' work on the field was equivalent to the soldier's action on the battlefield in the service of the nation.

The Seeds of Green Revolution and White Revolution

India faced a food shortage and things were in a bad shape when Shastri drew in C. Subramaniam as his food and agriculture minister. Shastri gave full support to his minister in laying the foundations of the Green Revolution, although it was Indira Gandhi who is usually given the credit, as the gains of the new methods came to be seen only after about a decade. But in fact, it was the result of Shastri's initiatives to transform Indian agriculture.

The Green Revolution involved a threefold thrust—technological, economic, and organisational. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research was reorganised and, for the first time, a scientist, Dr B.P. Pal, was appointed as its head. M.S. Swaminathan of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute brought the government to an awareness of the new high-yielding wheat varieties developed by Norman Borlaug's team in Mexico and how India must launch field demonstrations. In the face of opposition from various quarters, including the Congress party, Shastri approved the import of 250 tonnes of wheat seeds in 1965. Later, in 1966, some many thousands of tonnes were to be imported. And the Green Revolution in wheat was set in motion, as Indian scientists improved upon these varieties. In November 1965, when C.S. Subramaniam and Orville Freeman, the US agriculture secretary, met in Rome, they signed an accord that put on paper what had already been launched with the support of Shastri. As per the accord, India was committed to end imports of food grains by 1971 by investing more in agriculture, irrigation, research, seeds, fertilisers, and put in place suitable economic and marketing policies. The Americans, for their part, agreed to send more wheat to India in 1965 and 1966.

Incentives to support the new technology were also put in place. The Agricultural Prices Commission (APC) and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) came into being in January 1965. The National Seeds Corporation and the Central Warehousing Corporation were also set up around this time.

Shastri was also instrumental in setting in motion the White Revolution – a national campaign to raise the production and supply of milk. On his visit to Anand in Gujarat in October 1964 to inaugurate the Cattle Feed Factory of Amul at Kanjari, he was impressed by the milk cooperative. He wished that Verghese Kurien, who was the General Manager of Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union Ltd (Amul) at the time, would help in creating such cooperatives in other parts of the country so as to improve the conditions of farmers. The National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) was established, as a consequence, at Anand in 1965.

Skip a Meal Idea

The chronic food shortage in the country was a worrying fact. Also, during the 1965 war with Pakistan, Lyndon B. Johnson, the then President of the US, tried to put pressure on India by warning that if India did not stop the war, the US would stop providing wheat to the country under the PL-480 agreement. (India needed to import wheat at that time to meet its requirement of food grains.) Shastri refused to be budged. "We may go hungry, but not bow before the US," he told the Indians.

Shastri motivated the people to voluntarily give up one meal a week so that food could be saved to be distributed to the people who required it. However, before asking the public to do so, he got his family members to first try the system. Surprisingly, the public response was huge, with even restaurants closing down on Monday evenings.

New Institutions and Projects

Several new institutions were inaugurated during Shastri's tenure. Some of these were the Central Institute of Technology Campus at Tharamani, Chennai, in November 1964; the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University at Hyderabad in March 1965 (renamed Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University in 1996, and separated into two universities after the formation of the Telangana State, with the university in Telangana being named in July 2014 as Professor Jayashankar Agricultural University); and the National Institute of Technology, Allahabad.

The Jawahar Dock of the Chennai Port Trust was

inaugurated by Shastri, and the construction work of Tuticorin Port was begun in November 1964.

The foundation stone for the Upper Krishna Project, of which the Alamatti Dam is a part, was laid by Shastri in 1964. (It was decided by the government to name the Almatti Dam after Lal Bahadur Shastri.)

It was Shastri who inaugurated the plutonium reprocessing plant at Trombay in 1965. This followed the suggestion by Dr. Homi Bhabha that India should develop nuclear explosives for peaceful purposes, an idea which Shastri endorsed. At the initiative of Homi Bhabha, the nuclear explosive design group Study of Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes (SNEPP) was set up.

Foreign Relations

Shastri made no basic changes in the policy of non-alignment. However, he was deeply conscious that, in the wake of India's war with China (1962) and the growth of military ties between Pakistan and the People's Republic of China, the Indian government should increase the defence budget of the country. So, he tried to modernise the armed forces of India. He also decided that India should build closer ties with the Soviet Union.

He made overtures to neighbouring states to solve outstanding problems. The Bandarnaike-Shastri accord of 1964 between India and Ceylon (as Sri Lanka was then called) was signed by Lal Bahadur Shastri and his Ceylonese counterpart, Sirimavo Bandaranaike. Concerned with the status of Indian Tamils in Ceylon, the pact settled for the repatriation of 6,00,000 Indian Tamils to India and Ceylonese citizenship to be granted to 3,75,000 Tamils in Ceylon—to be accomplished by 1981. Shastri, however, died soon after, and the accord was not fulfilled, and some years later India considered the agreement to have lapsed.

Burma had undergone a military coup in 1962, and following that, many Indian families settled there had been repatriated by the Burmese government in 1964. Relations between India and Burma were strained. However, Shastri made an official visit to Rangoon in December 1965, and cordial relations were again established between India and the Burmese government under General Ne Win.

Considering the situation in the subcontinent and the disturbed relations with Pakistan and China, Lal Bahadur Shastri did not hesitate to initiate a nuclear explosives programme. In 1965, he gave authorisation to the Atomic Energy Commission to work on achieving a nuclear test. He faced strong opposition on this issue from his own government and party as well as others, but he did not waver. Unfortunately, Lal Bahadur Shastri died in January 1966 as did the prominent personality on the nuclear science programme in India, Homi J. Bhabha, before the programme could proceed.

The Indo-Pak War

In 1965, India faced threats of war from Pakistan. General Mohammad Ayub Khan had come to power in Pakistan through a military coup in 1958, forcibly taking over from President Iskander Mirza and assuming the president's post himself. The US was giving Pakistan a great deal of military support. The war with China in 1962 had left the Indians, including the armed forces, feeling demoralised. So, Ayub Khan probably thought it was the right time to test the strength of the Indian forces at the frontier. In April 1965, Pakistan tested the situation in Sindh. It seemed as if the Pakistanis could win after the first clashes in the Rann of Kachchh. Both sides were, at Britain's intervention, made to agree to a ceasefire and withdrawal of forces to the positions held before the clashes. Confident that the Indian Army was weak, and trying to capitalise on the unrest created in the valley by the followers of Sheikh Abdullah and some other dissidents, the leadership in Pakistan decided to launch an attack in Kashmir. 'Operation Grandslam' was launched in August with the idea of using the only significant overland route to Kashmir before India could muster its forces and outmoded tanks. Pakistan's foreign minister at the time, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, encouraged Ayub Khan in this venture. Well-trained infiltrators were sent into the valley with the idea of creating an uprising there.

The Indian prime minister showed his strength of mind at this point of time. Pakistan claimed that there was a spontaneous uprising against the Indian occupation of Kashmir. India pointed out that Pakistan had instigated trouble inside

Indian territory by sending armed raiders into Jammu and Kashmir from so-called 'Azad Kashmir' (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir). Declaring that force would be met with force, Shastri gave orders that the Indian Army should cross the ceasefire line and close the passes used by the infiltrators. By early September, the second Indo-Pakistan war had begun. Shastri proved that he could be decisive in a way that Nehru had not been. He took little time to grant the Indian forces the permission to take the needed retaliatory steps. His defence minister, Y.B. Chavan, also proved to be outstanding.

In September, Indian forces launched a three-pronged attack, with their tanks aiming at Lahore and Sialkot across the border in Punjab. Soon, Lahore was within the range of Indian fire. It was also the first time that the Indian Air Force was to take part in war after independence.

The United Nations intervened and a ceasefire was brokered to which both sides agreed on September 23.

Peace Agreement at Tashkent

A South Asian peace conference was held in January 1966 at Tashkent (the capital of Uzbekistan, then one of the republics of the Soviet Union), which was sponsored by the Soviet President, Alexei Kosygin. It was with the mediation of Kosygin that President Ayub Khan of Pakistan and Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri of India met and signed the Tashkent Declaration on January 10, 1966 to "restore normal and peaceful relations between their countries and to promote understanding and friendly relations between their peoples".

The Tashkent Declaration was meant to form a framework for lasting peace between India and Pakistan. It is believed that the two sides were not able to reach an agreement on their own and that they were compelled by the Soviet leaders to sign a draft that they had prepared. However, it did not meet with complete approval in India. Critics felt that the agreement should have but did not include a no-war pact, nor was there any provision that Pakistan should give up guerrilla aggression in Kashmir. In Pakistan, the agreement was received even more angrily: there were riots and demonstrations against it. Zulfikar Bhutto distanced himself from Ayub Khan and the pact, and in the end broke away to subsequently form his own political party.

The Tashkent Declaration

The points of the Tashkent Declaration signed by President Ayub Khan of Pakistan and Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri of India that was directed towards bringing peace after the September war are as follows:

1. Both sides will exert all efforts to create good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan in accordance with the United Nations Charter. They reaffirm their obligation under the Charter not to have recourse to force and to settle their disputes through peaceful means. They considered that the interests of peace in their region and particularly in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-Continent and, indeed, the interests of the peoples of India and Pakistan were not served by the continuance of tension between the two countries. It was against this background that Jammu and Kashmir was discussed, and each of the sides set forth its respective position.
2. All armed personnel of the two countries shall be withdrawn not later than 25 February, 1966 to the positions they held prior to 5 August, 1965, and both sides shall observe the ceasefire terms on the ceasefire line.
3. Relations between India and Pakistan shall be based on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of each other.
4. Both sides will discourage any propaganda directed against the other country and will encourage propaganda which promotes the development of friendly relations between the two countries.
5. The High Commissioner of India to Pakistan and the High Commissioner of Pakistan to India will return to their posts and that the normal functioning of diplomatic missions of both countries will be restored. Both governments shall observe the Vienna Convention of 1961 on Diplomatic Intercourse.
6. Measures will be considered towards the restoration of economic and trade relations, communications, as well as cultural exchanges between India and Pakistan, and to take measures to implement the existing agreements between India and Pakistan.
7. The two leaders would give instructions to their respective authorities to carry out the repatriation of the prisoners of war.
8. Both sides will continue the discussion of questions relating to the problems of refugees and evictions/illegal immigrations. Both sides will create conditions which will prevent the exodus of people. The return of the property and assets taken over

by either side in connection with the conflict would be discussed.

9. Both sides will continue meetings both at the highest and at other levels on matters of direct concern to both countries. Both sides have recognised the need to set up joint Indian-Pakistani bodies which will report to their governments in order to decide what further steps should be taken.

Source: *Ministry of External Affairs website*

Shastri's Death

Early in the morning of January 11, 1966, the morning following the signing of the Tashkent Declaration, Lal Bahadur Shastri died of a heart attack. There was a controversy over the death, with rumours floating that Shastri had been poisoned. The hand of the Central Intelligence Agency (of the USA) has been suspected in the matter (as also in engineering the death of Homi Bhabha in an air crash) as the West was wary of the nuclear aspirations of India and a disturbance in the balance of power in South Asia. The controversy has still not ended, especially as RTIs asking for relevant information have been turned down by the government.

Indira Gandhi: the First Phase
(January 1966 – March 1977)

After the sudden and unexpected death of Lal Bahadur Shastri in January 1966, once again, Gulzarilal Nanda was appointed the interim prime minister pending elections. Morarji Desai was a contender for the post of the Congress party parliamentary leader and, as a corollary, the prime minister. The Syndicate supported Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter, and most party members also were in favour of her. She won the election; it is said most of the senior Congressmen supported her as they thought she was weak enough to be manipulated as they wanted. Time was to prove them wrong.

Early Life

Indira Priyadarshini was born on November 19, 1917 in Allahabad to Jawaharlal Nehru and Kamala Nehru. India was in the midst of a struggle for freedom from the British, and the Nehru family was fully involved in the struggle. So,

almost from childhood, Indira was closely in touch with the events of those days of turmoil.

It is reported that when bonfires of foreign goods were made during the freedom movement, Indira, then a child, gave up a doll made in England to be thrown into the fire. At the age of 12, she brought together and led a group of children—calling it the Vanar Sena—to do their bit for the freedom struggle. These youngsters addressed envelopes, made flags, helped put up notices and carried messages to the freedom fighters.

Indira attended several schools and colleges, sometimes just for brief periods: these included the Ecole de Bex in Switzerland, Rabindranath Tagore's Visva-Bharati, the university at Santiniketan, Bengal, and Somerville College, Oxford, UK, among others.

In 1936, Indira joined the Indian National Congress, and in 1938, she became a member of the India League. It was during her stay in England that she met Feroze Jehangir Ghandy (later changed to Gandhi), who was also a member of the India League and studying in London. Feroze was a Parsi. Indira returned to India in 1941 with Feroze Gandhi, and she married him in 1942. Feroze too was a member of the Indian National Congress and took part in the freedom struggle. Indira was an active participant in the Quit India Movement and was imprisoned in Naini Central Jail for some time. Feroze and Indira had two sons—Rajiv and Sanjay—both of whom were later to be part of India's political scene in their different ways.

Political Journey after Independence

After independence, when the Congress party came to power and Jawaharlal Nehru became the country's prime minister, Indira often acted as her father's hostess for events and accompanied him on his travels. In the 1951–52 General Elections, Indira Gandhi handled the campaigns of Feroze, who was contesting from Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh. Feroze was elected to the Lok Sabha. But they had differences in personal life and soon separated. Feroze soon became a major spokesman against the corruption in the government. He was instrumental in exposing a scam involving major

insurance companies and the finance minister in Nehru's cabinet, T.T. Krishnamachari. He died in September 1960.

Indira joined the Congress party's working committee in 1955, and in 1959, she was elected the party's president. Following the death of her father in 1964, she became a member of the Rajya Sabha and was inducted into the cabinet by Lal Bahadur Shastri as the information and broadcasting minister.

Prime Minister

On January 19, 1966, Indira Gandhi became the third prime minister of India—the first woman to occupy the post in the country.

The General Elections of 1967 came amidst economic problems—stagnation and food crisis, rising prices, unemployment—which caused much disenchantment among the people. The decision on devaluation of the rupee was criticised by many. Also, political disputes obstructed the import of wheat from the US. In the 1967 General Elections, Indira Gandhi won the Lok Sabha seat from Rae Bareilly. The Congress party managed to win the elections but managed only a thin majority in the Lok Sabha. Indira Gandhi was now prime minister but also had Morarji Desai as deputy prime minister and finance minister.

The Congress either lost power or failed to get a majority in several states in the assembly elections. The coalition governments that took power in many states, however, led to unstable governments and the practice of defections from party to party.

Congress Split and Minority Government at the Centre

In the following years, there was much turmoil within the Congress party. So far, the Congress party had been accommodative of diverse interests. There was now a growing divide in ideology between the right and the left. The Congress right was in favour of tackling the protest movements and putting down the left, giving more space to the private sector in the economy and improving relations with the US. Indira Gandhi did not agree with many of the ideas of the senior leaders of the party. She was in favour of radical

economic reform which did not meet the approval of the conservative senior members of the party. A 10-point programme adopted by the Congress Working Committee under Indira Gandhi's aegis referred to the need for social control of banks, the government taking up foreign trade, nationalisation of general insurance, ceilings on property, public distribution of food grains, accelerated implementation of land reforms, provision of subsidised plots for housing the rural poor, etc. Indira Gandhi was in favour of abolishing the privy purses to former rulers of the princely states. Her decision to nationalise a set of banks without consulting her finance minister was not approved by the senior party members. In the end, Morarji Desai was forced to resign from the cabinet.

With the death of President Zakir Hussain in May 1969, things came to a head; there were strong differences over the choice of candidates for the election to the post of President of India. The official Congress candidate was Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, a member of the Syndicate, but Indira Gandhi, now increasingly leaning towards socialistic ideology, and fearing that the Syndicate would use Sanjiva Reddy to get her out of power, was in favour of V.V. Giri (erstwhile vice-president now standing as an independent candidate). V.V. Giri won the election and became the President of India in August 1969.

Consequently, in November, the Congress party president, S. Nijalingappa, expelled Indira Gandhi from the party on ground of indiscipline. India Gandhi managed to win over a majority of the party members to her side and created her own faction, the Congress (R) where R stood for 'Requisitionists', in 1969, while the other group was the Congress (O) with O for 'Organisation' headed by Ram Subhag Singh. Indira Gandhi no longer had a majority in the Lok Sabha, but with the issue-based support of regional parties such as the DMK, the Akali Dal, and the two communist parties, she retained power at the Centre.

The 1971 Elections: Indira Triumphant

Indira Gandhi found she could not take independent action as head of a minority government. Her efforts at progressive

legislations were obstructed by the Supreme Court as well as the Parliament. She got the nationalisation of banks through a presidential ordinance after clearing the legal lacunae pointed out by the court. The abolition of privy purses not only failed to get passed in Parliament (the constitutional amendment fell through just by one vote in the Rajya Sabha), but the presidential order derecognising the princes that Indira Gandhi brought in was nullified by the Supreme Court. In December 1970, Indira Gandhi recommended dissolution of the Lok Sabha and called for early elections. The nation thus went to the polls in 1971. The catchy slogan of the Congress (R) was 'Garibi Hatao' (Remove Poverty). Indira Gandhi campaigned for social change and removal of disparities in income and for stability of government.

The non-Communist opposition parties (Swatantra, Congress-O, SSP) came together in what was called the Grand Alliance with the election cry of 'Indira Hatao' (Remove Indira).

Congress (R) won the election with a good majority, probably because the voters showed maturity in preferring to vote on national issues rather than fall prey to political patronage. Indira Gandhi was now well on her way to dominating the political scene for a long time to come.

India's victory over Pakistan in December 1971 and the subsequent creation of independent Bangladesh out of the erstwhile East Pakistan in the liberation war gave a big boost to the image of Indira Gandhi. In the state assembly elections in March 1972, the Congress (R) came to power in many states. The elections of 1971 and 1972 had virtually reduced the importance of the Congress (O) and the Swatantra Party as significant opponents.

Problems

The huge enthusiasm for Indira Gandhi, however, started fading by 1973, in spite of some important achievements of the government. Economic problems grew. The main issue was high inflation that followed from the wartime expenses, drought in some parts of the country and the oil crisis of 1973. Food grains production declined due to poor monsoons, and low agricultural growth had its adverse impact on industry

as well. As world crude prices soared, India was affected by high costs of import and the resulting high prices of petroleum products. Unemployment grew. There were strikes, the most notable one being the all-India railway strike in May 1974. Most the influential social classes got gradually alienated from Indira Gandhi—the rich peasants resented land reforms, the industrialists resented the wide-scale nationalisation and socialistic policies, and the middle classes were deeply affected by the price rise and were critical of the spreading corruption among officials and politicians. The fact that Sanjay Gandhi, Indira Gandhi's second son, was entrusted with the venture of producing a small fuel-efficient Indian car and was handed the contract and the exclusive production licence, though he had little experience in the field, was seen by most people as nepotism.

The JP Movement

There were protest movements in many places, especially in Gujarat and Bihar, against the rising prices of essential commodities.

The Nav-Nirman Movement in Gujarat between December 1973 and March 1974 was serious enough for the central government to decide to dissolve the assembly in the state. The chief minister, Chimanbhai Patel, had to resign, and the Centre promulgated president's rule over Gujarat.

The movement in Bihar began as a series of student protests, but it was soon taken up by Jayaprakash Narayan (popularly known as JP) on a larger issue of corruption in high places. JP called for 'Total Revolution' against the very system that he said had forced people to become corrupt. He demanded that the Congress government in Bihar resign and the assembly be dissolved. People were asked to gherao the legislature and offices and refuse to pay taxes – in other words, obstruct government functioning. Jayaprakash Narayan went beyond Bihar to try and draw the rest of the country into the protest with the aim of bringing down Indira Gandhi's government which was portrayed as corrupt and undemocratic. People in many parts of North India were enthused by JP's call; besides, the non-left opposition parties rallied behind him. The movement, however, lost momentum by the end of

1974. Indira Gandhi challenged Jayaprakash Narayan to test the strength of his group against the Congress in the 1976 elections and JP accepted the challenge. However, before the 'contest' could be settled democratically, things changed drastically.

The Allahabad High Court Decision and the Imposition of Emergency

On June 12, 1975, Justice Sinha of the Allahabad High Court delivered a verdict in an election petition filed by Raj Narain, Indira Gandhi's opponent in the Rae Bareilly contest in 1971. Raj Narain had accused Indira Gandhi of corrupt practices during her election campaign. The court verdict declared Indira Gandhi's election to the Lok Sabha in 1971 invalid on grounds of electoral malpractice, excessive election expenditure, and using government machinery and officials for party purposes; this meant that she could no longer be the prime minister and could not try for election to Parliament for six years.

An appeal against the judgement was made in the Supreme Court, but before that could be settled, other events took place. For one, in the Gujarat assembly elections the Congress party suffered reverses and could not form a government. The JP movement was revived with greater zeal and the demand grew for Indira Gandhi's resignation. There was a call for nationwide agitation, and an announcement was made that a civil disobedience would begin on June 29.

Indira Gandhi responded by recommending to President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed that a state of internal emergency should be declared all over the country because of the lawlessness. The president, accordingly, declared a State of Emergency due to internal disorder, in accordance with the provisions of Article 352(1) of the Constitution, on June 25–26, 1975. (The prime minister's decision had not yet been endorsed by the cabinet, and the cabinet could agree to it only after the event.)

State of Emergency (1975–77)

"The President has proclaimed the Emergency. This is nothing to panic about. I am sure you are all aware of the deep and widespread conspiracy which has been brewing ever

Indira Gandhi and JP—Both to be Blamed?

The agitation led by JP was getting increasingly chaotic and certainly posed issues of law and order for the government. JP even exhorted the army and the police not to obey 'illegal' orders. When the Allahabad Court judgement came, the cry for Indira Gandhi's resignation/removal became strident.

Indira Gandhi's appeal to the Supreme Court led to an interim decision by the vacation judge, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, who, on June 24, allowed a conditional stay of the Allahabad verdict —that Indira Gandhi could remain in her post, speak in Parliament but could not vote in it. This stay order reinforced the demand of JP and the Janata Morcha for the removal of Indira Gandhi as the prime minister.

JP seems to have forgotten the Gandhian principles on which he had been nurtured. He could have had the patience to wait for the general elections which were due in March 1976: if people were dissatisfied, they would have thrown out Indira Gandhi and the Congress. But JP and his allies were not even willing to abide by the Supreme Court judgement and wait for the final decision.

In her broadcast to the nation on the evening of June 26, 1975, Indira Gandhi said: "In the name of democracy it has been sought to negate the very functioning of democracy, duly elected governments have not been allowed to function… agitations have surcharged the atmosphere, leading to violent incidents… certain persons have gone to the length of inciting our armed forces to mutiny and our police to rebel… How can any government worth the name stand by and allow the country's stability to be imperilled?"

Indira Gandhi, for her part, seems to have forgotten or deliberately discarded her father's democratic ideals. But then, perhaps, she was always a little autocratic; she was after all instrumental in getting an elected Communist government in Kerala dismissed. After the Allahabad Court judgement, she could have gracefully resigned, dissolved the Lok Sabha, and called for early general elections or waited a few months on the sidelines for the elections on their due date. But she was not interested in giving up power: she claimed later that resignation would have strengthened the forces that were, according to her thinking, threatening democracy.

As Joe Elder, a British sociologist pointed out, "JP erred

in launching a mass movement without a cadre of disciplined, non-violent volunteers… his movement's credibility was weakened by the presence within it of extremists of the Left and Right. On the other hand, the Prime Minister clearly over-reacted in imposing the Emergency."

P.N. Dhar said: "When the fateful moment arrived, JP did not let the law take its own course. Whether it was his mistrust of Indira Gandhi's motives, or his own lack of faith in the democratic method, or his ambition to go down in history as a political messiah of the Indian people is beside the point. Similarly, Indira Gandhi showed more faith in the repression of political opponents and dissidents in her party than in her own ability to engage them constructively or fight them politically. Whether she opted for the Emergency to save herself from loss of power or as shock treatment to bring the country back to sanity is also beside the point. The fact remains that both JP and Indira Gandhi, between whom the politics of India was then polarized, failed democracy and betrayed their lack of faith in the rule of law."

since I began to introduce certain progressive measures of benefit for the common man and woman in India." Those were Indira Gandhi's words to the nation in her broadcast over All India Radio.

President's rule was soon imposed on Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, the two states where parties other than the Congress ruled; the entire country thus came under direct central rule or were under Congress governments. Emergency powers were used to replace with compliant men those Congress chief ministers who were strong and could offer opposition to Indira Gandhi. All pending legislative assembly elections were indefinitely postponed.

Most opposition leaders—Jayaprakash Narayan, Atal Behari Vajpayee, L.K. Advani, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, Asoka Mehta—and some Congress dissidents such as Chandra Shekhar, as also many journalists (Ajit Bhattacharjea and Kuldip Nayar to name two), trade union leaders, student leaders, and academicians were arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA). Several organisations of extreme ideologies—the Anand Marg, the RSS, the Jamaat-i-Islami, the CPI(ML)—were banned.

As a result of the Emergency, the fundamental rights

were suspended and civil liberties were curtailed with the amendments to MISA and the Defence of India Act in July 1975. Parliament was practically ineffective as there was no effective opposition to debate issues. Several decrees, laws, and even constitutional amendments were passed to reduce the power of the judiciary and to declare that Parliament's right to amend the Constitution was unlimited. In this context, the 42nd Amendment is memorable.

Censorship was imposed on the press and some newspapers used to come out with blank spaces on the editorial pages to signify that their views had been blacked out for being critical of the situation. *The Indian Express* and *The Statesman* will be remembered for trying their best to put across criticism of the Emergency and the government.

The Emergency will be remembered for the ruthlessness of the State: people were detained without charges, the law enforcement authorities abused and even tortured those arrested, and so-called programmes for development were thrust on an unprepared people. The rise of Indira Gandhi's younger son, Sanjay Gandhi, to wield a power he did not hold officially seemed ominous. He spearheaded the programmes of destruction of crowded housing settlements and forced sterilisation for controlling the population, causing misery to thousands of people. He was, in the opinion of many, instrumental in helping to set up what was in effect a police state.

Support for the Emergency The imposition of Emergency was not condemned outright by everyone. In fact, considering that such a mass movement had been curbed and JP arrested, no spontaneous demonstration took place. The JP movement clearly did not have the support of people across the socio-economic spectrum.

The middle classes on the whole initially welcomed the Emergency: they were tired of the protest atmosphere and were all in favour of some discipline and the control on prices, for instance. Law and order certainly improved as did administration, and there was a sense of calm that was welcome. MISA was used to arrest smugglers, hoarders, and those indulging in black market. The suppression of strikes also met with general approval.

The announcement of the Twenty Point Programme enthused the poorer and rural sections of population as well. The economy improved initially, though it was mainly because of the good monsoons. And, on the whole, people believed that the Emergency was a temporary step to bring the country back on the path of progress.

Even if the Congress party president Dev Kant Baruah's sycophantic praise of Indira Gandhi in 1976 that "India is Indira, and Indira is India" was not shared by all, many eminent personalities supported her step, at least initially.

The Communist Party of India was all in support of the Emergency "to thwart right reactionary forces that is using all the rights and liberties of parliamentary democracy set up in order to destroy the freedom of the country". The party regretted its position later. The Communist Party (Marxist), though, opposed it, and some of its members were jailed.

Acharya Vinobha Bhave appreciated that it was time for discipline to be imposed. Mother Teresa too supported Indira Gandhi's step for bringing calm and peace in the country.

Eminent journalist Khushwant Singh, surprisingly, supported the Emergency in the beginning as he believed that the JP movement would have led to anarchy in the country. Later on, he was to change his view of the Emergency, especially in light of the atrocities that were perpetrated.

Growth of Popular Discontent By mid-1976, the popular mood had changed: there was discontent everywhere as the economic improvement could not be sustained; the criminals were back at their work, and the welfare programmes failed to move at a fast enough pace to please the poor. Also, it was the same corrupt and callous bureaucracy and sycophantic and exploitative politicians who were handling these programmes and the impact was therefore poor. The strict and rigid discipline imposed did not meet with the approval of government officials and teachers who also resented being compelled to fulfil targets of getting people sterilised. The police and bureaucracy had too much power which they abused. Above all, the atmosphere of fear and insecurity that had been created made people angry and resentful, but these feelings had no vent as protest was

forbidden even as there was no alternate way for getting grievances against corrupt and abusive officials redressed.

Sanjay Gandhi's rise to power without responsibility created great unease and anger, not only among intellectuals who feared the erosion of democratic values, but more so among the common people who had to bear the brunt of the demolition and sterilisation drives. Surprisingly, the points he put forward were not in themselves bad, for he advocated abolition of dowry, planting of trees and beautification of cities, encouraging literacy, and limiting family size. But the ruthless and insensitive way in which these ideas were implemented caused great misery and shocked people. Abuse of authority, apparently under the direction of Sanjay Gandhi, was rampant. With no effective press to report with at least some accuracy on the situation and with people disbelieving the official publicity news, rumours of atrocities and violent protest put down forcefully spread and were believed.

The scale of the Emergency atrocities were more in the northern parts of the country than in the southern parts. This was to be reflected in the election results of 1977.

In retrospect, the Emergency was one of the darkest periods of post-independent history of India; the two-year-long period was also perhaps a very significant episode in the political evolution of the Indian National Congress.

A lasting effect of the Emergency was to be felt in the way the Congress party worked since then. At the 1976 AICC session in Guwahati, the stage was set for sycophancy as an important political need. In fact, sycophancy was institutionalised and prepared the way for dynastic politics. The Guwahati session marked the debut of Sanjay Gandhi in politics, and the Youth Congress cemented the rise to power by considering Sanjay to be the heir to the throne, so to say. On Sanjay's death, Rajiv Gandhi was to step into the space created, even if reluctantly.

Elections of 1977

The Emergency was extended twice, and then most unexpectedly Indira Gandhi called for elections. It is possible that with just sycophants reporting to her about the situation and the absence of a free press to give a correct picture,

View

". . . democracy not only throws up the mediocre person but gives strength to the most vocal howsoever they may lack knowledge and understanding."

—Indira Gandhi

she thought people would endorse the policies brought in under the Emergency rule and thus give them a popular legitimacy. It has also been put forward by some that her inherent democratic instincts were against continuing with the draconian emergency rule. Yet others observe that when she got an idea of the excesses being perpetrated she wanted to get out of a situation that was getting out of her control.

The announcement of the elections came in January 1977. Political prisoners were released and press censorship lifted, even as political parties were allowed to campaign freely.

Opposition Gets Together In the elections, the Congress of Indira Gandhi was opposed by an alliance of opposition parties. The Jan Sangh, Congress (O), Bharatiya Lok Dal led by Charan Singh, and the Socialist Party got together to form the Janata Party. In February, Jagjivan Ram, Nandini Satpathy, and Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna left the Congress of Indira Gandhi to form their own party, Congress for Democracy (CFD). The CFD, Akali Dal, DMK, and the CPM allied with the Janata Party to fight the elections in opposition to the Congress and its allies, the CPI and AIADMK. After the elections, the CFD merged with the Janata Party.

A Historic Election The Janata alliance made the excesses of the Emergency and the issue of civil liberties the major planks of its election campaign. The people voted in March 1977; the elections seemed to be practically a referendum on the Emergency. The Janata alliance got a huge mandate with 330 out of the 542 seats in the Lok Sabha. The Congress was trounced, especially in the north, and its allies did not perform well either. Both Indira Gandhi and Sanjay Gandhi lost their seats. Incidentally, the Congress did well in the south where it got most of the 150 odd seats

it won. (The election results reflected the fact that the south escaped much of the Emergency excesses; furthermore, the pro-poor programmes were better implemented there than in the north.)

Before the elections, many political observers of India had despaired that democracy had no place in a country in which a majority of the populace was illiterate and presumably unaware of democratic values. They predicted that with the Emergency, India would cease to be a democracy in the true sense. But the elections proved that the Indian people were astute and used their political power to good effect. The poor too understood the value of civil rights. The elections which brought a non-Congress government at the Centre for the first time since independence showed that democracy was well imbedded in the country.

The Emergency came to an end on March 21, 1977.

Developments in the Political System

The elections over time showed how the voters had changed. The 1967 and the 1971 showed a marked increase in electoral malpractices with booth capturing and rigging becoming rampant. The Election Commission observed that casteism that was becoming prominent, especially in Bihar, "vitiates in no mean degree the political atmosphere". This feature has become practically entrenched in the country's voting behaviour.

Changes in the Congress

The 1971 elections—the fifth general elections since India became independent—came earlier than the due date, thus dissociating the national elections from the elections for the state assemblies (the two had so far taken place simultaneously). After the triumph in these elections, the Congress led by Indira Gandhi dropped the (R) and adopted the (I) to become Congress (I) and soon after dropped the (I) as well: the margin of victory for her faction seemed to confirm that it was the 'real' Congress. From now on, the inner party democracy within the Congress was to get more and more eroded.

A lasting effect of the Emergency was to be felt in the way the Congress party worked since then. At the 1976

AICC session in Guwahati, the stage was set for sycophancy as an important political need. In fact, sycophancy was institutionalised and it prepared the way for dynastic politics. The Guwahati session marked the debut of Sanjay Gandhi in politics, and the Youth Congress reinforced the rise to power by considering Sanjay to be the heir to the throne, so to say. On Sanjay's death, Rajiv Gandhi was to step into the space created, even if reluctantly.

Growth of Regional Interests

Regional interests grew and took hold in many parts of the country. At the level of the states, after the 1967 elections the Congress had lost out in many; governments formed by the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD)—composed of the Jana Sangh, socialists, the Swatantra Party, and defectors from the Congress—came and went in the northern states. The rise of the SVD is considered as the manifestation of the growing political consciousness of the lower castes who had benefited from the land reforms but had not got the political clout. Most of these castes belonged to the intermediary position below the brahmins and above the lowest, and formed the dominant group in their respective areas. Incidentally, the politics increasingly became affected by the politics of defection.

In southern India, especially in the Madras State (later Tamil Nadu), a North-South divide was perceived: it was felt that the North was trying to dominate and exploit the South. Brahminism was, in fact, seen as a manifestation of this exploitation as it was seen to have come from the North. Language became a prominent bone of contention. The South, especially Madras, viewed the possible imposition of Hindi as official language with resentment. While the knowledge of English was more or less evenly spread over the regions of the country, imposition of Hindi would be very much to the advantage of the people in the Hindi belt in the fields of education and employment.

The three-language formula calling for learning Hindi, English, and the regional language—each one with a different script—was unsatisfactory as Tamilians would still have to become proficient in all three while their 'northern'

counterpart would have no extra difficulty with their mother tongue. Kerala, Mysore State (later Karnataka), and Andhra adopted the three-language formula. The southern demand that northern states also include a southern language in a three-language policy for themselves was generally ignored. The northern states either refused to adopt a three-language formula, or if it was adopted, there was an option for taking Sanskrit instead of the southern language, so the formula itself had no meaning. It was in this background that the Dravida parties gained prominence.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), formed of the middle castes of the region and firmly anti-brahmin in its outlook, gained power in Madras; it came to power in the state in the 1967 elections with a huge majority and formed the first non-Congress government there under C.N. Annadurai. Since then, the state has in most elections brought to power either the DMK or the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), the group that separated from the DMK under M.G. Ramachandran.

In Kerala, the Congress failed; CPI and the CPM came together to form the government with E.M.S. Namboodiripad once again becoming the chief minister.

In West Bengal after the 1969 election, the Congress lost power, and a coalition government was formed by the CPM and the Bangla Congress. Ajoy Mukherjee of the Bangla Congress was the chief minister and Jyoti Basu of the CPM, the home minister. There was trouble in the alliance, and the state government also had problems with the Centre. There was also the conflict with the Naxalites, chiefly the Communist Party Marxists-Leninists, in short, the CP(ML) formed in 1969 and led by Charu Mazumdar, consisting of those rebels who left the CPM saying it had betrayed the 'revolution'. It was in the Naxalbari area that bordered Nepal and Pakistan (at the time East Pakistan) that the rural poor had been mobilised around 1967 by Kanu Sanyal of the CPM to demonstrate against landlords who had evicted tenants. The protests soon turned violent, leading to the beheading of some landlords. From the name of the place, the term 'Naxalites' grew to represent those who would resort to violence against the State to protect the interests of the

oppressed. Now the CP(ML) also attacked rival communists as agents of the government and the police in urban areas; the police took repressive action. They looked to China and Maoism for inspiration. In the end, they were successfully suppressed by the government, though they continued to influence certain areas of the country.

In Andhra Pradesh, there was a fresh agitation demanding the creation of Telengana, with Hyderabad as its capital. The Naxalites also established themselves in the rural areas here.

In Maharashtra, a new party Shiv Sena was founded in 1966 by Balasaheb Thackeray (more popularly called Bal Thackeray), a cartoonist, in Mumbai. This party was vociferous in its demand of 'Bombay for Maharashtrians', and targeted the South Indians residing there, who, according to it, were taking away jobs from the natives. There were even attacks on the homes of South Indians and commercial establishments run by South Indians. The Maharashtra for Maharashtrians approach seemed to find favour with many of the inhabitants, and the Shiv Sena came second to the Congress in the municipal elections of Bombay.

The calls for greater autonomy were reflected in the border areas as well. Kashmir had gone through an election in 1967, which was, to all purposes unfair, with Congress candidates being elected without opposition as other candidates' nomination papers were rejected. Sheikh Abdullah, under house arrest for some time, was released. His attitude to the position of Kashmir vis-à-vis India remained ambivalent, but according to some reports, he was more ready than before with the idea of Kashmir's accession to India. After the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971, the new order in South Asia seemed to indicate that India's control over Kashmir was quite firm. Sheikh Abdullah was in a mood for a more conciliatory approach to the Centre, and Indira Gandhi was ready to open a dialogue with him. He agreed not to raise the issue of self-determination for Kashmir but to limit his demand to just greater autonomy within the Indian Union. He became the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and the leader of the National Conference. There was relative peace and, in 1975, Indira Gandhi declared the state of Jammu and Kashmir to be a constituent of India.

In 1966, Indira Gandhi accepted the Akalis' demand that Punjab be reorganised on linguistic lines. In consequence, the southern part of Punjab which was predominantly Hindi-speaking became a separate state, Haryana. At the same time, the hilly areas in north-eastern Punjab were merged with Himachal Pradesh. However, the contentious issue on the status of Chandigarh, which the Akalis wanted to be the capital of Punjab alone, was declared a union territory to be shared by both the states as a capital. Though demonstrations over the status of Chandigarh went on in 1968 and 1969, and a veteran freedom fighter, Darshan Singh Pheruman, fasted unto death, the initially temporary arrangement continued indefinitely.

The north-eastern region of India has a strategic importance. The Mizos rose up against the Government of India in 1966, with the Mizo National Front (MNF) under the leadership of Laldenga demanding sovereign independence of Greater Mizoram. Indira Gandhi had to use the army to quell the rebellion; the air force carried out strikes in Aizawl, the only time the IAF was used in this way in civilian Indian territory. With the 1971 war victory, the Mizo separatist movement slowed down. Negotiating with the Mizo leaders, the union government offered to turn Mizo Hills into a union territory in July 1971. The Mizo leaders accepted the offer on condition that the status of union territory would soon be upgraded to statehood. In January 1972, the Union Territory of Mizoram came into being. (Later, under Rajiv Gandhi as prime minister, Mizoram was to become a full-fledged state in 1987.)

There was insurgency in Nagaland too. Nagaland had been a part of Assam at the time of India's independence, but in 1963, it had become a separate state of India. But there were extremists in the state who demanded a separate identity outside the State of India. The radicals in charge of the movement were ready to get help and training from China. Violent clashes took place between the Naga rebels and the Indian Army. Indira Gandhi handled the situation with firmness, especially during the Emergency. In March 1975, president's rule was imposed on the state. The leaders of the largest rebel groups agreed under the Shillong Accord in November 1975

to lay down arms and accept the Indian Constitution. However, a small group did not agree and spurts of violence and conflict continued.

Statehood had also, in the meanwhile, been granted to Meghalaya, Manipur, and Tripura in 1972, while the North-East Frontier Agency was made into a union territory and renamed Arunachal Pradesh.

Annexation of Sikkim

Sikkim had become a protectorate of India in 1950. By 1974, several elections had been held in Sikkim; in the last elections, two rival parties merged to form the Sikkim Congress and won a massive victory in the polls. This party campaigned for greater political rights. The chogyal, the ruler of Sikkim, tried to suppress the movement but was not successful. He turned to India, and India prepared a constitution for Sikkim. The constitution was approved by the national assembly of Sikkim in 1974. In 1975, a special referendum was held in which an overwhelming majority of the electorate voted in favour of Sikkim's merger with India. As a consequence, Sikkim was incorporated into the Indian Union as its 22nd state in May 1975 after the Thirty-sixth Amendment of the Indian Constitution. Sikkim is of great strategic importance for India because of its location bordering on China.

Language Policy to Curb the Anti-Hindi Disturbances

Indira Gandhi assuaged the sentiments of the non-Hindi speaking states by getting the Official Languages Act amended in 1967 to provide that the use of English could continue until a resolution to end the use of the language was passed by the legislature of every state that had not adopted Hindi as its official language, and by each house of the Indian Parliament. This was a guarantee of de facto use of both Hindi and English as official languages, thus establishing the official government policy of bilingualism in India. The step led to the end of the anti-Hindi protests and riots in some states.

Centralisation of Power and the Socialistic Path

After she came back to power in 1967, Indira Gandhi improved upon what Lal Bahadur Shastri had begun—having

a number of advisers to the prime minister in the prime minister's secretariat (which came to be known as the prime minister's office when Morarji Desai became prime minister in 1977). The real expansion of the prime minister's secretariat and its emergence as a power centre in its own right occurred under Indira Gandhi with P.N. Haksar becoming the first principal secretary to a prime minister. There was an increase in the number of joint secretaries in the secretariat as well. Indira Gandhi needed to show her independence of the Syndicate within her party; she did not trust the politicians and was not sure when they may conspire to get her removed. She chose to depend on the advice of a team of advisers: besides Haksar, there were T.N. Kaul, a career diplomat, D.P. Dhar, politician-turned diplomat, P.N. Dhar, economist-turned bureaucrat, and R.N. Kao, security analyst. Incidentally, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) was established in 1968 on the CIA model, with Kao as its head.

Haksar, with a firm orientation towards the Left, was the principal influence in the socialist path taken by Indira Gandhi. Her other advisers were also enthusiastic about this as they believed in socialistic ideals. They felt that the State needed to have a greater role in the economy for social equity to be ensured and national integration to be nurtured and advanced. They were in favour of the public sector too for promoting social integration. It is not certain that Indira Gandhi held these ideals, but she was pragmatic in her awareness that it was what she needed to follow. Her advisers helped develop her image as a socialist in economics, a secularist in religious matters, and as one who was pro-poor and wanted development for all, says Ramachandra Guha.

Clipping the Wings of the Judiciary

The judiciary came in the way of implementing many of the steps to facilitate quick social reforms. The contention over property as a fundamental right was severe. The court had obstructed the implementation of the abolition of privy purses as well as the nationalisation of banks (which was almost immediately implemented through a presidential ordinance).

In 1971, the Twenty-fourth Constitutional Amendment

Act was put in place that authorised Parliament to amend any provision of the Constitution; this was to overcome the restrictions placed by the Supreme Court on Parliament regarding amendment of fundamental rights (Golaknath case). In 1972 came the Twenty-fifth Constitutional Amendment Act providing that giving effect to certain directive principles could not be challenged in court on the grounds of their being inconsistent with certain fundamental rights.

In 1973, the practice of appointing the senior-most Supreme Court judge as the Chief Justice of India was set aside, and Justice A.N. Ray was made Chief Justice of India though there were three other judges senior to him. The appointment was politically motivated as A.N. Ray was seen to be on the government's side. When the law passed by Parliament giving it greater powers to amend the Constitution had been challenged in the apex court, Justice Ray had voted in favour of the government's view: this was seen as having influenced his promotion.

Then in 1975 came the Thirty-eighth Amendment Act specifying that the satisfaction of the president or the governor to declare emergency or issue ordinances could not be challenged in court.

The Thirty-ninth Amendment Act of 1975 provided that disputes regarding the election of the president, vice-president, speaker, and prime minister could not be heard by the high courts or Supreme Court, but only by a special court to be set up by Parliament.

The Forty-second Amendment was to further curtail the power of the judiciary.

The Forty-Second Amendment Act: A Mini Constitution of Sorts

In 1976 came the Forty-second Constitutional Amendment Act that was the longest one till then and brought about sweeping changes in the Constitution, so much so that it came to be called a mini constitution in itself. It added some 40 articles and a new chapter to the Constitution, besides adding new words to the Preamble. The main ideas were to exclude the courts entirely from election disputes; to concentrate power in the central government as against the states so that

the country could be ruled as a unitary and not a federal polity; to protect revolutionary social legislation from judicial scrutiny; and to further curb the power of the judiciary so that it would be difficult for the court to upset parliament's policy regarding certain matters.

Some of the huge changes the amendment brought about that affected the democratic system are given below. Some of these steps would be repealed by the Janata government that came in 1977.

The 42nd Amendment placed amendments outside the purview of courts, further declaring that there was to be no limitation on the power of Parliament to amend the Constitution. It curtailed the powers of the high courts and the Supreme Court in matters of judicial review and writ jurisdiction.

In the Preamble, India was now characterised as 'sovereign, socialist secular democratic republic' instead of the original 'sovereign democratic republic'. Besides, the words 'unity of the nation' were changed to 'unity and integrity of the nation'.

New directive principles were added to the Constitution, and the directive principles were, on the whole, accorded primacy over the fundamental rights.

A new chapter on fundamental duties was added to the Constitution.

The term of the Lok Sabha was extended from 5 years to 6 years. It further froze the number of seats in constituencies for election to Lok Sabha, and state legislative assemblies at the 1971 census level till the first census after 2000; there was to be no readjustment every 10 years after every census as was the practice till then.

The laws made by Parliament to deal with anti-national activities were declared to take precedence over fundamental rights. The necessity of quorum in Parliament as well as in state legislatures was discarded.

As per its provisions, the proclamation of national emergency could be made for a part of territory of India. The duration of president's rule without Parliament's approval was extended from six months to one year. The Centre was given the power to deploy armed forces in a state if a serious situation of law and order arose.

Socio-Economic Policies

It was P.N. Haksar who apparently advised Indira Gandhi that if she wanted to get control of her party she must oppose the Syndicate on ideological lines. So, she presented the socialistic path to be adopted for the good of the country. Several steps were taken in keeping with this socialistic ideology.

Nationalisation of Banks and Other Sectors of Economy

Bank nationalisation was a step on this path, as Indira Gandhi sided with the Young Turks (one of whose leaders was Chandra Shekhar). She relieved Morarji Desai of his finance portfolio as he opposed the idea, pointing out that the step would cause a strain on the government administration and lead to lower resources for economic development even as it increased bureaucratic control. Indira Gandhi then adopted the ordinance way to nationalise 14 major private banks in July 1969. The ordinance was later passed by Parliament to become the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act. (In 1980, when Indira Gandhi came back to power, another six banks were nationalised.)

The prime minister explained over the radio that India might be an ancient country but was a young democracy and, as such, should remain vigilant against the "domination of the few over the social, economic, or political systems". Banks, she said, should be publicly owned so that they catered to not just large industries, and big business but also to agriculturists, small industries, and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the private banks had been functioning erratically, with hundreds of them failing and causing loss to the depositors who were given no guarantee against such loss.

The nationalisation did result in a huge expansion of the banking sector, with branches not only increasing in numbers but also coming up in remote and rural areas where the formal credit system was hitherto unknown. Household savings increased, with deposits increasing. Investments rose in the informal sector. The nationalisation of banks led to credit being provided to agriculture and small and medium industries. It was stipulated that banks had to reserve a certain

percentage of credit to the priority sectors (agriculture and small and medium industries). Differential interest rates scheme introduced in 1972 required the public sector banks to provide at lower than normal rates of interest to the weaker sections of the society.

After being re-elected in 1971 on a campaign that endorsed nationalisation, Indira Gandhi went on to nationalise the coal, steel, copper, refining, cotton textiles, and insurance industries. The main reasons were to protect employment and the interests of the organised labour. Whatever industries remained in private hands were strictly regulated. The foreign-owned private oil companies in India created obstructions for India by refusing to supply fuel to the Indian forces during the war of 1971. In consequence, Indira Gandhi nationalised the oil companies in 1973; since then, the major oil companies have to maintain a minimum stock of oil for military use when needed.

Abolition of Princely Privileges

After India got independence, the rulers of the princely states, on merging with the State of India (thus losing the right to rule), were granted a 'privy purse' by the Government of India. This 'purse' was a certain amount of money, payable annually to the rulers (and their successors) of such states in proportion to their revenue, ranking as a salute state under the British Raj, the antiquity of the dynasty, etc. Article 291 of the Constitution of India, the privy purse would be a fixed, tax-free amount guaranteed to the former princely rulers and their successors. The quantum of these 'purses' ranged from Rs 5,000 per annum to Rs 26 lakh per annum.

The privileges enjoyed by erstwhile rulers were often questioned and considered by many to be a relic of the past. The 1969 attempt by the Indira Gandhi government to abolish the 'privy purse' system and the official recognition of the titles did not meet with success: the Constitutional Amendment Bill to this effect was passed in the Lok Sabha, but it failed to get the required two-thirds majority in the Rajya Sabha. It was only in 1971 that with the passage of the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution of India that the privy purses were abolished.

As per the objectives and reason stated in the amendment bill, "The concept of rulership, with privy purses and special privileges unrelated to any current functions and social purposes was incompatible with an egalitarian social order. The Government, therefore, decided to terminate the privy purses and privileges of the rulers of former Indian States. It was necessary for this purpose, apart from amending the relevant provisions of the Constitution, to insert a new article therein so as to terminate expressly the recognition already granted to such rulers and to abolish privy purses and extinguish all rights, liabilities and obligations in respect of privy purses." Thus, Article 363-A was inserted in the Constitution. Besides, the abolition of the privy purses would reduce the government's revenue deficit.

MRTP Act

In 1969, the Indira Gandhi government was able to get the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act passed after abolishing the managing agency system; the latter, it was thought, enabled a small number of capitalists to control a large number of industrial enterprises even though they had little or no financial stake in them. The MRTP Commissioner was to check the concentration of economic power wielded by a few leading business families.

Steps for Equity and Poverty Reduction

It was under Indira Gandhi's administration that a clause calling for equal pay for equal work for both men and women was enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

It was also in the cause of social equity that the princely privileges were withdrawn.

Her programme for poverty reduction and redistribution of wealth included rapid enforcement of land ceilings—agricultural as well as urban land ownership; legislation for redistribution of land to the marginal farmers was also passed in many states.

A programme was initiated for distribution of food grains at low cost to the economically vulnerable sections of population. A crash programme for creation of employment in rural areas was also devised.

Views

". . . even the late prime minister's critics would concede that the maximum number of legislations of social significance was brought about during her tenure."

Pankaj Vohra

"I suppose you could call me a socialist, but you have to understand what we mean by that term...we used the word [socialism] because it came closest to what we wanted to do here – which is to eradicate poverty. You can call it socialism; but if by using that word we arouse controversy, I don't see why we should use it. I don't believe in words at all."

Indira Gandhi

Programmes for building houses for landless labourers were designed. At least on paper, bonded labour was abolished and there was a moratorium on the debts of the poor.

As already mentioned, the nationalised banks had to keep in mind priority sector lending.

The nature of the reforms has been criticised, but it cannot be denied that the social changes had the long-term effect of bringing to prominence middle-ranking farmers from the lower castes. And these classes were to pose a challenge in the political system in the North.

Tackling Economic Problems

In the mid-1960s, Indian economy was going through a crisis. There was shortage of food grains, a huge fiscal deficit, and a deterioration in the balance of payments situation. This led to a greater dependence on foreign aid. The war with Pakistan in 1965 resulted in the suspension of food aid from the US, which refused to renew the PL-480 agreement. In the circumstances, five-year planning was suspended in favour of annual plans (between 1966 and 1969).

Inflation remained high except during the Emergency. Unemployment too was a grave problem.

Devaluation of the Rupee

There was pressure from the US, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund on India to reduce its controls over trade and industry and to devalue the rupee. Indira Gandhi

did devalue the rupee in June 1966 by 36.5 per cent, increasing the dollar's value against it by 57.4 per cent. (According to B.K. Nehru's account in *Nice Guys Finish Second*, Lal Bahadur Shastri had decided upon devaluation as early as January 1966 before he went to Tashkent.) The idea behind the step was that devaluation would help India sell more abroad and get the dollars to pay for its imports of food, oil, and capital goods.

The step was severely criticised. The critics seemed to be vindicated when the World Bank fell short on its commitment to quickly organise more aid. Foreign capital did not come as expected. Indira Gandhi felt betrayed and lost faith in promises made by the West—this could have been a factor in her subsequent shift leftward. Furthermore, another drought added to macroeconomic difficulties, and the effect of devaluation was ineffective due to contradictory export-import policies. Devaluation thus came to be seen as a failure. The medium-term effect of devaluation was, in fact, beneficial: India managed to avert famine as well as bankruptcy, and the trade deficit reduced drastically by 1970–71. In the short term, however, it led to inflation and failed to the extent that it was not accompanied by other reforms.

In the circumstances, the idea of liberalising the economy became politically unacceptable and was abandoned. Indira Gandhi chose to control the deficit through drastically cutting down government expenditure. This led to an industrial slowdown. Indira Gandhi had by now turned leftwards and launched some radical policies—nationalising banks and insurance, enacting the MRTP Act, enacting the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) which placed restrictions on foreign investment and foreign companies functioning in India, taking over 'sick' companies (especially in the textiles sector) rather than letting them close down. In the long term, some of these steps weakened the Indian economy, causing stagnation and slow growth, but in the short term, they led to an improvement in the economic situation, so much so that India was able to stay clear of a debt crisis. Foreign exchange was painstakingly built up. The resolve was to avoid food aid; it seemed sensible to use the foreign exchange to buy food grains commercially—as was done after the poor

harvests in 1972. Of course, the success of the Green Revolution helped to restore the food economy.

Fourth Five-Year Plan

The much postponed Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969–74) was at last launched. Its investment outlay was almost double than that of the Third Plan. The goal was stated to be "growth with stability and progressive achievement of self-reliance".

The plan was dovetailed to the socialist principles adopted by Indira Gandhi by then. The rationale was the Ten Point Programme put forward by Indira Gandhi in 1967, her first economic policy formulation soon after taking office of prime minister. The programme placed an emphasis on greater state control of the economy as it was believed that government control ensured greater welfare than leaving the economy to the private sector. So, the private sector needed to be regulated. By the end of the 1960s, the liberalisation process had been reversed and India's policies could be called as 'protectionist'.

The government intended that India should be free of dependence on foreign aid and emphasise on increasing agricultural and industrial production.

The objectives of the Fourth Plan included: increasing the income of the rural population and augmenting the supply of food; making efforts towards maximising production; attaining stability of prices; making policies to encourage mixed economy; and bringing about human resource development, especially in rural areas. It was intended to provide for the minimum needs of the community through a rural works programme.

The performance of the plan was not as good as expected, though many of the social goals were realised. The shortfall in targets was mainly because the war with Pakistan and dealing with the refugees from East Pakistan took their toll, and because of the 1973 oil crisis.

Green Revolution Success

The bright spot on the economic scene was the success of the new agricultural strategy. The Green Revolution, the seeds of which had been sown in Lal Bahadur Shastri's tenure, bore fruit and benefited the government of Indira Gandhi. The

new dwarf varieties of wheat that the Punjab and Haryana farmers adopted led to bumper harvests. The new varieties of rice, groundnut, and cotton too did well. Production of wheat, especially, grew sensationally. There were shortcomings in the strategy: huge regional variations, large areas unaffected by the 'revolution' still depending on the erratic monsoons, growth in the disparity of farmers' income and what was to be seen much later—the damage to the environment overuse of chemical fertilisers and wastage of water. But at the time, the feeling was that endemic food shortage had ended.

Fifth Five-Year Plan

The Fifth Five-year Plan (1974–79) did not last its full term, but its programmes mostly coincided with the Emergency period. The plan was targeted at reducing poverty through addressing the consumption needs of the poor and by enacting a range of socio-economic reforms. This was more or less an aspect of the Twenty Point Programme. With the Emergency in place, the economic programmes could be implemented forcefully. Indeed, with the economy growing at the rate of 9 per cent in 1975–76 alone, the Fifth Plan was the first plan during which the per capita income grew by over 5 per cent. However, with the elections of 1977 and the Janata government coming to power, the Fifth Plan period was curtailed and it was ended in 1978.

The Indo-Pak War of 1971 and the Birth of Bangladesh

The war between India and Pakistan in 1971 was a milestone in that it saw the liberation of East Pakistan resulting in the birth of a new nation, Bangladesh.

The 1970 Polls in Pakistan and Unrest in East Pakistan

In 1970, General Yahya Khan, who had succeeded Ayub Khan as president and chief martial law administrator in Pakistan, promised to restore democracy in Pakistan and duly called for general elections—the first ever election based on adult franchise in that country. Also, the number of seats to the National Assembly was to be in proportion to the population. East Pakistan, the more populous of the two wings of

Pakistan, was thus, naturally, allotted more seats than West Pakistan.

In West Pakistan, the dominant party was the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, while in East Pakistan, the Awami League led by Mujibur Rahman was the dominant party. Mujibur Rahman spoke of the eastern wing being repressed by the military rulers and treated as a colony to cater to West Pakistan's interests. The East Pakistanis resented their language—Bengali—being sidelined and the low representation of their people in the higher administrative sections of the country. Mujibur Rahman demanded greater autonomy and a true federal constitution with greater powers for the East wing. The poll was held in December 1970 and the results showed where Pakistan was heading. While the PPP won a majority of seats in West Pakistan, the Awami League simply swept the elections in East Pakistan and, in the process, got a majority over all.

Yahya Khan did not like the prospect of an assembly led by an East Pakistani and dominated by East Pakistanis with their demand for autonomy in framing a new democratic constitution. There was also a fear among the West Pakistan rulers that the Hindus in East Pakistan, many of whom were well-educated professionals, might influence the writing of the constitution. Yahya Khan with the endorsement of Zulfiqar Bhutto postponed convening the National Assembly. This angered the East Pakistanis, and the call for a general strike by the Awami League met with a good response. In March 1971, the Pakistani military regime took steps to crush the protest and sent tanks and forces into East Pakistan. Mujibur Rahman was arrested and moved to an unknown destination. There seemed little chance for reconciliation after the violent clashes and the brutal killing of civilians, especially students, by the Pakistani Army.

Refugee Influx in India and Indian Response

One consequence of the civil war in East Pakistan was the exodus of refugees (mostly Hindus) from that country into India, the numbers running into millions by August 1971. India allowed these refugees in and set up camps for them (in West Bengal, Tripura, and Meghalaya, and even in Madhya

Pradesh and Orissa) and fed them. It was the central government that bore the cost of all this.

In the beginning, India mounted diplomatic efforts at convincing the world powers of the desperate situation building up. Indira Gandhi contacted the US on the matter. Henry Kissinger, the national security adviser to the US president at the time, brought a letter from the US president asking India to send back the refugees under UN supervision. Indira Gandhi pointed out that the American arms given to Pakistan, which were once used against India in 1965, were now being used by Pakistan against its own people. She also asked if the refugees from Hitler's Germany would have been repatriated under the conditions that existed at the time. It is now known that Kissinger and Nixon differed in their opinions on the situation. Nixon favoured Pakistan, especially as it had secretly helped Kissinger establish contact on behalf of the US with China, and did not want to help India.

The USSR, as opposed to the US, agreed with India on the situation on the subcontinent—that the two wings of Pakistan had drifted too apart for a possible reconciliation. The USSR offered military equipment to India. It also proposed a friendship treaty with India, which would act as a deterrent to Pakistan and China if they thought of getting together and indulging in military adventurism. When India's foreign minister at the time, Swaran Singh, visited Moscow in June 1971 and met his Soviet counterpart, Andrei Gromyko, and the president, Alexei Kosygin, it was decided that such a friendship treaty would be signed. In August 1971, the foreign ministers of the two countries signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation. The most significant part of the treaty spoke of the mutual consultations on suitable measures to be taken in the face of any attack or threat of an attack on either country so as to remove the threat and ensure peace and security of their countries.

By the summer of 1971, India had decided to intervene actively in the situation. Indian forces began to provide instruction in the use of weapons to Bengali guerrillas in training camps. The group of these fighters, comprising regular soldiers of the erstwhile united Pakistan as well as fresh volunteers, was known as the Mukti Bahini. These

guerrillas were to sneak across the border into East Pakistan to attack army camps and communication installations. The Mukti Bahini was to play an important role in the liberation of East Pakistan.

Indira Gandhi toured the world to acquaint the leaders of the situation on the subcontinent. The country that could have made a difference, namely the USA, remained unimpressed. In November 1971, Richard Nixon and Indira Gandhi met but did not agree on the situation; Nixon said that the US would not agree to overthrow Yahya Khan and warned India against taking military action.

In the meanwhile, the situation along the border between India and East Pakistan had reached conflict stage, with shelling taking place across the line. It was an opportunity for the members of the Mukti Bahini to use the exchange of fire to cross the border to carry out their insurgent activity.

War and Liberation of East Pakistan

Pakistan chose to attack India on the western border on December 3, 1971. As their bombers targeted airfields along the western borders, their artillery regiments attacked Kashmir. India, under the generalship of Sam Manekshaw, took swift action in Kashmir and Punjab on the ground and with massive air strikes. The Indian Navy got into action for the first time and moved towards Karachi. The Western Naval Command, under Vice Admiral S.N. Kohli, successfully launched a surprise attack on Karachi port under the codename Trident. India now had every reason to push across into Eastern Pakistan with its troops and tanks and to turn the secret skirmishes into open confrontation.

It must be pointed out here that India had modernised its armed forces, besides starting indigenous weapons' manufacture. The Pakistani military was no match for the Indian forces. There was a further handicap that the Pakistanis were working under—the low morale of its forces due to the civil unrest and defection of Bengali personnel and the stress of having to fight people of their own country. It has been pointed out that Yahya Khan's strategy was difficult to understand. If Chinese help was anticipated, it did not come;

perhaps the snow in the Himalayas in December did not allow any Chinese action. The Indian forces, on the other hand, had no problem with weather on the eastern front and furthermore were helped by the locals and the Mukti Bahini. Moving towards Dacca (now Dhaka) from four directions, the Indian forces captured strategic installations. The Indian Eastern Naval Command, under Vice Admiral Nilakanta Krishnan, created a naval blockade in the Bay of Bengal and isolated East Pakistan. From December 4 onwards, the aircraft carrier INS Vikrant was deployed to carry out attacks on the major ports of East Pakistan.

India's intention for East Pakistan became clear on December 6, 1971 when the Indian government formally recognised the Provisional Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The US sent Task Force 74 led by the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* into the Bay of Bengal, but it was just a show of power and an indication of the US stand. It did not affect the course of what happened to East Pakistan. It was now clear that Dacca was going to fall to the Indian forces and, what is more, once the East Pakistan issue was settled, India might turn its full attention to West Pakistan and also cause its disintegration.

On December 13, the Yahya Khan sent a message to Lieutenant-General A.A.K. Niazi, the Commander of the Pakistan Eastern Command, to give up arms. But it was December 16, 1971 before the Instrument of Surrender of Pakistan Eastern Command stationed in East Pakistan, was signed between the Lieutenant-General Jagjit Singh Aurora, the GOC-in-C of Indian Eastern Command and Lieutenant-General A.A.K. Niazi, the Commander of the Pakistan Eastern Command, at the Ramna Race Course in Dacca.

East Pakistan had been liberated and a new independent nation Bangladesh had come into being. Mujibur Rahman, released from captivity, assumed the leadership of the new nation.

On December 16, Indira Gandhi announced on radio a unilateral ceasefire on the western front as well. The next day, Pakistan too announced a ceasefire.

Indira Gandhi's image was greatly enhanced as an effect of the victory. Many in India called her 'Durga'. There was a new confidence and a sense of power and achievement in the Indians. The country seemed to have established a dominant position in the subcontinent.

The Simla Agreement

In Pakistan, following the war, Yahya Khan resigned and Zulfiqar Bhutto took over. Bhutto was reported to be in favour of beginning a new relationship with India. India was not against the idea. Bhutto was invited for a summit at Simla in June 1972. At the meeting, the Indians expressed the need for a comprehensive treaty settling all outstanding problems including Kashmir. But the Pakistanis preferred a step by step approach. In the end, whereas the Indian side wanted a 'no-war pact', it had to agree to a 'renunciation of force' by both sides. The Kashmir issue was left hanging, and regarding the Line of Control which India wanted to be respected by both sides, Pakistan added the caveat, 'without prejudice to the recognised position of either side'. Many of India's demands were watered down, and India apparently went with it because it realised the precarious position held by Bhutto in Pakistan and pushing too hard may have deposed him and made the situation worse. The agreement (not treaty, as India wanted) was signed on July 2.

The Simla Agreement was considered to be a comprehensive blue print for good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan. Under the agreement, both countries undertook to abjure conflict and confrontation, and to work towards the establishment of durable peace, friendship, and cooperation.

The two countries agreed to follow a set of guiding principles in managing relations with each other: respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; respect for each other's unity, political independence; sovereign equality; and abjuring hostile propaganda.

There was a mutual commitment to the peaceful resolution of all issues through direct bilateral approaches, and to build the foundations of a cooperative relationship with special focus on people-to-people contacts.

Text of the Simla Agreement

1.The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan are resolved that the two countries put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the subcontinent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing talk of advancing the welfare of their peoples.

In order to achieve this objective, the Government of India and the Government of Pakistan have agreed as follows:

- That the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations shall govern the relations between the two countries;
- That the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them. Pending the final settlement of any of the problems between the two countries, neither side shall unilaterally alter the situation and both shall prevent the organization, assistance, or encouragement of any acts detrimental to the maintenance of peaceful and harmonious relations;
- That the pre-requisite for reconciliation, good neighbourliness, and durable peace between them is a commitment by both the countries to peaceful co-existence, respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, on the basis of equality and mutual benefit;
- That the basic issues and causes of conflict which have bedevilled the relations between the two countries for the last 25 years shall be resolved by peaceful means;
- That they shall always respect each other's national unity, territorial integrity, political independence, and sovereign equality;
- That in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations they will refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of each other.

2. Both governments will take all steps within their power to prevent hostile propaganda directed against each other. Both countries will encourage the dissemination of such information as would promote the development of friendly relations between them.

3. In order progressively to restore and normalize relations between the two countries step by step, it was agreed that;

- Steps shall be taken to resume communications, postal, telegraphic, sea, land including border posts, and air links including overflights.
- Appropriate steps shall be taken to promote travel facilities for the nationals of the other country.
- Trade and co-operation in economic and other agreed fields will be resumed as far as possible.
- Exchange in the fields of science and culture will be promoted.

In this connection, delegations from the two countries will meet from time to time to work out the necessary details.

4. In order to initiate the process of the establishment of durable peace, both the Governments agree that:

- Indian and Pakistani forces shall be withdrawn to their side of the international border.
- In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the ceasefire of December 17, 1971 shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this Line.
- The withdrawals shall commence upon entry into force of this Agreement and shall be completed within a period of 30 days thereof.

5. This Agreement will be subject to ratification by both countries in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures, and will come into force with effect from the date on which the Instruments of Ratification are exchanged.

6. Both Governments agree that their respective Heads will meet again at a mutually convenient time in the future and that, in the meanwhile, the representatives of the two sides will meet to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and normalization of relations, including the questions of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees, a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir and the resumption of diplomatic relations.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs website

However, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's speech in Pakistan's National Assembly soon after the agreement indicated that the Kashmir issue was very much alive and that Pakistan was ready to help the people of Kashmir if they started a freedom movement.

In 1976, in spite of the Pokhran nuclear test by India and the hostile reception to it in Pakistan, the two countries agreed to reopen diplomatic establishments and normalise relations.

Foreign Policy and Relations with other Countries

Bangladesh India's relations with Bangladesh were specially cordial with Mujibur Rahman in power. However, Mujibur Rahman's policies that were pro-India did not meet with approval of many in the political and military circles of Bangladesh as they feared Bangladesh would become some kind of satellite state to India. Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in 1975, following which came Islamist and military regimes. Indira Gandhi's relations with these regimes was uncomfortable. But, on the whole, the relations between the two countries remained amicable.

Sri Lanka Indira Gandhi had cordial relations with her Sri Lankan counterpart, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, and was initially accommodative about the ethnic problem involving the Tamils in that island country.

In 1974, India ceded the tiny islet of Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka in order to save Bandaranaike's socialist government from a political disaster. In 1974, India ceded the small islet Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka through the Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime Agreement that was intended to settle the maritime boundary in the Palk Strait. Sirimavo's popularity was rather low at the time, and Indira Gandhi decided to cede the island so as to improve the image of the Sri Lankan prime minister and to help stabilise the Bandranaike regime in Sri Lanka.

The agreement, which did not specify fishing rights, allowed Indian fishermen to fish around Katchatheevu and to dry their nets on the island. However, in 1976, without consulting the Tamil Nadu assembly or Parliament Indira Gandhi's government finalised another agreement to determine

the boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and Bay of Bengal and restricted both the countries' fishermen from fishing in the other's waters: "The fishing vessels and fishermen of India shall not engage in fishing in the historic waters, the territorial sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Sri Lanka, nor shall the fishing vessels and fishermen of Sri Lanka engage in fishing in the historic waters, the territorial sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone of India, without the express permission of Sri Lanka or India, as the case may be," said the agreement.

Soviet Union Under Indira Gandhi, India's relations with the Soviet Union deepened, especially in light of the attitudes of the US and China regarding Pakistan. The Treaty of Friendship with the USSR was a move to counter the Chinese closeness with Pakistan. When the US introduced a resolution in the UN Security Council calling for a cease-fire and the withdrawal of armed forces by India and Pakistan after Pakistan began the attack on the western front, the Soviet Union vetoed the resolution. Though the Soviet Union was not happy with India's nuclear test of 1974, it did not support further action against India. Certainly, there was a tilt towards the Soviet Union for pragmatic reasons during the times of Indira Gandhi.

United States From the time Indira Gandhi came to power, the relations with the US were strained. When Lyndon Johnson was president and India was reliant on the US for food aid, Indira Gandhi resented aid with strings attached—that in return for food, India was expected to agree to the policies of the US. She was also firm about not signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). After Nixon came to power in the US, relations deteriorated; Nixon disliked Indira Gandhi as well as the Indians and had a clear bias for Pakistan. Indira Gandhi expressed her criticism of the Vietnam war as well.

West Asia Indira Gandhi fully supported the Palestinians' cause and against Israel. The pro-Arab stand had mixed results, especially after the war with Pakistan. While some of the Arab governments remained neutral (Egypt, Algeria, Syria, for instance), the conservative pro-American Arab monarchies in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and United Arab

Emirates supported Pakistan. Libya saw the Indian intervention in East Pakistan as an attack on Islam.

Ties with Iran floundered for a while in the wake of the Indo-Pak war, with Iran viewing India's tilt towards Moscow and the break-up of Pakistan as part of a larger conspiracy against Iran involving India, Iraq, and the Soviet Union. However, Iran had not agreed to activate the Baghdad Pact and draw in the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) into the conflict at Pakistan's instigation. By 1974, the relations had recovered enough for Iran and India to come to an agreement that led to Iran supplying a substantial amount of crude to India.

Asia-Pacific In 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed. In India's view, ASEAN was a pro-US organisation with links to the SEATO. The ASEAN countries were not happy about India's stance over Vietnam and the close ties with Moscow. Nor did India's nuclear test meet with their approval; they saw it as contributing to the tension in the region.

Africa India's image as a vigorous opponent of colonialism suffered in African eyes because of the cordial relations India maintained with the Commonwealth of Nations. Initially, India condemned the armed struggle in Kenya and Algeria for independence. Under Indira Gandhi, relations began to be repaired. Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and Libya—the countries that had supported India during the Sino-Indian War in 1962 got special attention after she came to power. Diplomatic and economic relations with these states were expanded. Unlike her father, Indira Gandhi openly supported the liberation struggles in Africa. India's image too had improved in the world with the nuclear test and the refusal to be bullied by the US in the Indo-Pak War of 1971. Furthermore, Indira Gandhi firmly connected the Indian anti-imperialist interests in Africa and those of the Soviet Union. The experience of Indians in Uganda, however, was depressing: they suffered persecution in the Idi Amin regime and were eventually expelled from that nation.

The Smiling Buddha

Though it could be seen as a part of the national security policy, it was scientific endeavour that led to India's successful

detonation of a nuclear device. On May 18, 1974, India conducted its first nuclear test in the Thar Desert of Rajasthan, at the army base near the village of Pokhran. Officially termed Pokhran I but code-named 'Smiling Buddha', the exercise was an underground detonation. It was formally called a 'peaceful nuclear explosion'. It was the first time that a confirmed nuclear test was done by a nation that was not one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

It is believed that Indira Gandhi authorised the development of nuclear weapon system, presumably in light of China slowly and steadily becoming a nuclear power. She was guided by the belief that it was in the interests of the stability and security of India if it was to develop independently of the nuclear superpowers. The nuclear device, which was of the implosion type and was said to resemble the American nuclear bomb called 'Fat Man', was developed under the guidance of Raja Ramanna who was then the Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). The project was overseen by the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Homi Sethna. Some of the other scientists of renown involved in the projects were P.K. Iyengar, R. Chidambaram, Basanti Nagchaudhuri, and Waman Dattatreya Patwardhan.

Though there was euphoria in many sections of the population, there was also a perception that the test was authorised by Indira Gandhi to divert attention from the unrest that was going on in the country.

International Reaction Though India called it a test for 'peaceful purposes', the rest of the world was not too happy about it. The Nuclear Suppliers Group was formed to check nuclear proliferation.

As the plutonium used in the test came from the CIRUS reactor supplied by Canada and the heavy water was supplied by the US, the two countries were unhappy. Canada suspended assistance for the two heavy water reactors then under construction.

Pakistan was furious and cancelled the talks that were soon to take place for the normalisation of relations. Pakistan's prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, declared that he would not be blackmailed by India and would not accept

India's domination in the subcontinent. The Indian test, according to Pakistani opinion, pushed Pakistan into the nuclear field.

The Janata Party Years
(March 1977 – January 1980)

The Janata Party contesting under the symbol of 'chakra-haldhar' and its allies won a massive majority in the 1977 elections.

Morarji Desai the First Non-Congress Prime Minister

There were three contenders for the post of prime minister, namely, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, and Jagjivan Ram. It was left to Acharya Kripalani and Jayaprakash Narayan to decide who would become prime minister. Their choice was Morarji Desai who duly took the oath as prime minister on March 23, 1977. Charan Singh (minister of home, and later of finance) and Jagjivan Ram (defence minister) were deputy prime ministers.

Fresh State Assembly Elections

It was felt that the nation had expressed its dissatisfaction with the Congress and hence the states under Congress rule should also have fresh elections. These state assemblies were dissolved and elections were held in June. As a result of the elections, the Janata Party was able to form governments in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh. In Punjab, the Janata Party and the Akali Dal formed a coalition government. In Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK swept the elections and its leader, M.G. Ramachandran formed the government. His government was not interested in confrontational politics with the Centre; it was also to be the pioneer in launching the midday meal scheme to encourage children, specially girls, to attend school. In West Bengal, a coalition of left parties won a good majority, with the CPM doing exceptionally well, and Jyoti Basu became the chief minister. The left government was to undertake agrarian reforms from which a large number of poor peasants benefited.

In Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah had led the Congress government consequent to an accord with Indira Gandhi before the Emergency. Now the Morarji Desai government dissolved the assembly and initiated fresh polls to install a mandated government in the state. Sheikh Abdullah revived his party, the National Conference, and, in the first truly fair and free polls in the state since independence, his party won a comfortable majority. However, the divide between the Muslim-dominated Valley and the Hindu-dominated Jammu became apparent, with the National Conference not doing so well in Jammu.

New President of India

With a hold on most states, the Janata Party was able to get its candidate, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, elected as the President of India in June 1977. The presidential election was necessitated by the death of Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed in February of that year.

Downslide of the Janata and Rise of Congress (I)

The Janata government began with full popular support and high hopes, but cracks soon started showing with marked differences on ideological and political lines coming up. What is more, the concentration of some leaders on revenge against Indira Gandhi worked against the party and revived the Congress leader's popularity. In combination, these two factors worked towards the fall of the first non-Congress government at the Centre.

Futile Commissions Various commissions of enquiry were set up to look into alleged malpractices and wrongdoing by Indira Gandhi and her son. The most famous of these was set up under the chairmanship of Justice J.C. Shah, a retired judge of the Supreme Court, to enquire into the atrocities and excesses of the Emergency. Most of the allegations, however, could not be proved, and few convictions could be obtained. The cases against Indira Gandhi could not be maintained as there was lack of evidence.

Belchi and Indira's Masterstroke Then in May 1977, came the violence in Belchi, a village in Bihar: a group of

Harijans were burnt to death by a mob from the upper castes, allegedly over a dispute over land. It may be noted here that the social set-up in India was undergoing a transformation. There was a rise to prominence of the backward castes (who later came to be called the 'other backward classes') who had got rich in the wake of the Green Revolution and the White Revolution and bought land from the forward castes and had elected representatives to further their cause. Unfortunately, they also took this as a licence to act as they wanted. The Harijans worked on these lands, but they were at the receiving end of much abuse from the landlords. With the spread of education and scope for political representation, the younger among the Harijans, especially, were no longer ready to meekly accept the ill treatment handed out. They too gave a fight. There was thus a spurt in caste violence.

The Belchi incident was exploited to her own advantage by Indira Gandhi. She travelled to Belchi, the last bit on an elephant as there was no clear path on which to even walk to reach the village, and showed her sympathy for the affected people. Besides showing up the Janata government as callous to the poor and marginalised, Indira Gandhi's action built up her own image as a friend of the poor and the Harijans even as her party members were made to realise that she was the leader to follow if power was to be regained.

Indira makes Gains Charan Singh's single-minded hounding of Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay worked in her favour. Indira Gandhi was arrested on some vague corruption charges and kept in police custody for a day, after which the magistrate released her, rejecting the charges as insubstantial. She was now very much back in the game and made speeches critical of the government.

The Congress split once again in January 1978; the group led by Indira Gandhi becoming the Congress-I (for Indira). Her party won the Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh state assembly elections, defeating the Janata Party as well as the rival Congress party. She herself contested elections from Chikmagalur in Karnataka and won a seat to the Lok Sabha. Now, a parliamentary committee reported on Indira Gandhi having misled the house on the Maruti enterprise, and the

house said she should go to jail. She was disqualified from her seat. However, she won again from Chikmagalur. Indira Gandhi was now seen as a victim of a witch-hunt, and her popularity grew.

Differences within the Janata Party and Fall of Morarji's Government The Janata Party was in the meanwhile disintegrating, with growing factionalism and personal rivalries overshadowing the efforts at governance. The antagonism between Morarji Desai and Charan Singh, who was not satisfied with his second number position in the cabinet, grew to such an extent that Desai was forced to dismiss Charan Singh as well as Raj Narain from office in mid-1978. Charan Singh retaliated by organising a farmers' protest march to Delhi in December 1978. In an effort to keep peace, Charan Singh was recalled to the cabinet by Desai in February 1979 and allotted the finance portfolio as well as the post of deputy prime ministership. Things, however, failed to move smoothly. The divide was getting deeper, with two sides being formed: the Socialists siding with Charan Singh and the Jana Sangh with Desai. There was further the issue of 'dual membership' of the Jana Sangh members who maintained their ties with the RSS. They would not give up the membership of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) as they considered it to be merely a cultural entity. The Socialists and Charan Singh's party walked out of the coalition reducing the government to a minority. Desperate bids to get support from the Congress factions did not succeed and the Morarji Desai government resigned in July 1979.

Charan Singh the Prime Minister Who Never Faced Parliament

In a brazen show of opportunism, Charan Singh negotiated with his erstwhile bitter enemy Indira Gandhi to get support for a government led by him. With a letter of support from the Congress, Charan Singh was able to convince the president that he could have a majority in the Lok Sabha. He was sworn in as prime minister towards the end of July subject to proving the confidence of the House. So, he gave the prime minister's speech from the rampart of the Red Fort on Independence Day but never got to face the Parliament: just a day before the confidence vote, Indira Gandhi withdrew her

support to his government. Charan Singh had not accepted Indira Gandhi's demand that the special courts set up to prosecute her be disbanded. Charan Singh had no option but to resign. The president explored other options of government formation but none was feasible. In the end, Lok Sabha was dissolved and fresh elections called for. Charan Singh remained caretaker prime minister till elections could take place.

Fresh Lok Sabha Elections and End of Janata Party Rule

Lok Sabha elections took place in January 1980. The parties in the fray were the Congress (I), Congress (U), Lok Dal, the new party floated by Charan Singh and the Socialists, and Janata, now consisting primarily of Jana Sangh and of the old Congressmen such as Jagjivan Ram and Chandra Shekhar. The presence of the CPM and CPI was only in West Bengal and Kerala. The Janata Party campaigned again on the planks of threats to democracy, and Charan Singh spoke of power to the farmers, but this time round Indira Gandhi ignored ideology and astutely focused on an issue close to the people's heart at the time, namely, the offer of a government that could govern. The people, tired of the Janata's lack of governance and incessant mutual quarrels, gave their mandate in favour of the Congress led by Indira Gandhi, also thus endorsing the view that hers was the real Congress.

The Janata Party split into various parties, like Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Samajwadi Party, etc.

Legacy of the Janata Rule

Short-lived its rule might have been and marked by strife and contradictions within, but the Janata Party government contributed something valuable to the Indian polity even as its negative aspects cannot be ignored.

It was the first non-Congress government at the Centre since India's independence. It was also the first coalition dispensation at the central level.

Restoration of Democratic Rights

An unforgettable contribution of the Janata Party government was the restoration of democracy and civil rights in the country.

The Janata government was prompt to take steps to reverse the draconian measures of the Emergency: media censorship was removed and several controversial executive decrees were repealed.

It repaired the Constitution from the Emergency 'depredations' and revived 'open parliamentary practice through its consultative style when repairing the Constitution' and restored the independence of the judiciary, as Granville Austin points out. Arbitrary powers of the executive were curbed and the power of an independent judiciary restored.

Under the supervision of the law minister, Shanti Bhushan, amendments were devised to nullify the democracy-throttling steps of the Forty-second Amendment. The Forty-third and Forty-fourth Amendments to the Constitutions were landmarks in India's political history.

The **Forty-third Amendment** passed in 1977 deleted Article 3ID which gave powers to Parliament to curtail even legitimate trade union activity under the guise of preventing anti-national activities. Ratified by more than half the states as required, the amendment gave back to the states the legislative powers to make appropriate provision for anti-national activities consistent with the Fundamental Rights. The power of the judiciary to invalidate laws was restored. The high courts were given the power of going into the question of constitutional validity of central laws, thus making it possible for persons living in distant places to seek justice without having to come all the way to the Supreme Court.

The **Forty-fourth Amendment** of 1978 made the promulgation of Emergency more difficult than it was. It would now require the 'written advice' of the cabinet and not the prime minister alone before the president could proclaim Emergency. The proclamation would have to be approved within one month of the reassembly of Parliament, and that too by a two-thirds majority; its renewal would need a parliamentary vote on it every six months. Furthermore, the term 'internal disturbances' was replaced with 'armed rebellion' as a cause for imposing emergency. A special session of the Lok Sabha could be called, one-tenth of its members requesting the president for the purpose of revoking the

emergency; such a revocation could be achieved by simple majority. It was also asserted that Article 20 and Article 21 would never be suspended even during emergency, while other fundamental rights would not get suspended automatically but would require a separate order by president. All important, the emergency provisions could be challenged in courts.

The amendment restored the term of the Lok Sabha and the state assemblies to the original term of five years. The courts also got back the power to decide the election disputes of the president, prime minister, speaker, etc.

The president would now be allowed to return the advice tendered by the cabinet once for a review.

The amendment deleted Article 31, the Right to Property from the list of Fundamental Rights to become just a legal right.

Economic Contradictions

The Janata Party had no single ideology; its members were a mix of veteran socialists, trade unionists, and pro-business leaders. It made the achievement of major economic reforms difficult. With Charan Singh in a prominent position, it was inevitable that agriculture and the rural sector got importance.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan (meant for 1978–83 but also curtailed due to change of regime in 1980), launched by the government after curtailing the Fifth Plan, aimed to boost agricultural production and rural industries. It was called the rolling plan. In a rolling plan, planning is at three levels: first, for the current year as decided by the annual budget; second, a plan for a slightly longer fixed period which allows flexibility to change priorities as per the need of the economic and political situation; and third, a perspective plan which is for 10, 15, or 20 years. There are no fixed dates and the targets can be revised every now and then as per the annual reviews which are very important. While flexibility is a plus point with this type of planning, a major drawback is that targets are difficult to achieve as they could keep changing.

With the fiery Socialist George Fernandes in charge of the industries ministry, the aim was to promote economic self-reliance and indigenous industries and, if need be, even

expel the American multinational companies, such as Coca-Cola and IBM (which indeed was accomplished). Such policies led to a reduction in foreign investment. However, the problems of resurging inflation, fuel shortages, unemployment, and poverty could not be effectively addressed as no effective alternative economic policy was evolved to deal with the economic situation.

The government failed to work on the radical reforms the party had promised in the run-up to the elections.

There were some bright spots. The Food for Work programme, launched in April 1977, envisaged some of the stocks of food grains with the government to be used for payment as wages in kind to workers in rural areas who helped to build roads and water ponds during the season when agricultural employment was low.

Madhu Dandavate, also a socialist but on the moderate side, undertook some important reforms of the railways of which he was in charge. It was he who initiated steps to reduce the corruption in ticket reservation. He initiated steps to repair worn-out tracks. He did a huge favour to the travellers in the sleeper second class compartments: he directed that the hard bare wooden seats be cushioned with two inches of foam.

Foreign Relations

There was a belief that the Janata government would move closer to the West to compensate for the Indira Gandhi tilt towards the Soviet Union. The Janata government certainly tried to improve ties with the US, with the result that the US president, Jimmy Carter became the first US president to visit India after Eisenhower. Efforts were made to improve trade and expand cooperation in science and technology. However, the Janata government made it clear that it would practise genuine non-alignment, so maintained cordial relations with the USSR too, with Morarji Desai and Vajpayee (the foreign minister) paying visits to Moscow. Representing India at the UN conference on nuclear disarmament, Vajpayee continued with India's earlier policy and spoke in defence of India's nuclear programme and its refusal to sign the non-proliferation treaty on the ground of discrimination.

One of the firsts in foreign relations of the Janata government was the effort at normalisation of ties with the People's Republic of China. In 1979, Vajpayee became the highest-ranking Indian official so far to visit Beijing to meet the Chinese leaders. Diplomatic ties were re-established between India and China; ties had been suspended since the 1962 war. The two sides agreed to establish regular dialogue to resolve long-standing territorial disputes, expand trade, and improve border security.

Social Changes and Movements

The late 1970s, observes Ramachandra Guha, saw a churn in political and social terms. Politicians seemed to have abandoned ideology in favour of expediency and the polity had become fragmented. On the social level, the sections of society that had been oppressed for so long began to assert themselves, and this led to a certain amount of social turmoil. There were new social movements, such as the feminist and the environmentalist. The older movements, such as the trade union movement, spread out into fresh areas, such as mines, and there were campaigns for equal wages for men and women, education, health, and safety. The liberated press wrote at length and on a wide range of subjects. And technology in the form of the new offset printing presses helped disseminate the location of newspapers and journals. Investigative journalism began with its lens on crime and corruption. Readership expanded, especially in small towns as did journalism in Indian languages. And a civil liberties movement became active.

The social classes—the OBCs—had reaped economic power through the Green Revolution, and the land reforms and also gained political power. (The Socialists and the Lok Dal were mostly formed of the OBCs.) They now sought a space in the administrative system. The Janata government in January 1979 appointed the Second Backward Classes Commission, popularly known as the Mandal Commission after its chairman Bindeshwari Prasad Mandal, a former chief minister of Bihar. Its remit was to examine whether reservation in jobs for OBCs should be there in the central administrative system.

Indira Gandhi: the Second Phase
(January 1980 – October 1984)

In the 1980 General Elections for the Seventh Lok Sabha, the Congress (I) was returned to power with a strong majority. Indira Gandhi won from Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh as well as from Medak in Andhra Pradesh. She chose to keep the Medak seat. Chosen as the Congress parliamentary leader, she became the Prime Minister of India once again.

Indira Gandhi trusted very few and had come to rely more and more on her son, Sanjay, who had also been elected to the Lok Sabha. She was not ready to share power with anyone else. But in June 1980 Sanjay died when he tried out some stunts in the plane he was flying and lost control. And Rajiv Gandhi, Indira's elder son, an airline pilot with no experience in politics, was reluctantly forced into politics. Soon enough he was elected from Amethi to the Lok Sabha and most people knew he was heir apparent to the Congress leadership.

Economy

Indira Gandhi paid immediate attention to the economy. The Janata Sixth Five-Year Plan was curtailed and a **new Sixth Year Plan (1980–85**) was launched. The objectives of the new Sixth Five-Year Plan India were mainly focused on increasing growth and industrialisation and reducing poverty and unemployment. There was to be promotion of efficiency in the use of resources and improved productivity, besides the strengthening of the impulses of modernisation for the achievement of economic and technological self-reliance. A minimum needs programme was envisaged for the economically underprivileged, designed to ensure that all parts of the country attained, within a prescribed period, nationally accepted standards.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched on October 2, 1980 all over the country. The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), launched in October 1980, became a regular programme under the Plan from April 1981.

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development was established for the development of rural sector in 1982 on the recommendation of the Shivaraman Committee.

The Sixth Plan is considered to have initiated the first steps towards economic liberalisation, with the government subsequently launching Operation Forward in 1982. They were the first cautious attempt at reform, but they were too cautious to have much effect. Indira Gandhi was wary of the multinational companies eroding the country's self-reliance.

Improvement in the ecological and environmental aspects of the country was also to be given attention, according to the Sixth Plan. It is worth recalling that Indira Gandhi had attended and spoken at the first UN conference on environment in 1972. In her earlier stint as prime minister, she was behind the implementation of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1974. The Wildlife Protection Act facilitated the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, and Project Tiger was launched in 1973. Now, in her second stint in power, the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1981 were enacted.

Foreign Relations

Sri Lanka and Tamils Problem In the area of foreign relations, Indira Gandhi was unhappy with Sri Lanka's turn away from socialism after Sirimavo Bandaranaike lost power to J.R. Jayewardene, who, Indira Gandhi felt was a puppet of the West. Though it is alleged that India under Indira supported LTTE militants in the 1980s to pressurise Jayewardene to be sensitive of Indian interests, the Indian prime minister refused demands that India attack Sri Lanka after the incidents of Black July 1983, in which Sinhalese mobs targeted the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

Pakistan: Siachen Conflict India-Pakistan relations reached low depths after the rise to power of General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan in 1978. It was strongly felt in India that General Zia supported Khalistani militants in Punjab. In 1984, there were military skirmishes on the border. In the end, it became a conflict over the Siachen

India's Man in Space

It was during the rule of Indira Gandhi that an Indian went travelling in space. As a part of the joint programme between Indian Space Research Organisation and the Soviet Intercosmos, Rakesh Sharma, an Indian Air Force pilot, was selected in 1982 as a cosmonaut for a joint Soviet-Indian spaceflight. On April 2, 1984, Sharma flew on board Soyuz T-11 with two Soviet cosmonauts to the space station Salyut 7. During his stay of nearly eight days on the space station, he performed certain experiments in the fields of bio-medicine and remote sensing and exercises to study the effects of yoga on the body during weightlessness.

The most memorable aspect of that space mission for many Indians is the episode of Indira Gandhi asking Sharma, on a hazy live video link, how India looked from space, and he replied in Hindi: "Sare jahan se achcha (the best in the world). Today that would have become viral tweet!

Glacier lying between the Saltoro ridge line to the west and the main Karakoram range to the east in the Himalayas; located in the disputed Kashmir region, it is claimed by India and Pakistan. The water melting off the glacier ultimately feeds the Indus, crucial to both countries.

The roots of the conflict lie in the lack of proper demarcations of the territory on the map beyond the map coordinate known as NJ9842. Before 1984, neither India nor Pakistan had any permanent presence in the area. However, in order to reinforce their claim on the area, the Pakistanis encouraged expeditions to the glacier on the basis of permits given by their government. Becoming aware of this in about 1978, an Indian Army expedition was also sent to Teram Kangri peaks as a counter-exercise. To free the glacier from Pakistani domination, the Indian armed forces launched Operation Meghdoot in April 1984, and Siachen became the world's highest battlefield. India was victorious in the conflict; two passes, namely, Sia La and Bilfond La, were secured by India while Pakistan retained control of the Gyong La pass.

Non-Aligned Movement Under Indira Gandhi, India reasserted its prominence in the Non-Aligned Movement. India hosted the 1983 summit of NAM at Delhi, and thus

Indira Gandhi became its chairperson. She brought attention to bear on the relationship between disarmament and economic development. She actively worked to project the need for a new international economic order that would be of benefit to the developing countries.

Unrest in States

Political and communal tensions rose in many parts of India during the second term of Indira Gandhi as prime minister.

Naxalites were once again active in the tribal areas of Andhra Pradesh.

There was a movement for separate statehood in Jharkhand region, which was then a part of Bihar. Less intense but very much present were movements for separate states in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

In Nagaland, militancy reared its head again with Muivah setting up the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) with ideas of separating from India and to that end working with separatists from Kashmir and Sikh militants.

There were also movements for greater autonomy for states even if these states did not desire to leave the Union of India. The most serious disturbance was in Assam with the growth of the All-Assam Students Union which wanted the Bengalis out of the state in fear of being culturally dominated.

In Andhra Pradesh a new political party under the aegis of N.T. Rama Rao, a very popular film star, was formed in 1982. The Telugu Desam party spoke for the self-respect of the Telugu-speaking people. And his party came to power in the state elections at the end of the year.

Punjab Turmoil and Operation Blue Star

The political turmoil was greatest in Punjab with strong communal overtones to it. In fact, there were many strands in the turmoil. There was the strident demand for greater autonomy. Many Sikhs increasingly saw themselves in terms of their separate religion and resented that a Sikh political party (the Akalis) could not rule the state on its own free on central interference; they had waited for a long time to get a state of their own, but Chandigarh was still a shared territory with Haryana. There was trouble over sharing of

river water as well. In 1973, the Akalis had brought out the Anandpur Resolution that on one level just demanded greater autonomy—as did all states. On another level, by using the term 'Sikh nation', it lent itself to the interpretation of separation from the Indian Union.

The Akalis opposed the Nirankari Sikhs whom they called heretics. It was in this context that Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale rose to prominence. As a priest and head of the Damdami Taksal, he spoke vehemently against the Nirankaris. But he also orated against being slaves in independent India, and mocked at Hindus as well as the 'modern' Sikh. It has been said that Bhindranwale had been encouraged and built up by the Congress as a counterpoise to the Akalis. If so, he became a Frankenstein's monster, and very soon broke free to create an independent image of himself. He attracted a large number of followers.

In 1980, the Akalis suffered a blow when they were dismissed from power in the state and the Congress came to power.

The impetus to form a state free of India was given mainly by Sikhs in England, US, and Canada. In June 1980, a group of students meeting at the Golden Temple in Amritsar declared the formation of an independent Sikh republic—Khalistan; its president was to be Jagjit Singh Chauhan from London.

The situation became worse and worse, with Bhindranwale gaining greater power and suspected to be behind several assassinations of prominent men, including the Nirankari leaders. The government proved ineffective in bringing him to book.

In an effort to up the ante against Bhindranwale, the Akalis became more extreme in their views. Their legislators resigned en masse from the state assembly on Republic Day of 1983. It seemed to indicate that their commitment to the Indian Constitution was not firm.

Bhindranwale, in the meantime, was becoming more virulent towards the Hindus in his speeches and instigating Sikhs to violence against the Hindus in order to drive them out. Conflict between Hindus and Sikhs seemed impossible in light of the origin of the Sikhs, but it had now come about.

The central government sent a team led by Narasimha Rao to try to convince Bhindranwale to make peace; the negotiations failed and the law and order situation in Punjab continued to deteriorate.

Khalistani terrorists, reported to be encouraged by Pakistan, were slowly entrenching themselves in Punjab and killings took place to eliminate prominent Hindus and Sikh officials. In October 1983, a bus was stopped and the Hindu passengers on it shot. The Centre imposed President's Rule on the state. Bhindranwale moved without facing any hindrance into the Akal Takht, the seat of temporal authority for the Sikhs near the Golden Temple, which was the seat of spiritual authority. By 1984 beginning, Bhindranwale and his associates had begun to fortify the Golden Temple complex and arms and ammunition as well as food stocked. It was all under the command of Shubeg Singh, once a major general and hero of the Indian Army but later dismissed from it.

Clearly, strong action needed to be taken. Indira Gandhi gave her permission to initiate **Operation Blue Star** on the recommendation of Army Chief A.S. Vaidya. By the night of June 25 and June 3, 1984, curfew had been imposed on the state of Punjab, all means of communication and public travel suspended, and electricity supply interrupted. Media was strictly censored. It was on the night of June 5 that the actual army action began, with the army storming Harmandir Sahib under the command of Major General K.S. Brar who acted under the direction of General K Sundarji. The militants were not easy to subdue as they had sophisticated weaponry. In the end, tanks had to be used against the Akal Takht before the army had full control of Harmandir Sahib by the morning of June 7. Bhindranwale was found dead as was Shubeg Singh. While many militants were killed, there were also many casualties among the army personnel as well as civilians.

Aftermath The operation caused great disturbance to the Sikhs all round the world. Many Sikhs left the Indian Army. Even mutinies by Sikh soldiers were reported. But it did put an end to militancy in the state and cleared the Golden Temple complex of arms and ammunitions, at least for the present.

But the assassination of a prime minister is also to be seen as the result of Operation Blue Star. On the morning of October 31, 1984, while walking over from her house to her office, she was shot by her Sikh security guards, Beant Singh and Satwant Singh. She was rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, but she did not survive. Though it was generally known that Indira Gandhi had died, All India Radio and Doordarshan made the official announcement only in the evening.

The Indira Gandhi era was over. Her son Rajiv Gandhi was sworn in as prime minister by President Zail Singh that very evening after Congress leaders unanimously decided that he should take the post.

Legacy

Indira Gandhi was in power for a long time. As a result of economic programmes and spread of education, the middle social castes/classes as well as the lower castes/classes were asserting themselves and there was a growth in the middle classes in urban India. One consequence of the changing social situation was widespread social unrest; there were caste clashes as well as communal violence.

Though Indira Gandhi was liberal minded and not discriminatory as a political leader, there was a deterioration in values of democracy in her time. Indira Gandhi's style of functioning began with a reliance on the prime minister's secretariat formed of persons she could trust, but who were also of indubitable integrity and intellect, but went on to depend more and more on her son and a small coterie. It was the same at party level: fearing competitive power centres, she weakened the Congress party structure. Sycophancy grew, and a party that had developed a well-organised structure with grassroots presence and a range of regional leaders across the country gradually lost strong leadership at state level and gave up the democratic style of choosing its leader and officials. A member of the Gandhi family had now become indispensable for holding the party together. Ideology was no longer the basis of politics. And this was true of other political parties as well. Corruption spread, and the state apparatus was more and more manipulated by the powerful for personal gain.

Indira Gandhi's grit and decisiveness in the face of external aggression, however, was exemplary. She showed that India was not to be bullied and brought the country to prominence in the world map.

The Rajiv Years
(October 1984 – December 1989)

Problems at the Very Outset

Appointed prime minister after the assassination of his mother, Indira Gandhi, on October 31, 1984, Rajiv Gandhi faced major problems from the very outset on the domestic front.

Anti-Sikh Riots

Even as the news of Indira Gandhi's death became known, there were sporadic incidents of violence showing anger at the assassination—perhaps a spontaneous reaction in the circumstances. But as her body lay in state at Teen Murti House (Nehru's residence as prime minister), these sporadic incidents had deepened and widened; by November 1 there seemed to be an organised and brutal mob violence against Sikhs. There was a continual replay on Doordarshan, the state-owned and only television channel available at the time, of the crowds filing past paying their respects to the assassinated prime minister with the grieving son beside the body and the shots of the crowds outside shouting revenge; this would have further instigated the mob.

While most of the Sikhs targeted were in the resettlement colonies in North Delhi, inhabited by the poorer section of the population, there was some looting and killing in middle-and upper middle-class localities, as well. The mobs, composed mainly of Hindus drawn from the "scheduled caste sweepers who worked in the city, and Jat farmers and Gujjar pastoralists from villages on the fringes", as pointed out by Ramachandra Guha and many newspaper reports of the time, killed thousands of Sikhs, burnt their homes, and looted their houses and businesses. Witnesses indicated that several Congress leaders instigated and encouraged these mobs. Rumours stoked the violence.

View

Though we boast of being the world's largest democracy and Delhi being its national capital, the sheer mention of the incidents of 1984 anti-Sikh riots in general and the role played by Delhi Police and state machinery in particular makes our heads hang in shame in the eyes of the world polity.

Delhi High Court in 2009

The role of the police and the administration was shocking; the police either turned a blind eye, refused to take action or, more reprehensibly, actively helped the mob. The riots went on unabated for two days. The prime minister and his home minister, Narasimha Rao, did not call in the army immediately; the army could have quelled the riots at once and effectively. It was late on November 2 that Rajiv Gandhi declared over radio and television that acts of rioting should be stopped and that these were casting a slur on the late prime minister. It was only by November 3 that the army got its orders to take steps to control the situation.

On the birth anniversary of Indira Gandhi on November 19, Rajiv Gandhi in a speech said that when a great tree falls, the earth around it shakes; it was taken to imply a justification of the riots. Even if one agrees with the view that the public anger was great after the assassination, it was an insensitive remark for a prime minister to make.

The anti-Sikh riots was the official term given to the violence, but many called it 'genocide'. It was an unforgettable and tragic blot in the history of India since independence.

The silver lining in an otherwise dark spot in India's history lay in the efforts made by many Hindus to hide and help Sikh families during the rioting.

The Bhopal Gas Tragedy

On December 3, 1984, India faced another great tragedy: a leak of the toxic methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas from the pesticide plant of the US multinational company Union Carbide (UCC) at Bhopal killed thousands and left many more impaired for life. The gas caused internal haemorrhage, lung failure, and death. Worst affected were the inhabitants of the villages and slums in the neighbouring areas of the factory.

It was one of the worst industrial tragedies of the world. The plant should not have been allowed in the city in the first place; further, it seemed to have disregarded safety measures several times.

After the disaster, UCC tried its best to disown responsibility for the gas leak by shifting culpability to the Indian subsidiary UCIL, stating that the plant was wholly built and operated by UCIL. Soon after, the first multi-billion dollar lawsuit was filed by an American attorney in a US court. And the legal battles and machinations began with the ethical implications of the tragedy and its effect on the people being pushed to the background. In March 1985, the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster Act was enacted by the Indian government so as to ensure speedy and equitable settlement of claims arising from the accident. As per the act, the government became the sole representative of the victims in legal proceedings anywhere in the world. Eventually, all cases were removed from US jurisdiction and shifted to Indian jurisdiction. Under the aegis of the Supreme Court of India, UCC agreed to pay $470 million to the Indian government to be distributed to claimants as a full and final settlement. The figure was based on a number of claimants that was on the lower side, whereas the actual number came to be much larger.

There were allegations that American pressure and political influence had resulted in the UCC chairman, Warren Anderson, being allowed to leave India for the US without being arrested. The controversy continues and so do the troubles of the people who suffered from the fallout of the gas leak and had to do with such low compensation.

The 1985 General Elections

Rajiv Gandhi on assuming the post of prime minister in October 1984 recommended early elections. General elections were to be held in January 1985; instead, they were held in December 1984. The Congress (I) won an overwhelming majority, securing more than 400 seats, the largest ever majority in independent India's Lok Sabha election history till then. The mandate was partly the result of a sympathy wave and largely from a desire to keep extremism and separatism down. Rajiv Gandhi, who now

assumed the post of prime minister, was also the youngest person to do so in India.

The March 1985 elections to assemblies in 11 states brought the Congress (I) to power in 8 of them.

Tackling the Tensions in States

Several ethnic conflicts raged in different parts of the country when Rajiv Gandhi took over as prime minister. Some of these were settled, but others continued to cause trouble.

Punjab was a burning problem. Akali leaders were freed and an agreement was signed by the Akali leader Sant Harcharan Singh Longowal and Rajiv Gandhi in July1985. But in August, Longowal was shot dead. However, state elections were held in September and in what was seen as a vote against extremism, the Akali Dal came to power with a comfortable majority. But militancy was not to end so easily. It reared its head soon and the Golden Temple was once again being used by militants. This time round, strong—in fact, even ruthless—action by the police under J.F. Ribeiro and K.P.S. Gill brought the situation under control, after Operation Black Thunder was launched in May 1988 to flush out militants from the Golden Temple. It was a smoother and cleaner operation, but then there was no charismatic leader like Bhindranwale this time round to whip up emotions. Even so, militancy did not quite die down for quite some time in the state. The Chandigarh issue continues to rankle.

Assam was torn by violent agitation in the 1970s and the 1980s over the influx of foreigners. Rajiv Gandhi and the All Assam Students Union (AASU) signed an accord on August 15, 1985. President's Rule was removed and elections held in December. The AASU became a political party—the Asom Gana Parishad—and contested the polls; it emerged victorious leaving the Congress far behind.

Yet another agreement was that between the Centre and the Mizos in 1986, whereby the Mizo rebels surrendered their arms. Mizoram was granted statehood. The Mizo National Front under the leadership of Laldenga—once a fiery rebel calling for secession from India—came to power as chief minister of Mizoram which became the 23rd state of India in February 1987.

Problems, however, arose in other parts of the country as well as in the same states later. The Gorkha National Liberation Front under Subhash Ghisingh represented the interests of the Nepali-speaking population in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal and began demanding a separate state for themselves. Ghisingh after meeting Rajiv Gandhi was persuaded to accept an autonomous district council.

Tripura was torn by agitations and clashes between the tribals and Bengalis who had come into the state after Partition. The Tripura National Volunteers (TNV) adopted the way of terrorists intimidating civilians and the police with kidnappings and murders. In August 1988, a memorandum of understanding was signed under which TNV decided to abjure violence, give up secessionist demands, and to hold negotiations for a peaceful solution of all the problems of Tripura within the Constitution of India. It was agreed by the Indian government that the seats for the tribals in the legislative assembly would be increased and that some more villages would be brought under the purview of the autonomous tribal councils. The terms of surrender were chalked out through talks between the Centre, the Tripura government, and the TNV. The troubles were not, however, quite over.

In Assam there was a violent agitation led by the Bodo tribals against local Assamese. The leadership was given by the All-Bodo Students Union. Some kind of resolution of the problem lay some years in the future.

In Jammu and Kashmir, a different kind of problem arose. On Sheikh Abdullah's death, his son Farooq Abdullah had become the chief minister of the state, but Indira Gandhi had removed him. Now, with Rajiv Gandhi as prime minister, the Congress and the National Conference formed a coalition caretaker government in Jammu and Kashmir in 1986. Elections were held in 1987. The Muslim United Front (MUF) formed by a group of Kashmiris who sought greater autonomy from the Centre was also in the fray. There was wide-ranging rigging in the elections to favour the Congress-National Conference so that the results went overwhelmingly in favour of that group. This was a most unfortunate thing to happen; even in fair and free election, the Congress-NC group would probably have won, but now the unfair practices

created disappointment and anger and alienation from the Indian State. This was the beginning of the militancy in Kashmir, with some of the Kashmiri youth turning to Pakistan for help.

Positive Steps taken on the Domestic Front

Rajiv Gandhi as a fresh face in politics came to power with a lot of goodwill from the people. He tried to change the way things worked. Within his party he indicated that he would not tolerate incompetency, corruption, or sycophancy. He introduced modern managerial techniques and tried to bring younger, more dynamic people into the decision-making process of the Congress. In the long run, the effort did not work. The 'Congress culture' was too entrenched, and even the young who began hopefully were soon drawn into the old ways.

He tried to cut red tape and make the administration more open and less rigid.

Anti-Defection Act

One of the first things Rajiv Gandhi did as prime minister was to get the anti-defection law passed in January 1985. As a result, an elected member of a legislature at the central or state level could not join an opposition party until the next election, or he/she would be disqualified as a member of the house. The measure was aimed at curbing corruption and bribery of MPs and MLAs to switch parties so as to manipulate the numbers in the house to form the government.

Environmental Legislation

An outcome of the Bhopal tragedy was the increase in environmental awareness and activism in India. Rajiv Gandhi as prime minister responded positively. In 1986 came the Environment Protection Act (EPA) under which the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) was created, with overall responsibility for administering and enforcing environmental laws and policies. EPA gave authority to the Centre to issue direct orders to close, prohibit, or regulate any industry. An enabling law, it delegates wide powers to the executive, allowing it to make rules to manage different issues. In 1987,

amendments to the Factories Act, 1948 empowered states to appoint site appraisal committees to guide the location of factories using hazardous processes. Systems were also set up to ensure the safety of workers and nearby residents and emergency disaster control plans specified. By 1989, the Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules had been enacted for management, storage, and import of hazardous chemicals. But it would be 1991 before the enactment of the Public Liability Insurance Act to provide for immediate relief to persons affected by accidents while handling hazardous substances.

Improving Local Government

Rajiv Gandhi saw the ineffective manner in which the panchayati raj system worked in states and tried to amend the situation through a constitutional amendment that called for regular panchayati elections being mandatory; the law could not be passed in his tenure, but the effort had been made, and in the coming years, the local government system would get constitutional sanction.

First Steps towards Liberalising the Economy

The first budget presented by the Rajiv Gandhi government—by the finance minister, V.P. Singh—sought to remove some of the controls that were stifling the growth of the economy. Besides simplifying the licensing scheme, the trade regime was liberalised with reduction in duties on several import items and incentives to promote exports. Tax rates were reduced and curbs on company assets were loosened. As a result of these steps, business houses did well, and the growth rate of industry was good. However, the period also saw businessmen and politicians getting closer, with the former doling out gifts (even of money) that were eagerly accepted by the latter for favours done. Real estate became a potent source of corruption and unaccounted money with the politicians.

However, by the end of his term as prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, faced with several problems in the country, went back to populism. Taxes were increased on consumer durables and air travel made more expensive. In April 1989, the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and the

Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) were merged into a single programme, the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana.

Technology Missions

Imbued with the desire to reform the socio-economic situation in India, six technology missions were set up under Rajiv Gandhi's direction. The idea was to use science and technology to tackle underdevelopment. The scientific approach was to be applied for solving problems. The target-oriented projects intended that India should enter the millennium as a modern nation.

The drinking water mission aimed at using satellites and the disciplines of geology, civil engineering, and biochemistry in locating, extracting, and purifying water so that all people in the country could have safe drinking water. There were missions directed towards improving milk yield and health of cows; expanding the production of edible oil so that imports could be curbed; improving health of people, especially through immunisation of children against polio; and increasing literacy, by spreading the television network to rural areas and using it as a medium. These were all good ideas and evolved into other programmes over time.

The best known of the missions was that of telecommunications. Realising the importance of communications to reach remote corners of the vast country, Rajiv Gandhi wanted improvement of service, dependability, and accessibility of telecom across India. Indigenous development, local talent, and privatisation were part of the mission. Sam Pitroda, a young US-trained Indian telecom expert, became Rajiv Gandhi's adviser on this as well as the other technology missions; he was made the chairman of the Telecom Commission. The Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, popularly known as MTNL was set up.

Computerisation

Computerisation was another field in which Rajiv Gandhi's initiative has to be appreciated. His government took steps to make it easy for large-scale computerisation with reduction of import duties on components so that domestic manufacturers could increase production. Laws were liberalised

to allow foreign manufacturers to enter the market so that quality and competitive prices could be ensured. Use of computers in schools and offices was encouraged. As a result of these measures, India was soon to emerge as a major software exporter. Some people have called these steps as initiating the 'information revolution' in India.

Education Policy

In 1968, the government under Indira Gandhi launched the first national Policy of Education (NPE). In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi promulgated the new NPE that stressed on "special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity". The policy called for expanding scholarships, adult education, recruiting more teachers from among the SCs, incentives for poor families to send their children to school regularly, development of new institutions and provision of housing and services. Under the policy, Rajiv Gandhi included Operation Blackboard to improve the educational infrastructure at primary schools all over India. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), a by-product of this policy, was directed towards promoting adult education. The concept of having a Navodaya Vidyalaya in every district of India was born as a part of the 1986 NPE, the aim being to provide excellence along with social justice. These residential schools were meant to provide quality education free of charge to children of poor families, chosen by merit, who could stay in the schools.

The Negative Side

There were several areas in which the Rajiv Gandhi government failed to act in a statesmanlike manner or made grave tactical mistakes.

The Shah Bano Case

In 1985, the Supreme Court gave a decision in a case involving a Muslim divorcee, Shah Bano, upholding the decision of a lower court. The lower court verdict was that Shah Bano's erstwhile husband should pay her maintenance every month, while Mohammed Ahmed Khan (the husband) contended that he had paid three months allowance as required, according to him, by Islamic law. Invoking Section

125 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), the apex court said that Shah Bano, not having remarried and not in a position to maintain herself, was entitled to get an allowance from the ex-husband. The court was clear that Section 125 of the CrPC would prevail over personal law in case there is a conflict between the two. The Supreme Court even went on to say that a uniform civil code, as mentioned in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution, would help national integration.

Conservative Muslims resented the court decision as interfering with their personal law. Sometime later, an MP moved a private member's bill in Parliament to the effect that Muslims be exempted from the purview of Section 125 of the CrPC. This was opposed by Arif Mohammed Khan, the minister of state in the home ministry. The bill was defeated in the House. But dissatisfaction among a section of Muslims was deep. With thousands of Muslims demonstrating against the Supreme Court decision, the Rajiv Gandhi government bowed to the pressure. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill was introduced in the House in 1986 to overturn the Supreme Court judgement and a whip issued to Congress MPs to vote in its favour. The bill was passed, thereby denying divorced Muslim women the right to claim maintenance under the CrPC and confining the maintenance to the *iddat* or a three-month period. The bill placed the onus of supporting the divorced wife on her relatives or the Wakf Board.

Arif Mohammed Khan resigned in protest.

The Babri Mosque Gates Opening

In British times, the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya was used by Muslims for worship; there was a platform outside the mosque where Hindus worshipped Ram. It was believed that the place was the birthplace of Ram. In 1949, an idol of Ram Lalla (baby) is said to have been placed inside the mosque one night. Hindu devotees saw this appearance of the idol as a miracle and now wanted the place for worship. In the wake of disturbances, it was decided by the local authorities to lock the disputed premises in Ayodhya so that neither Hindus nor Muslims could use the act of worship to press their claims.

Appeals were made before Faizabad court that the Ram Janmabhoomi gates be unlocked on the grounds that it was the Faizabad district administration, and not a court, that had ordered its closure. In the 1980s, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and other such Hindu groups launched a campaign to construct a Ram Mandir at the site. On February 1, 1986, the Faizabad district judge ordered that the doors to the mosque be opened so that the devotees could pray. According to reports at the time, the Congress government under Rajiv Gandhi ensured that the locks of the mosque were opened almost immediately after the Faizabad judge's ruling. Television cameras were present to cover the opening, suggesting that the judge's decision was known by the administration beforehand.

There was a strong belief that the Rajiv Gandhi government's decision in the Ayodhya matter was made to balance the Muslim Women's Act by placating the hard core Hindus. If the Congress thought it could undercut the BJP's temple campaign, it was mistaken; the initiative was grabbed by the Sangh Parivar. The VHP was emboldened and its attitude hardened: now the demand for the demolition of the mosque to build a temple at the site became vociferous.

The image of Rajiv Gandhi as a modern forward-looking leader was tarnished after these two issues. As political analysts warned at the time, the policy of appeasement of communities for electoral gains could become a vicious cycle and cause much damage to the social fabric.

The Bofors Scandal

There was more trouble for the prime minister. In March 1986, India signed an agreement with the Swedish arms manufacturer AB Bofors (once owned by Alfred Nobel) for the supply of four hundred 155mm Howitzer guns for the Indian Army. The deal included an option to license-produce 1,000 more guns. The deal amounted to $285 million (about Rs 1,500 crore), which was huge for the time.

Almost a year later, in April 1987, a Swedish radio report claimed that the Bofors deal involved payment of bribes to top Indian politicians and defence personnel as well as Swedish officials.

The Hindu correspondent in Geneva, Chitra Subramaniam, investigated the matter on behalf of her paper and collected several documents on the basis of which she revealed that over Rs 64 crore was indeed paid to some very powerful people. One name that appeared amidst it all was that of Ottavio Quattrocchi, an Italian businessman who represented the Italian petrochemicals firm Snamprogetti and was alleged to have become a powerful broker between the Indian government and international businesses, mainly because of his reported closeness to the Gandhi family. *The Indian Express* and *The Statesman* also carried long reports on what came to be known as the Bofors scandal.

In the meanwhile, V.P. Singh who had been shifted from finance to defence also seemed to have uncovered details of corruption in the Bofors deal. V.P Singh was finally left out of the cabinet. This seems to have increased the suspicion against the Rajiv Gandhi government, and even against the prime minister himself. There was scepticism about Rajiv Gandhi's declaration in Parliament that no bribe was paid and no middleman was involved. Rajiv Gandhi who had been nicknamed 'Mr Clean' suffered an irreparable damage to his image.

In July 1988, Rajiv Gandhi introduced what has been termed as one of the most draconian bills drafted by the Indian government. The bill was aimed at checking the freedom of the press: it provided that an editor or proprietor of a newspaper/ journal could be imprisoned for 'criminal imputation' and 'scurrilous writings', terms which would be defined by the State. Apparently, he was pushed into introducing the measure because of the investigative journalism into the Bofors scandal. The bill was in the end dropped, but further damage had been done to the image of the government.

Agrarian Unrest

The failure of monsoons still plagued the country, and the drought in 1987 was severe, causing much rural distress. Kalahandi district in Orissa was particularly affected. The discontent in the countryside went beyond the rain-fed areas to the irrigated areas. Farmers' organisations were formed. The most famous were the Shetkari Sanghatana led by Sharad

Joshi, who had once been a civil servant, and the Bharatiya Kisan Union led by Mahendra Singh Tikait. While the former's base was in Maharashtra, the latter covered Punjab and Haryana. These leaders spoke of a divide in the country—between the Bharat of villagers and the India of the urban middle class, with the former getting little attention in the economic policies formulated by the government. Their demand was that there should be a higher price for agricultural produce and subsidised power for agricultural use. In actual fact, however, these organisations were representatives of the rich and middle-level farmers, not the really poor sections of rural society. The poor all over India, whether in the urban or in the rural areas, shared the same problems, which seldom found voice.

Foreign Relations

Rajiv Gandhi set out to improve relations with the US and expanded scientific and economic ties with that country. His policies of economic liberalisation and emphasis on information technology brought him closer to the US and other western nations. Rajiv Gandhi is said to have used a direct private channel to Ronald Reagan, the US president, which led to the cancellation of proposed supplies of AWACS aircraft to Pakistan.

Despite moving closer to the West, Rajiv Gandhi did not succumb to pressure on the nuclear non-proliferation issue which he linked, as Indian policy had always done, to universal disarmament. In June 1988, at the 15th special session of the United Nations General Assembly, Rajiv spoke about a world free of nuclear weapons, and put forward his 'Action Plan for Ushering in a Nuclear-Weapon Free and Non-Violent World Order'.

In 1986, the President of Seychelles faced a coup and sought India's help. The Rajiv Gandhi government authorised the Indian Navy to reach the coasts of Seychelles to help avert the coup in a mission named 'Operation Flowers are Blooming'.

Then, in 1988, Maldives faced an attempted coup whose perpetrator was apparently assisted by armed mercenaries of a Tamil secessionist organisation from Sri Lanka, the People's

Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). The Maldives government sought India's help, upon which Rajiv Gandhi ordered the deployment of the Indian forces in an operation code-named Cactus. The coup was averted.

In 1987, India re-occupied the Quaid Post in the disputed Siachen region in what was termed Operation Rajiv.

In December 1988, Rajiv Gandhi became the first Indian prime minister since Jawaharlal Nehru in 1954 to visit China. In 1986–87, there had been a standoff between Indian and Chinese troops at Sumdorong Chu on the north-eastern border. However, Rajiv Gandhi's visit led to better relations. He had a cordial meeting with Deng Xiaoping who, though he was not the head of state, or head of government or general secretary (of the Communist Party), was an all-important person in China.

India and China signed two crucial agreements to establish a joint working group (JWG)—to seek fair, reasonable, and mutually acceptable solution on the boundary question—and a joint economic group (JEG) and agreed to expand and develop bilateral relations in all fields.

The IPKF Misadventure

Sri Lanka was faced with an ethnic conflict between the Sinhala majority and the Tamil minority who were inhabitants mostly of the northern part of the island. After Sri Lanka got independence from the British, Sinhalese was imposed as the sole official language in the island country. The Tamils wanted parity on all fronts with their language given the same status as Sinhalese. There were protests when discrimination continued. Opposition to the official repressive measures took a violent turn. Soon, a number of militant groups were operating in the Jaffna Peninsula against the Sri Lankan armed forces. Over time, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) became the most prominent under Velupillai Prabakaran and took over the struggle using violence against the Lankan forces as well as civilians; their demand had progressed from autonomy to liberation from the Sri Lankan government to form an independent Tamil state. Though it was an internal affair of Sri Lanka, the events in Jaffna raised tensions in Tamil Nadu, where many felt close to the Sri

Lankan Tamils. The LTTE used Tamil Nadu as a refuge, and the state government was sympathetic to their cause, even as the central government kept quiet. It is believed that the governments under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi surreptitiously supported the Tamil militants.

When the Sri Lankan forces responded with brutal force and blockaded the Tamil majority district of Jaffna, Rajiv Gandhi first tried to resolve the problem diplomatically. But the siege continued. India hoped the Sri Lankan government would be amenable to India, sending relief supplies to the beleaguered Tamils by sea. A flotilla of Indian ships with relief supplies was locked by the Sri Lankan Navy as they approached the territorial waters of Sri Lanka. On June 4, 1987, the Indian government ordered relief supplies to be air-dropped into the area on humanitarian grounds—in what was called Operation Poomalai (also Eagle-Mission-4)—after warning Sri Lanka not to try and stop the planes.

India was criticised by some nations for the action even as Sri Lanka accused India of "blatant violation of sovereignty". The US expressed regret over the incident but added no further comment. India wanted the airdrop to send a message; the siege of Jaffna was lifted, and there was a declaration of ceasefire.

Indo-Sri Lanka Accord 1987 In July 1987, the Sri Lankan president, J.R. Jayawardene, asked Rajiv Gandhi to mediate in the island country's ethnic conflict. As a result, the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was signed by the two leaders in Colombo on July 29, 1987.

Incidentally, it was on the occasion of this visit to Colombo that Rajiv Gandhi was assaulted by a Sri Lankan in the Guard of Honour held for the Indian prime minister in what seemed an attempted assassination. Rajiv Gandhi escaped serious injury.

The peace accord was perhaps too ambitious in its scope, seeking to address three contentious issues: strategic interests, people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka, and rights of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Under the terms of the agreement, the Sri Lankan government would devolve power to the Tamil-majority areas, the Sri Lankan troops would withdraw to their barracks in the north, and the Tamil militants would surrender

their arms. Besides the LTTE being dissolved, Tamil was to be designated an official language of Sri Lanka. Significantly, the Tamil groups were not party to the talks that led to the agreement.

It was under the accord that the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was sent to Sri Lanka's northern and eastern provinces where the Tamils were in majority to "guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities" between the Tamil separatist groups and the government. The LTTE, however, refused to surrender arms and began threatening Tamils who opposed the militant group. The IPKF and the LTTE became involved in a military confrontation.

The IPKF was working under severe strategic constraints. The scene of action was an island-nation; the war was an unconventional one being waged against a group that had strong emotional connections with Tamil Nadu; and the Indian intervention evoked hostile reaction from the Sinhalese as well as they felt their sovereignty to be undermined.

Finally, the IPKF captured the LTTE headquarters in Jaffna, but the militants retreated into the jungles from where they used guerrilla tactics to keep the forces at bay. A large number of Indian soldiers died and the cost of the operation was huge. Back in India, the pressure was on the government to recall the force.

In the end, the IPKF misadventure was to be the cause for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi on May 21, 1991 during his election campaign in Tamil Nadu. At Sriperumbudur, a woman bent to touch his feet and exploded an explosive device attached to her. The suicide bomber belonged to the LTTE and her action was in retaliation of India's role in Sri Lanka.

General Elections of 1989

V.P. Singh, on leaving the Congress, floated the Jan Morcha along with Arun Nehru and Arif Mohammed Khan, both of whom had parted ways with Rajiv Gandhi. Later, this group merged with the Janata Party, Lok Dal, and Congress (S) to form a new party, the Janata Dal, with the idea of bringing together centrist parties opposing the Congress government under Rajiv Gandhi. The Janata Dal then joined a set of

regional parties (which included the DMK, the Telugu Desam party, and the Asom Gana Parishad) in a coalition which came to be called the National Front.

In November 1989, general elections were held for the Lok Sabha. By then, the opposition to Rajiv Gandhi had consolidated, and a coordinated strategy was adopted. The Congress did badly in the elections, though it still manged to be the largest single party in the Lok Sabha. People had lost faith in Rajiv Gandhi in the face of the accusations of corruption.

The 1989 election was the first in which no single party got a majority on its own. At that time itself, some commentators indicated that the elections marked a milestone, the beginning of coalitions, and a period of political instability.

Rajiv Gandhi resigned in December 1989. His party chose to sit in the opposition as it did not have the majority or the support to form the government after the elections.

The V.P. Singh Years
(December 1989 – November 1990)

The National Front did not have a majority of its own in the Lok Sabha after the 1989 elections. But it staked the claim to form the government and did so with the BJP and the Left parties offering to support it from the outside.

Vishwanath Pratap Singh was sworn in as India's prime minister on December 2, 1989.

Rajiv Gandhi, as head of the Congress party, was leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Soon, after state legislative elections in March 1990, the governing coalition at the Centre achieved control of both houses of Parliament.

One of the first decisions taken by V.P. Singh was to recall the IPKF from Sri Lanka.

V.P. Singh was prime minister for less than a year, but he faced major problems in that short period.

Kashmir Situation Worsens

In Kashmir, in December 1989, militants of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) kidnapped the daughter of

Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, the Union home minister. The Centre capitulated to the demands of the JKLF and released jailed militants. Another prominent militant group, which was soon to sideline the JKLF, was the Hizb-ul Mujahideen led by Syed Salauddin, with more hard core ideas of turning the state into an Islamic regime. Salauddin, incidentally, had left mainstream politics after the rigged elections of 1987.

With armed attacks on banks and grenade attacks on police stations, the militants were becoming more defiant and daring. The Centre decided to take strong action and sent in forces to control the situation. The governor was changed and Jagmohan was appointed to the post.

A series of incidents turned many Kashmiris into supporting the militants. 'Jihad' became a prominent cry as religion became an important factor in the militants' game. The Hindu minority suffered as a consequence: the Kashmiri Pandits, who formed an integral part of the Valley and shared a common culture with the Muslims in that state in almost every aspect except religion, became the target of brutal violence, with many of them being killed by the militants. There was an exodus of Pandits from the Kashmir valley to Jammu and farther afield; they became refugees in their own land. Many of them still live in refugee camps and makeshift buildings, afraid to go back.

Implementation of the Mandal Commission Report

The Mandal Commission appointed during the Janata Party rule had submitted its report in December 1980. The Congress governments under Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi had quietly shelved the report.

The Mandal Commission or the Backward Classes Commission—to give it its official name—said that caste and backwardness were linked, and that the other backward castes, despite forming a significant proportion of the country's population, had very low representation in the administration, especially at the higher levels. In this context, the main recommendation made by the commission was that 27 per cent of jobs in the central government be reserved for these castes beyond the percentage reserved for the scheduled

castes and scheduled tribes. The same kind of relaxation in age was also to be made for the OBCs as existed for SC/ ST in being considered for posts.

V.P. Singh thought it would be a good idea to implement the Mandal Commission recommendations to gain popularity with the decidedly large group of OBCs whose importance as a 'vote bank' was not to be ignored. There were rising politicians from the group, Lalu Yadav in Bihar and Mulayam Singh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh, the two states that had a decisive say in most elections in India. A move forward on social justice-related issues, Singh calculated, would consolidate the caste coalition that formed the support base of the Janata Dal in northern India. In this context, it might be worth noting that in the southern states a large proportion of government jobs were reserved for the non-brahmins, and, it was pointed out by those who agreed with the Mandal recommendations, efficiency had not suffered.

On August 7, 1990, V.P. Singh announced in Parliament that his government had accepted the Mandal Commission report and would implement 27 per cent reservation at all levels of central government services for the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes as identified by the Mandal Commission.

Large-scale protests greeted the government's order. There were self-immolation bids and even suicides by youngsters from the upper castes, as these people felt their chance of getting government jobs had become more difficult. The protests were intense in the northern part of the country while the south was not affected. In the south, with the reservation policy being in place for quite some time, youngsters over time had become less dependent on government for their livelihood as the industrial sector offered a good alternative for jobs. Also, the proportion of upper castes in the population in the south was less compared to the north.

[The matter had been taken to the Supreme Court which stayed the order. But it was only in November 1992 that the nine-judge bench of the court gave its decision. Six judges upheld the constitutionality of the Mandal Commission as well as the government order based on its recommendations.

Three judges offered a dissenting view that impersonal criteria rather than caste should be used in deciding who was disadvantaged. The apex court, however, laid down two conditions: reservations in toto should not exceed 50 per cent and that caste criterion should be restricted to the recruitment level and not apply in case of promotions. By the time the judgement came, most political parties were reconciled to the reservation order; they realised that opposing it would prove to be politically harmful. Even the Congress which had been lukewarm to the matter had realised the importance of the OBC factor in winning elections in the north. The Narasimha Rao government which came to power in 1991 had already issued a fresh order in September 1991 in favour of the Mandal recommendations, with a condition attached that within the 27 per cent reservation preference would be given to the poorer sections of the OBCs.]

Mandal to Mandir: the Rath Yatra and Fall of the Government

One issue on which the Bharatiya Janata Party had gained popularity was the campaign to build a Ram temple in place of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya. With the implementation of the Mandal recommendation, the BJP was itself divided over whether to support the move or oppose it. While some thought it was a plan to fragment Hindu society, others felt OBC aspirations needed to be met. The BJP in the end decided to play the mandir card to mobilise the Hindus.

The party president, L.K. Advani, decided to set out on a *yatra* or tour in a *rath* (which was a van converted to look like a chariot). The Ram *rath yatra* beginning in Somnath in September 1990 was to culminate in Ayodhya after touring several of the states in between. V.P. Singh faced a dilemma; whatever he did—stop the procession or let it continue—would prove counterproductive for the government. In the end, it was left to the chief minister of Bihar, Lalu Prasad Yadav, to prevent the *yatra* from reaching Ayodhya; he got Advani arrested on the charges of disturbing the peace and fomenting communal tension and placed under preventive detention in a guest house when the procession passed through Bihar.

There were widespread disturbances after many of the *kar sevaks*, who were to build the temple, were also arrested by the Mulayam Singh government in Uttar Pradesh. Clashes took place between security forces and supporters of the mandir, and there were communal clashes as well.

The BJP withdrew its support to the National Front government. V.P. Singh lost the confidence vote in the Lok Sabha and resigned in November 1990.

The Chandra Shekhar Government
(November 1990 – June 1991)

With the imminence of the fall of the V.P. Singh government, Chandra Shekhar and Devi Lal had left the Janata Dal along with several others who supported him to form the Samajwadi Janata Party. Once again, the Congress, as in the case of Charan Singh earlier, offered to support from outside a minority government, this time led by Chandra Shekhar who had just 64 MPs with him.

Chandra Shekhar won a confidence motion and was sworn in as prime minister on November 10, 1990.

Troubled Economy

The economic situation was in a bad shape, and foreign exchange levels had reduced to a dangerous low. The economic crisis was mainly due to the large and growing fiscal imbalances over the 1980s. The loans that earlier governments under Congress had taken from world financial institutions and, in Rajiv Gandhi's case, from the market had created a huge debt. India was struggling to finance its essential imports, especially of oil and fertilisers, and to repay official debt. The situation was made worse because of the Gulf war and the resultant hike in oil prices.

By January 1991, the Chandra Shekhar government, with Yashwant Sinha as the finance minister, had convinced IMF to approve two loans. In return, the government promised to initiate economic reforms through the budget due to be presented in February. By the middle of February, it was clear that the Congress would create trouble. During the motion

of thanks to the president's speech at the beginning of the budget session, the Congress withdrew its support to the government on some flimsy grounds, with the result that the minority government was unable to present the full budget.

In March 1991, the government was forced to pledge gold reserves of the country to manage the foreign exchange situation. According to news reports, economic advisers to the prime minister pointed out India could use the plentiful gold that it held. The State Bank of India was asked to put up a proposal to the Reserve Bank to lease gold confiscated from smugglers on the government account. The central bank approved the proposal and the government approved it too.

By mid-March, global credit-rating agencies had placed India on watch. It was impossible to raise even short-term funds. In the absence of a full budget and a firm commitment to reforms, there was no more funding available from multilateral institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.

It was in these circumstances of a severe liquidity crisis with the possibility of a default in sovereign payments that Chandra Shekhar, though only a caretaker prime minister at the time, authorised the decision to pledge the gold to raise money; it was an inevitable move. Though there was a public outcry when it came to be known, and criticism that it had humiliated India, it was this move that helped meet the balance of payment crisis besides helping the next government begin its much vaunted process of economic reform.

With Chandra Shekhar's resignation in March 1991, the Lok Sabha was dissolved and fresh elections announced. President Venkataraman asked Chandra Shekhar to continue as caretaker prime minister till June when the new government would take over.

Elections of 1991

The first phase of the General Elections took place in May. Then, on the night of May 21, tragedy struck: Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated while campaigning in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. The next phase of elections were held in June.

In the first phase, voting took place for 211 constituencies while the rest of constituencies voted in June. The results showed a marked variation between the two

phases: the Congress did not do well in the constituencies that voted before Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, whereas in the constituencies that went to the poll after the tragedy the Congress did remarkably well. The results reflected the sympathy and horror felt by the people over the young leader's assassination. Incidentally, that act by the LTTE led to the total loss of support for it in India. In the end, the Congress was the largest party with 244 seats, which, however, did not reach the level of a simple majority in the House. The BJP improved upon its earlier tally creditably.

The Narasimha Rao Years
(June 1991 – May 1996)

Pamulaparti Venkata (P.V.) Narasimha Rao was chosen to lead the Congress (I) after Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. Narasimha Rao was an erudite scholar and knew several languages, and he was a Congress loyalist. He had held important ministerial posts—external affairs, defence, human resources, and home—in the governments of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

After the elections, he formed a minority government. Narasimha Rao himself had not contested elections in 1991, probably with the intention of retiring from politics. But after he was sworn in as prime minister, he won in a by-election from Nandyal in Andhra Pradesh to become a member of the Lok Sabha.

Rao is best remembered for the economic reforms undertaken by his government; however, he has other achievements to his credit as well. And a few blots as well.

Economic Reform

On becoming prime minister, Narasimha Rao inducted Manmohan Singh, a non-political economist who was at the time Chairman of the University Grants Commission, into his cabinet as finance minister. He backed his finance minister in all the steps he took and took a few on his own as industries minister. He also managed the reactions, especially within the Congress party, which were not initially in favour of reform when socialism had been the basic approach under Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

The economy of India was in shambles. Besides the precarious balance of payment situation, domestic scene was not good with high inflation.

When Rao became prime minister, the Soviet economic model was discredited. China under Deng Xiao Ping had undertaken market-oriented reforms. Narasimha Rao also opted for market reforms, but not the free market type; he opted for the middle path. He focused on reforms that would produce the least pain to the masses in general even while producing high growth rates. The government approach was not radically reformist. There was to be no bank privatisation or staff reforms. Nor would there be no opening up of the farm sector.

The **New Economic Policy** of 1991 aimed at correcting the weaknesses on the fiscal and balance of payments fronts to stabilise the economy. On the structural reform side, the policy sought to remove the rigidities that infested the various sectors of the economy. An effort was to be made to control inflation and release industries from unnecessary controls and regulations so that hurdles in the way of growth would be removed. The fundamentals of the new economic model were to be liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation.

The rupee was devalued. Manmohan Singh explained that this would help export. The budget took a bold step of correcting fiscal imbalance by reducing the fiscal deficit. Singh initiated the gradual reduction of import duties, income tax, and corporate tax.

The finance minister, with the support of his prime minister, specifically targeted the highly restrictive trade and industrial policies. The quotas on the imports of most machinery and equipment and manufactured intermediate goods were removed. There was a rationalisation of the tariff structure and reduction in custom duties, especially on capital goods. Imports of technology were freed.

The **Industrial Policy** of 1991 was revolutionary for the times. Significantly, Narasimha Rao himself held the industries portfolio. The industrial licensing system was made applicable to a much shortened list of environmentally sensitive or security-related industries. The MRTP Act was modified to remove sections that restricted growth or

prevented merger of large business houses. The industries reserved for the public sector was drastically reduced. The public sector was also granted more autonomy. Private investment was made welcome in the infrastructural sector. The restrictions on foreign ownership were liberalised. Foreign investment was gradually liberalised.

The service sector was also liberalised, with private sector allowed to invest in insurance, banking, telecom, and air travel sectors.

The Rao government abolished the Controller of Capital Issues which governed capital issues in India; introduced the SEBI Act of 1992 and the Security Laws (Amendment) to regulate all security market intermediaries; and started the National Stock Exchange as a computer-based trading system.

The system may not have been wholly reformed: because of bureaucratic controls it still took much more time to start a business in India when compared to China or Malaysia; labour laws were not reformed, and the process of exit for losing enterprises continued to be difficult.

Panchayati Raj and Nagarpalika Acts

Though it was Rajiv Gandhi who had initiated the move, it was during the time when Narasimha Rao was prime minister that the Panchayati Raj and municipal government got constitutional status. With the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, a new chapter, Part-IX, was inserted in the Constitution of India. A new Eleventh Schedule covering 29 subjects within the functions of the Panchayats was also added. The amendment is an implementation of one of the Directive Principles of State Policy. States have been given flexibility to take into consideration their geographical, politico-administrative, and other conditions while adopting the Panchayati Raj system.

With the enactment of the 74th Amendment to the Constitution, a new chapter, Part-IX A, has been added to the Constitution. States now have a constitutional obligation to adopt municipalities as per the system prescribed in the Constitution.

In both panchayats and municipal bodies there is reservation for SC/ST and women; this is an attempt to ensure that there is inclusiveness in local self-government.

Handling Security Issues and Space Tech

The Punjab situation was controlled. Rao went in for state elections though there were misgivings. It was for the good as after the 2002 elections, militancy died down.

The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act was passed mainly directed towards eliminating the infiltrators from Pakistan.

The modernisation of the defence sector was given importance, and military spending was increased. Prithvi 1 missile was inducted into the army.

It is widely believed that it was Narasimha Rao who made sure that India's nuclear programme made progress.

Space technology progressed with the successful tests of the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle as well as the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle.

Foreign Policy

The Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991, and the Indians were forced to rethink their foreign policy as there was no Cold War, and bloc politics now had no place in international relations. India's relations with the US gradually improved. But India also tried to build up strong relations with other nations of the West as well as with Japan, Israel, Brazil, and South Africa. Post Cold War, India's foreign policy became closely linked with its economic policy.

Rao launched the Look East policy in an attempt to bring India closer to ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). The strategy involved the creation of close economic and commercial ties, bringing about an increased cooperation in strategic and security matters, and an emphasis on age-old cultural and ideological connections between India and the region. The policy has over time served to strengthen India's political, economic, and cultural relations with the countries of Southeast Asia and the Pacific, besides helping India become an important part of the economic and security dynamics of the region. Significantly, the policy was taken up by governments that came after Narasimha Rao's.

Rao's overture to China, which he visited in 1993, and Iran were useful when Pakistan brought a resolution on India's violation of human rights in Kashmir in the human rights body of the UN: China and Iran did not favour it.

Negative Aspects

There were two main criticisms against Narasimha Rao. One was that he allowed the Babri Masjid demolition and the other was corruption.

The Babri Masjid Demolition

In the late 1980s, the Bharatiya Janata Party had raked up the issue of the Ram Janmabhoomi to its advantage in the 1991 elections. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) was even more vociferous and aggressive on the issue and began organising protests and demonstrations in Ayodhya and in other parts of the country demanding a temple at the site of the Babri Masjid. There was apparently some demolition and building at the site earlier itself, but the administration took no notice. Uttar Pradesh was under BJP rule, and the chief minister at the time was Kalyan Singh.

The VHP announced that on December 6, 1992, work on the temple would begin. Thousands of volunteers—the *kar sevaks*—converged on Ayodhya. While the plan announced was that prayers would be held on a platform near the mosque, when the time came, groups of *kar sevaks* were moving towards the mosque despite being asked not to by the RSS and the police. The crowd became quite uncontrollable and not amenable to reason, their one intention being to demolish the mosque. They were armed with iron rods and other tools and had soon scaled the mosque walls. The BJP leaders gathered there, such as L.K. Advani, are reported to have called these kar sevaks back but to no avail. The police did little to control the situation. The mosque was soon attacked and reduced to rubble. The BJP clarified that it was not a party to the vandalism and that it was an unfortunate thing to have happened. It was more than unfortunate; it was tragic and ominous and would have long-term repercussions. BJP leaders were arrested. Communal riots broke out in Uttar Pradesh and many other parts of the country resulting in many deaths. Bombay was one of the worst sufferers, with the Shiv Sena stoking the violence. In 1993, there were bomb blasts in the city at strategic locations orchestrated by a couple of mafia dons based in Dubai, apparently in retaliation for the attacks on Muslims earlier.

The fact that Kalyan Singh did nothing to stop the situation from turning ugly cannot be condoned; as a chief minister, he was an authority of the State and he should have upheld the law and enforced it. What shocked many and aroused criticism was the non-action of the Centre. Surely, it was pointed out, president's rule should have been imposed in anticipation of trouble and central forces should have been given firm orders to intervene and control the situation. Maybe the prime minister did not want himself and his party to be dubbed anti-Hindu by taking firm action. The Uttar Pradesh government was dismissed and president's rule imposed on the state only after the destruction had taken place.

India's image was damaged world over because of this event and its aftermath of riots. There were dire predictions that India wold be reduced to one of those lawless countries with ineffective government or become a dictatorship of some kind. The predictions did not come true, but the Babri Masjid demolition remains a blot in the history of modern India that continues to echo down the years ominously. In society, where there had so far been no open antagonism between Hindus and Muslims, though a sense of victimhood was felt by both and communal riots did occur, now there was open suspicion and even hostility between the two communities. It would not be fair or true to say that every Muslim and every Hindu felt that way, but the general impression to that effect had been created.

Liberhan Commission A commission was appointed 10 days after the Babri Masjid demolition by order of the home ministry. The one-man commission, comprising Justice Liberhan, a sitting judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, was assigned the task of probing the sequence of events that led to the occurrences at the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid complex on December 6, 1992, resulting in the destruction of the structure. The commission submitted its report some 17 years later in June 2009 when the UPA was in the government.

The commission indicted top BJP leaders, and held 68 people culpable, including L K Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Kalyan Singh, the then-Chief

Minister of Uttar Pradesh. It identified the Kalyan Singh-led BJP government in Uttar Pradesh as the key to the execution of the conspiracy to demolish Babri Masjid. The report of the commission apparently contained no criticism of the 1992 Indian government and then Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. It accepted Rao's contention that it was not possible to legally and constitutionally impose president's rule in Uttar Pradesh in December 1992 before the event.

Corruption Scandals

Till July 1993, the Narasimha Rao government ran smoothly though technically it was a minority government. But in July 1993, the opposition decided to test the strength of the government and brought in a no-confidence motion. The government side on its own did not have the numbers to pass the test. When the no-confidence motion was put to vote, it was found that some members belonging to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and the Janata Dal (Ajit Singh group) had voted against the motion, thus enabling the government to win the vote and remain in power for the full five-year term. It was later alleged that the JMM members had been bribed by Narasimha Rao through a representative.

In 1996, after Rao was no longer prime minister, investigations in the case took place. A special court convicted Rao and his colleague, Buta Singh (who is alleged to have taken the MPs to the prime minister). However, on appeal to a higher court, the decision was overturned, mainly due to the doubt attached to the credibility of Mahato who said he had taken the bribe. Both Rao and Buta Singh were cleared of the charges in 2002.

Rao's name was also dragged into the Harshad Mehta stock market scam and then in the hawala and Lakhubhai cheating cases. Rao was cleared in both cases.

Rao may not have been convicted in any of the cases, but in the public mind the whiff of corruption never faded.

Kashmir

Even as Hindu religious feelings were being whipped up in India by certain groups, there was growing Islamic fundamentalism in the Kashmir valley. It was in the 1980s and the 1990s that militancy grew with the active help of Pakistan. Religious sentiment was intensified and linked to

the liberation of Kashmir from the Indian State. The cry was for '*jihad*' and groups such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba wanted Kashmir to join Pakistan. This group was rapidly gaining prominence, trying to suppress other groups such as JKLF which wanted independence rather than joining Pakistan, and working for vengeance against India for its role in the creation of Bangladesh. The fundamentalism was not confined to fighting the Indian State machinery but extended to changing the way of life with banning cinema, smoking, and drinking alcohol besides compelling women to wear the burqa. The Pandits bore the brunt of the actions of the militants: they were forced to leave their homes and Kashmir and become refugees.

General Elections of 1996

In May 1996, Narasimha Rao resigned following the resounding defeat of the Congress in the General Elections. He also resigned from the post of party chief later.

The elections were fought along three themes—Ayodhya, economy, corruption. Lines were drawn along religious and caste; besides the Congress was torn by factions, and many accusations were made against the Narasimha Rao government from within the party itself for mishandling situations and corruption charges. In the circumstances, the verdict was fractured. No party got enough seats to form a government on its own.

The BJP won the most seats (161), while its allies formed of Samata Party, Shiva Sena, and Haryana Vikas Party won a total of 26 seats, thus making the BJP group get a total 187 seats. The Congress got the second position, while the National Front composed of Janata Dal, Telugu Desam, and Left Front won 114 seats. Another feature that marked the 1996 general elections was that several strong regional and state parties showed no interest in allying with any of the three main contenders for power.

Rise of the Dalit Voice

Even as political parties were getting to represent people on the basis of religion and the OBCs, the Dalits (much more commonly used now than the official scheduled caste or the Gandhian term 'Harijan') were also being consolidated into being represented by their own party. In earlier times, the

Congress had always drawn the Dalit votes, and after the death of Ambedkar, the Dalits found a leader in Jagjivan Ram. The Congress in this aspect was challenged only by the Republican Party in Maharashtra and by the more militant Dalit Panthers, also in the same state. But alongside, as far back as in the 1970s, Kanshi Ram, having quit his government job, had mobilised Dalit government employees into an organisation—the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF). This organisation attracted a large number of followers. Encouraged, Kanshi Ram started a political party, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which, as indicated by the choice of the name 'bahujan', was to represent not just Dalits but other backward castes as well as Muslims and others as well over time. The area of influence was mainly Uttar Pradesh.

The Dalits were drawn by the narrative that the BSP presented—that the Congress was merely using them as vote banks whereas the BSP stood for social justice and change that would take the Dalits along the path of progress. The BSP fought the 1984 elections but won no seat though it got quite a few votes. In the Uttar Pradesh state elections, it made an impressive showing. In 1993, the party won more than 60 seats, mostly drawing away votes from the Congress, and became a major player in Uttar Pradesh politics alongside the Samajwadi Party and the BJP.

Mayawati, a protégé of Kanshi Ram, succeeded him as the leader of the BSP. She was the one who built up alliances with other caste groups and political parties. She won a Lok Sabha seat in 1989. In 1995, In June 1995, she created history by becoming the first-ever Dalit woman in India to serve as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Though her term in office was short, in later years she was to come back as chief minister of the state. In 2007, she became chief minister, and this time she stayed in that post till 2012.

Between 1996 and 1999: Three Prime Ministers

Now began a period of quick change of governments; the period 1996–1999 saw three prime ministers at the helm.

The BJP won its largest tally so far in the 1996

elections, but, even with its allies, it was far from the simple majority required to form a government on its own. The National Front emerged as a contender with the agenda of replacing the Congress or the BJP. The elections also for the first time showed the strength of regional and state parties.

Vajpayee's Short-Lived Term as Prime Minister

As it was the largest party in the Lok Sabha, the BJP was called by President Shankar Dayal Sharma to try and form a government. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, was elected the new Prime Minister of India, replacing P.V. Narasimha Rao of the Indian National Congress in May 1996. However, the party just found no allies to support it, and Vajpayee resigned after just 13 days later rather than lose a confidence vote in the House.

The Congress, as the second largest party, declined the invitation to form a government.

United Front Government: Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral

In the end, the United Front, composed of some 13 parties including the National Front, Tamil Maanila Congress, the DMK, and Asom Gana Parishad, and led by Deve Gowda, formed the government with outside support extended by the Congress party. The Communists later joined the government. The government, however, fell in April 1997 when the Congress party withdrew its support.

During its short tenure, the government signed an agreement on confidence-building measures with China and the Ganga water accord with Bangladesh. The government maintained its refusal to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The government, however, fell in April 1997 when the Congress party withdrew its support. A compromise was reached so as to avoid elections: the Congress agreed to support a government led by a new leader. The United Front elected I. K. Gujral as the new leader, and he was sworn in as prime minister on April 21, 1997.

I.K. Gujral is best known for what has come to be known as the **Gujral Doctrine.** This was a policy which sought friendship, on the basis of sovereign equality and non-interference, with the neighbouring countries of India. Its aim was to create an atmosphere of peace in South Asia.

It enunciated five principles:

(i) With the neighbours like Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka, India does not ask for reciprocity but gives all that it can in good faith and trust.

(ii) No South Asian country will allow its territory to be used against the interest of another country of the region.

(iii) None will interfere in the internal affairs of another.

(iv) All South Asian countries must respect each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

(v) All South Asian countries will settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations.

Though theoretically praiseworthy, critics have pointed out that it may not work very well to believe in the 'inherent goodwill' of openly hostile neighbours.

Gujral managed to maintain good relations with the Congress, which supported his government from outside. Trouble, when it came, came from within his party. The Governor of Bihar gave the Central Bureau of Investigation the permission to take up a corruption case against the chief minister of the state, Lalu Prasad Yadav in the matter of the purchase of fodder (what has come to be called the Fodder Scam). Yadav refused to resign in the face of demands from within and outside the United Front. Gujral personally told him to resign. In the end, Lalu Yadav left the party and formed his own party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal in July 1997. However, as the new party extended its support to the United Front, the government did not fall.

The Gujral government took a controversial decision when it recommended to the president that president's rule be imposed in Uttar Pradesh which was then under Kalyan Singh of the BJP when violence marred the assembly. President K.R. Narayanan sent it back to the government for reconsideration. A decision by the Allahabad High Court also went against the idea of president's rule in Uttar Pradesh.

Then the Jain Commission which had enquired into the conspiracy aspects of the Rajiv Gandhi assassination submitted its report to the government. The government finally tabled the report in Parliament in November. The report criticised the DMK for tacitly supporting the Tamil militants accused in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. This created uproar in the House, and the Congress demanded that the prime minister dismiss the DMK ministers from his government. Gujral refused and the Congress party finally withdrew support from the government on November 28. 1997. Gujral resigned as a result, though he continued to be caretaker prime minister till the next government took over.

General Elections

Fresh elections were held in February–March, 1998. Sonia Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi's widow, entered the political fray and campaigned for the Congress. It was the fourth time since 1989 when a parliamentary election yielded a 'hung' house, indicating that the era of coalitions had become established.

The BJP once again came ahead of the other parties though without a majority of its own. This time round, however, the BJP had formed an alliance with regional parties from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa (now Odisha), and West Bengal. This enabled it to increase its tally of seats, besides attracting new post-poll allies.

NDA Years
(March 1998 – October 1999)

After the elections of 1998, the BJP joined up with several regional parties to stake its chance to form the government. The group became known as the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the BJP was chosen to lead the NDA, and in March 1998, he was sworn in as prime minister, for the second time. The NDA proved its majority in the Lok Sabha.

The government lasted till April 1999 when the AIADMK withdrew from the NDA. In a dramatic no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha on April 17, 1999, the government lost by a single vote. This loss is generally

attributed to the vote of Giridhar Gamang, who, despite having been chief minister of Orissa for a couple of months, had not yet resigned from the Lok Sabha, so was technically still an MP.

With the Opposition not able to come up with an alternative to form the new government, the Lok Sabha was dissolved by President K.R. Narayanan, and fresh elections were held in September–October 1999. Vajpayee remained caretaker prime minister till the elections.

In the meanwhile, Sharad Pawar and some leaders left the Congress when the party chose Sonia Gandhi as its head.

The few months the Vajpayee government was in power were marked by some notable events.

Pokhran II: Operation Shakti

In May 1998, a series of five nuclear explosions was conducted by India at the Indian Army's Pokhran Test Range. This was the second time, the first time being in 1974, that such devices were being tested. Termed Operation Shakti, it involved the underground detonation of a regular fission device, fusion devices, as well as a 'sub-kiloton' device. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee convened a press conference to declare India a full-fledged nuclear state. The main scientists involved were A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (a future President of India) who was a scientific adviser to the prime minister and head of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, and R. Chidambaram who was Director of the Department of Atomic Energy.

May 11, incidentally, is celebrated as National Technology Day.

The world, especially the US, was shocked, as the detonations were conducted with utmost secrecy. The relations between the US and India plunged to an all-time low. The US implemented the Glenn Amendment for the first time. Newer sanctions were imposed, and at one point it looked that relations would never recover.

Pakistan reacted with its own nuclear tests, Chagai I and II, also in May 1998, as if it were responding in kind to India.

In June, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution condemning the Indian and Pakistani tests.

The Lahore Summit

In late 1998 and early 1999, Vajpayee worked towards a diplomatic peace process with Pakistan.

The Delhi-Lahore bus service was inaugurated in February 1999, and Prime Minister Vajpayee travelled to Lahore by the bus. An attempt was made by Vajpayee now to begin a new peace process between India and Pakistan so as to permanently resolve the Kashmir dispute and other conflicts. At a summit at Lahore in February 1999, Prime Minister Vajpayee of India and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan signed the Lahore Declaration, espousing a commitment to dialogue, expansion of trade relations and mutual friendship, undertaking to refrain from intervention and interference in each other's internal affairs, and expressing a commitment to take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons and discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence-building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict, reaffirming their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and their determination to combat this menace and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Kargil War

The *bonhomie* of the bus and the summit at Lahore did not last long. Barely three months after the summit, it was found that a steady infiltration was taking place into the Kashmir valley by armed militants and Pakistanis soldiers, and these intruders had got control of hilltops at the border and unmanned border posts. It came out later that the incursion was planned by the military of Pakistan which was under General Pervez Musharraf, and the civilian prime minister was only told after the plan was under way. The Kargil district was the main centre of this incursion.

The Indian Army first came to know of the incursion from a group of shepherds in May 1999. Swift action was taken to counter the Pakistani infiltration. Both army and the air force (with its operation called 'Safed Sagar') were coordinated in their action. (But the military were told clearly that they were not to cross the Line of Control.) Operation

Vijay was successful and the peaks taken over by the Pakistanis recaptured. The vantage points included Tiger Hill in the Drass sector. These points were crucial as they overlooked the Srinagar-Leh highway which the Pakistanis aimed at occupying and so cutting off this only all-weather road link between the two towns.

In June, Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan is reported to have asked the US to intervene, but the then US president Bill Clinton declined to do so until Pakistani troops were withdrawn from the Line of Control. Nawaz Sharif ordered the operation of the Pakistanis to stop. By July 26, the war was over with India victorious.

The Indians fought a fierce battle in cold and treacherous terrain, and over 500 of the soldiers were killed. The Kargil victory boosted the image of Vajpayee as a decisive and sensible leader and also enthused the public with patriotic feelings.

NDA: Second Stint
(October 1999 – May 2004)

The Kargil war was fresh in the public mind when the country went to the polls in 1999. There was public support for the NDA and the prime minister, in particular. The election results gave the NDA led by the BJP a majority with the support of new constituents such as the Janata Dal (United) and the DMK. Atal Bihari Vajpayee was sworn in as prime minister for the third time on October 13, 1999.

Economic and Social Steps

The NDA government carried forward the economic reforms that had been initiated by the Narasimha Rao government. Infrastructure development got special attention and encouragement. Telecom, highways—the National Highways Development Project and the Golden Quadrilateral—got importance. Rural sector was not ignored: the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was launched to improve rural connectivity with all-weather roads

The services sector was growing and software industry was given a boost. Outsourcing of work from the West created tremendous increase in jobs in India.

The government came out with a new telecom policy that announced a shift from the high fixed licence fee to a more reasonable revenue-share based fee. The government also privatised state monopolies such as VSNL and brought about fiscal changes in the form of duty-free imports.

The Disinvestment Commission was upgraded into a ministry.

With the economy being opened up, foreign companies began tapping Indian markets. Indian pharmaceuticals exported their medicines and brought in precious foreign exchange.

Efforts were made to encourage foreign investment, especially from Europe and the United States.

The government was instrumental in getting through the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act in 2003 to institutionalise financial discipline, reduce India's fiscal deficit, improve macroeconomic management and the overall management of the public funds by moving towards a balanced budget and strengthen fiscal prudence.

The government tried to spread education through the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan for achieving universalisation of primary education.

A highlight of the period was the Constitution 86th Amendment Act, 2002, which placed the right to education among the Fundamental Rights in Part-III of the Constitution.

Terrorist Trouble and Relations with Pakistan

In December 1999, an Indian Airlines flight (IC 814 from Nepal) was hijacked by Pakistani terrorists and flown to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. The government ultimately met the demands of the terrorists and released certain terrorists including Maulana Masood Azhar from prison. There was no explanation forthcoming from the Indian government as to why the external affairs minister personally escorted the terrorists to Afghanistan to exchange them for the passengers. Relations with Pakistan dipped.

But again in July 2001, Vajpayee made an effort to improve relations with Pakistan by inviting Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf to Delhi and Agra for a summit and peace talks. No breakthrough was possible as Musharraf did not agree to leave aside the Kashmir issue.

Then, in December 2001, came the attack on the Parliament House in Delhi, which was carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists. Once again Indo-Pakistani relations dipped. Following this attack and other terrorist attacks, the government got the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) passed.

Relations with the US

With the US, India improved relations with President Clinton coming on a visit to India and efforts were made to expand trade and cooperation on strategic issues.

Kashmir Elections

Kashmir went to elections in September 2002, which were firmly made free and fair with the Election Commission making its effort in that direction. Despite militants threatening the people and telling them to boycott the elections, large numbers of people voted. The National Conference which was in power was voted out. An alliance of the Congress and Peoples Democratic Party was voted to power. Mufti Mohammad Sayeed became the chief minister.

The Downside

In 2001, the defence minister, George Fernandes, was forced to resign following the Barak Missile Deal scandal and another scandal involving the supplies of coffins for the soldiers killed in Kargil. There was also the report of an enquiry commission that the government could have prevented the incursion in Kargil.

Then there was the episode of the BJP party chief, Bangaru Laxman, apparently accepting a bribe which was videoed and telecast—one of the first sting operations by the media.

The Godhra incident and the riots that followed put a blot on the image of India. In February 2002, the Sabarmati Express caught fire at Godhra (in Gujarat) and several pilgrims returning from Ayodhya were killed. It was widely believed that a mob of Muslims had set fire to the compartments, whereas reports also said the fire started inside the compartment was due to a gas cylinder or a stove

catching fire. Riots followed, with Ahmedabad and Baroda being chiefly affected. The riots have been called a pogrom as Muslims were targeted and the violence was unbelievable. It recalled the anti-Sikh riots of 1984. Narendra Modi, who was chief minister of Gujarat at the time, was severely criticised for being unable or unwilling to control the situation. It is believed that Prime Minister Vajpayee was deeply disturbed by the happenings in Gujarat and officially condemned it. It is also believed that he wanted Modi to resign, but others in the party dissuaded him from pursuing that.

Significance of NDA

The NDA government lasted almost its full term, the first non-Congress government to do so. Vajpayee turned out to be an efficient prime minister, ably managing the coalition tightrope politics. With the NDA completing its term, it appeared as if a credible alternative was available to the Congress at the national level. And this was necessary in a truly democratic State. Some of the programmes it launched were noteworthy. Its freeing the economy further helped India.

2004 General Election

The Lok Sabha term was to end in October 2004, but the government decided on early polls; the Lok Sabha was dissolved in February itself and the country went to polls in April–May 2004. Perhaps the BJP thought that the government had done exceptionally well and took the slogan 'India Shining' seriously and misread the feelings on the ground. Perhaps it was encouraged by the party's recent successes in state assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chattisgarh. Even newspapers and magazines misread the situation and predicted that the NDA would win without difficulty. But the NDA was defeated. It is possible that the BJP lost the support of a section of the population because its campaign stressed economic issues rather than the controversial and ideological questions.

The Congress, led by Sonia Gandhi, emerged as the single largest party.

The UPA Years

(May 2004 – May 2009; May 2009 – May 2014)

After the elections, the Congress joined up with minor parties to form the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), which managed more numbers than the NDA. President Abdul Kalam called the UPA to form the government. The UPA with external support from the BSP, Samajwadi Party, Kerala Congress, and the Left parties managed a comfortable majority.

It was expected that Sonia Gandhi, as party president, would be the natural choice for the prime minister's post. She declined the office, despite dramatic entreaties by her party members and the allies, stating that she was following her 'inner voice'. She nominated Manmohan Singh for prime minister. She probably understood that her foreign origin would be exploited by the opposition to create trouble for the government. She, however, remained Congress party president and the UPA chairperson.

UPA Government: First Term

Manmohan Singh, former finance minister, who had initiated the economic reforms when in Narasimha Rao's government, was sworn in as Prime Minister of India on May 22, 2004. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha.

A common minimum programme (CMP) was formulated to guide the policies of the UPA government. As the communist parties had an important role in devising this CMP, the government's policies were perceived to be 'left-of-centre'.

Social Welfare Measures

The reformist tendency of Manmohan Singh in the field of economy was probably curbed by Sonia Gandhi. A National Advisory Council (NAC) had been formed, which Sonia Gandhi chaired. This council had, as its members, social activists with a welfare agenda. The ideas for social welfare that came from the council needed to be adopted by the government.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)—to which the name of Mahatma Gandhi was added later to become MNREGA—was the largest welfare scheme of its kind in the world; it was started in 2006. It guaranteed rural households 100 days of paid labour in a year, with the aim of tackling rural poverty. The programme also sought to help women with one-third of the work mandated for women.

In 2005, the government's health ministry started the National Rural Health Mission.

Under the provisions of the Right to Information Act of 2005, any citizen of India may request information from a 'public authority' which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days. The act also requires every public authority to computerise their records for wide dissemination of certain categories of information so that citizens do not have to formally request for information.

In 2005, Manmohan Singh's government introduced VAT (value added tax) to replace the complicated sales tax.

Foreign Relations

The Manmohan Singh government made efforts for stronger ties with the United States. The prime minister visited the US in July 2005 to initiate negotiations over the Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement. When, in 2006, President George W. Bush visited India, the declaration over the nuclear agreement was made. This gave India access to American nuclear fuel and technology, though in return India would have to allow its civil nuclear reactors to be inspected by the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency). It was only in October 2008 that India and the US finally signed the agreement after further negotiations and approval from the IAEA, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the US Congress. With this agreement, the thirty-year-long ban that the US had placed on nuclear trade with India came to an end.

Manmohan Singh was adamant over the Indo-US nuclear deal saying he would not backtrack from an international commitment even if it led to the fall of his government. In

July 2008, the UPA government faced a confidence vote over the issue, as the Left parties withdrew support to the government. The government managed to win the trust vote.

Manmohan Singh tried to ease relations between India and the People's Republic of China. In 2006, China's President Hu Jintao visited India, and in 2008, the Indian prime minister visited Beijing. In the process, the Nathula Pass was reopened in 2006 after having been closed for more than four decades.

New President

In the meanwhile, in 2007, Pratibha Patil was elected and sworn in as the President of India, the first woman to hold the post in the country. Not very well known, Pratibha Patil was a Congress member, who had been the Governor of Rajasthan, and a close associate of the Nehru-Gandhi family. She was favoured by Sonia Gandhi as a candidate for the president's post.

Terror Attacks

India faced several terror attacks in 2007–08. Even as terrorist acts were carried out by Islamic groups, there were also a number of bomb attacks in which the ostensible targets were Muslims, investigations into which pointed to the role of Hindu groups and individuals. In 2006, a series of explosions occurred at a Muslim cemetery in Malegaon, in Maharashtra. In May 2007, a blast took place in the Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad, then in Andhra Pradesh. In 2007, a bomb exploded at the Ajmer Dargah in Rajasthan. These blasts claimed many lives.

In February 2007, a blast on the Samjhauta Express took place as the train was on its way to Attari in Amritsar, the last railway station on the Indian side. Many Pakistanis were killed as well as some Indians. Initially, it was reported that the main suspects in the terrorist act were the Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. In 2009, the United States Treasury and the United Nations Security Council put in place sanctions on Lashkar-e-Toiba, and Arif Qasmani was named for having had a part in the Samjhauta Express bombing.

However, in 2011, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), established after the NIA Bill was passed in December 2008 following the Mumbai terror attacks, accused eight people of involvement in the Samjhauta blasts. These were all Hindus with extremist views who were, said the NIA, "angry with attacks on Hindu temples by jihadi terrorist activities". They included Naba Kumar Sarkar, alias Swami Aseemanand, Lokesh Sharma, Kamal Chauhan, and Rajinder Chaudhary among others. [In March 2019, however, the four were acquitted by the NIA court citing lack of evidence.]

There was a series of bomb blasts in 2008 in Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan. In September 2008, bombs were set off in a busy marketplace in Delhi. These acts of terrorism were carried out by Islamic fundamentalists often aided by Pakistan. The worst incident was the attack on November 26, 2008, perpetrated by Pakistani terrorists when a group of these young men went through Mumbai and created havoc. They entered the prestigious Taj hotel and held the guests hostage before killing many. They attacked the busy Shivaji rail terminus, again causing the death of innocent people. India's security weaknesses were exposed as these terrorists had apparently reached the coast of India in a small boat and entered the country unnoticed. In the end, nine of the terrorists were killed and one, Ajmal Amir Kasab, was captured. The captive's confession confirmed that Pakistan and, more particularly, the Lashkar-e-Toiba, had masterminded the attack. [On November 11, 2012, a special court issued Kasab's death warrant after a trial. He was hanged to death after being held guilty of 80 offences, including waging war against India.]

Situation in States

Before the country went in for general elections, there were noteworthy changes in state governments. The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), led by Mayawati, won a majority in the assembly elections and formed the government in Uttar Pradesh. Her party's victory is attributed to the fact that it had reached out to the higher castes among the Hindus besides the

Muslims and not confined itself to the Dalits. After a long time, the state was free of a coalition government. This brought stability to the state. In May 2008, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) made an inroad in the South for the first time, forming the government in the state of Karnataka. In Jammu and Kashmir, the National Conference emerged with the largest number of seats and formed a government, with the Congress joining as a junior coalition partner. In Gujarat, Chattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh, the BJP was in power.

Trouble in Kashmir

Kashmir witnessed unrest once again in 2008. When it was decided to allot some forest land for shelters for pilgrims to Amarnath, there were protests in the Valley. There were counter-protests in Jammu, which was dominated by Hindus. Several people were killed in police firing. The series of protests and counter-protests subsided for a time in the winter before a fresh series or protests erupted in 2010, this time over a youth killed in police firing. A large number of people, mostly the young, came out on the streets and they resorted to throwing stones and rocks at the police. The army was called in to control the situation, and this served to increase the resentment of the people. Protests continued, with violence every now and then. The situation worsened when it was reported that a copy of the Quran had been burnt by a Christian priest abroad. Protestors burnt down a school of the Christians. The protestors in Kashmir were getting more and more influenced by the fundamentalists even as the central government would not even think of withdrawing the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from the state. The Kashmir situation continues to simmer.

2009 Election and UPA Back in Power

The country went to the polls in April–May 2009 to elect the 15th Lok Sabha. Posters for the Congress campaign showed three faces: those of Manmohan Singh, Sonia Gandhi (party president), and her son, Rahul Gandhi (who had become general secretary of the party in 2007), confirming the hold

of the 'First Family' and the dynastic trend in the party. The main opposition party, the BJP, projected L.K. Advani as the prime ministerial candidate. (Atal Bihari Vajpayee was not keeping well by this time.) Several regional parties too were in the fray, some of them allied with the BJP and some ready to support the Congress if the occasion demanded.

The election results showed that the Congress was able to increase its tally of seats, though it could not get a majority on its own. The reasons for the endorsement probably were that the middle classes were satisfied with the economy which was doing quite well, and they favoured the nuclear deal with the US; the welfare schemes initiated by the government at the behest of the NAC under Sonia Gandhi appealed to many in the rural sector, especially the women and the underprivileged, and had begun to show positive results; and Rahul Gandhi was expected to and, probably did, appeal to the younger voters.

The UPA was once again in a position to form the government. Manmohan Singh was sworn in as the prime minister on May 22; as per norms, he had submitted his resignation on May 18 to President Pratibha Patil. Manmohan Singh, thus, became the first prime minister since Jawaharlal Nehru in 1962 to be re-elected after completing a full term.

Telangana Issue

The second term of the UPA government was marked by the agitation for a separate state for Telangana. Before the 2004 elections, the Congress had allied with the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) and promised to create a separate state of Telangana out of Andhra Pradesh if it came to power at the Centre. The Congress did very well in Andhra Pradesh in the 2009 elections, but the chief architect of that victory, Y.S.R. Reddy, who was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, was totally opposed to the bifurcation of the state. In the circumstances, the Congress government, now in power at the Centre, went back on its promise on Telangana. [Also ignored was another promise—that a fresh states reorganisation committee would be formed to divide up some

of the larger states. This was because the Left, without whose support the government would not have survived, was strongly opposed to the idea.]

Y.S.R. Reddy died in an air crash, and the agitation for Telangana got a fresh lease of life, with the movement being led by K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR). In November 2009, KCR went on a fast unto death in the cause of Telangana as a separate state; life in Hyderabad was badly disrupted, with KCR's supporters coming out in thousands to protest. The government at the Centre gave in and, in December 2009, announced that the process to form the state was being initiated. The decision caused much resentment among the Congress MPs from coastal Andhra, but it had to be accepted in the end. The Centre appointed a commission headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court, B.N. Srikrishna, to look into the matter of bifurcation. The commission submitted its report in December 2010, but it was rejected by the TRS. After much negotiation, Parliament cleared the Telangana Bill in February 2014. As per the act, Andhra Pradesh was formally divided to form the new state of Telangana. While the two states were to share Hyderabad as capital for ten years, the Centre was to provide funds to Andhra Pradesh (also Seemandhra) to build a new capital. [It was only in June 2014, after a new government took over at the Centre, that Telangana actually came into existence, with KCR as the chief minister.]

Incidentally, in May 2011, there was a historic development on the state government level. West Bengal, where the Left Front had ruled without break since 1977 (itself constituting a record), decided to switch allegiance, and put the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in power. Mamata Banerjee, who had once been in the Congress but had broken away to form and lead the TMC, became the new chief minister of the state.

Social Welfare Measures and Legislations

The UPA government brought in some important social welfare measures in its second term. The **Right of Children**

to Free and Compulsory Education Act, known as the RTE Act, came into being in 2009. The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 had already inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The RTE Act, 2009 put in place what is envisaged under Article 21-A; it means that every child has a right to full-time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school, which satisfies certain essential norms and standards. All private schools (except those recognised as 'minority' educational institutions) are required to enrol children from weaker sections and disadvantaged communities in their incoming class to the extent of 25 per cent of the school enrolment, through the means of simple random selection. These children are to be treated on par with other children in the school, but they will be subsidised by the State. Article 21-A along with the RTE Act came into effect on April 1, 2010.

An attempt was made to get the bill on reserving 33 per cent of seats in the union and state legislatures passed; the bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha, but the government was compelled to shelve it as its own allies, especially the Rashtriya Janata Dal, refused to support it.

The government was, in a way, forced to formulate the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013** to deal with sexual offences against women.

One night in December 2012, a horrific gang rape of a young woman took place in Delhi. Jyoti Singh, accompanied by her friend, got on to a private bus, which had some other men in it. These men, one of whom was a juvenile, with the collusion of the driver and the conductor, brutally raped and tortured the woman and beat up the young man accompanying her as the bus travelled around, even passing police check posts. In the end, the woman and her friend were thrown out on to the roadside. They were found by a passerby who notified the police, and the victims were taken to hospital.

Doctors could not save Jyoti. According to police reports, Jyoti had bravely attempted to fight off her attackers, hence she came to be called 'Nirbhaya' in the media as the real name of the rape victim could not be published. (Her real name was later revealed openly by her mother.) The police were quick to arrest the six culprits. In March 2014, the Delhi High Court found all the defendants guilty of rape, murder, unnatural offences, and destruction of evidence. The high court confirmed death sentence for all four men convicted earlier. (The juvenile was tried under a different law and escaped with a few years in prison, and one of the accused died in jail.) The case went in appeal to the Supreme Court. [It was not till 2018 that the case was finally settled. In May 2017, the Supreme Court rejected the convicts' appeal and upheld the death sentence of the four who had been charged in the murder. The convicts exercised their right to file a review petition to the Supreme Court, but the Supreme Court rejected the review petition in July 2018.]

The gang rape incident led to widespread protests in Delhi and in many other places in India, in spite of the police arresting the culprits quickly. (Incidentally, the protests in India sparked protests across South Asia; marches and rallies took place in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.) The demonstrators who came from all walks of life, but mostly from among the youth, wanted the death penalty to be meted out to the criminals. The protestors in Delhi turned violent and clashed with the security forces. The government was initially high-handed, but ultimately it was forced to climb down.

The government appointed a three-member judicial committee on December 22, 2012. It was headed by J.S. Verma, a former Chief Justice of India and an eminent jurist, and was asked to recommend amendments to the criminal law so as to provide for quicker trial and greater punishment for criminals accused of committing sexual assault against women. In its report, submitted in January 2013, the committee was critical of the government, the police, and even the public

for its apathy. It identified 'failure of governance' as the fundamental cause for sexual crime. The committee made recommendations on laws related to rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, child sexual abuse, medical examination of victims, police, electoral and educational reforms.

The committee did not recommend the death penalty for rapists. It suggested a range of prison sentences—from seven years to life—for different situations arising from rape and gang rape. Recognising the need to curb all forms of sexual offence, the committee recommended suitable punishments for acid attacks and trafficking. It made it incumbent on the police to register every complaint of rape. It called for the police to be sensitised and trained to handle sexual assault cases appropriately. Civil society, it said, should report every case of rape that came to its knowledge. It wanted all marriages to be registered. Under the Indian Penal Code, though sexual intercourse without consent is prohibited, an exception is made for sexual intercourse without consent within marriage. The committee recommended that there should be no such exception to marital rape.

Besides suggesting time-bound trials for rape cases and the need for stringent punishment for all forms of sexual harassment, including stalking and groping, the committee also called for a review of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in conflict areas so that sexual offences by those in the forces are brought under ordinary criminal law.

The panel strongly recommended that 'law enforcement agencies do not become tools at the hands of political masters'. It pointed out that members of the police force must understand 'their accountability is only to the law and to none else in the discharge of their duty'.

The committee also observed that the primary responsibility of the judiciary is to enforce fundamental rights. It called upon the judiciary to be vigilant.

Calling for reforms to deal with criminalisation of politics, the committee suggested that a candidate be

disqualified from participating in the electoral process for sexual offences, and that filing of a charge sheet and cognisance by the court should be sufficient for disqualification of a candidate.

The committee wanted education facilities to be provided by the State to the homeless and abandoned children.

In February 2013, the government promulgated an ordinance amending the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Evidence Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act in matters relating to sexual offences. In March 2013, the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act** was passed by Parliament to replace the ordinance. Several new sections were inserted in the existing laws to define and bring within the ambit of law such offences as acid attack, which would attract a 10-year jail term extendable to life imprisonment or fine or both; sexual harassment, with punishment of imprisonment ranging from 1 year to 3 years, fine or both; voyeurism, punishable with imprisonment from 3 years to 7 years; stalking, punishable with imprisonment of 1 year to 5 years; and gang rape, punishable with imprisonment up to 20 years extendable to life imprisonment. The age of consent has been increased from 16 years to 18 years. Repeat offences in certain cases have been made punishable with life imprisonment or death. Besides, a quick trial and conviction is called for in cases of rape.

The law has been criticised mainly for not bringing marital rape within its ambit, and for doing away with gender neutrality in the cases of sexual offences and rape because it recognises these offences only against women.

In 2013, the government pushed through the **National Food Security Act and the Right to Food Act**. This was aimed at providing subsidised food grains to the beneficiaries of the targeted public distribution system. Though it was pointed out that this kind of distribution may not reach the targeted population due to the corrupt and inefficient

functioning of the public distribution system, NAC did not favour the idea of cash transfers/ food coupons. As one critic has observed, the contribution of the NAC to the agenda of 'inclusive growth' was to ensure that inclusiveness was to be through patronage and protection rather than promotion of livelihood and employment opportunities for the poor. Clearly, the government faced some difficulties is reconciling its own priorities with those of the NAC.

Space Venture to Mars

Amidst all the negative aspects that occupied the political discussion, it was heartening to watch the success of Indian space scientists. In November 2013, the first interplanetary mission of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), officially called the Mars Orbiter Mission and popularly known as *Mangalyaan*, was launched. [On September 24, 2014, India's space agency became the fourth agency to have launched a spacecraft that was successful in reaching Mars orbit, after the Russian, American, and the European space agencies. What is more, India became the first country to have succeeded in reaching Mars in its very first attempt, and at a remarkably low cost.]

Corruption Charges and Lokpal Act

The UPA government in its second term could also be credited with having got the Lokpal and Lokayuktas bill passed in December 2013. But here too it was compelled by circumstances to do so.

The second term of the UPA government was fraught with allegations of corruption against it. There was a controversy over the allocation of the 2G and 3G spectrum (telecom licences), which were alleged to have been given away at very low rates. In 2010, the Comptroller and Auditor General's report seemed to confirm this. Then came the Commonwealth Games scandal, with reports of huge sums of money changing hands for the procurement of contracts for various infrastructure projects. While the 2G/ 3G scam could be laid at the doors of an ally of the Congress, the

Commonwealth Games scam led to a Congress minister. The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General in 2012 charged that coal block allocations had led to a loss to the exchequer because the allocations were based on favouritism; this report actually cast an aspersion on Manmohan Singh's reputation, which had always been that of a clean politician, as the allocations had been made when the coal portfolio was with him (2006–09). The corruption stories were extensively covered and debated on the numerous television channels and brought the subject to a large number of people.

Anti-corruption movements became prominent in 2011. Anna Hazare, a well-known social worker from Ralegaon Siddhi village in Maharashtra, came to Delhi in April 2011 and sat on a 12-day fast to protest against the corruption in government and the failure to tighten anti-corruption legislation. His specific demand was that a Lokpal be established. Many activists joined him in the protest. 'India Against Corruption' was an organisation created to support Anna Hazare in his efforts. One of its main founders was Arvind Kejriwal, a Magsaysay Award winner and an activist for the right to information movement. Many of its members were prominent persons in public life–lawyers, civil servants, and academicians. Large numbers of people, including celebrities, came out to support Anna Hazare. And the media coverage added to the importance of the event. The 2011 movement was significant in Indian political history in that it provided people the opportunity to express frustration. Most people had experience of having had to bribe officials and politicians for getting even legitimate work done. A series of demonstrations and protests against official corruption took place across India.

The government seemed to be rattled by the protests and responded by announcing that it would set up a committee to hammer out a lokpal bill. It said the committee would have five cabinet members and five persons nominated by India Against Corruption. Anna Hazare broke his fast and expressed the belief that the bill would be passed before Independence

Day that year. The committee, however, failed in its effort as there was deep distrust between the government representatives and the activists, and they could not agree on some major aspects.

Soon there was another protest meeting, this time led by the yoga guru, Baba Ramdev, demanding the repatriation of unaccounted money from Swiss and other foreign banks. Though he was not like Anna Hazare in that he had political ambitions (he was considered close to the BJP), he had a large following. Once again, there were large numbers joining in the protest. The government came down hard on the protestors after its efforts at conciliation failed. Ramdev was ordered to stay out of Delhi.

The Lokpal Bill, approved by the government in July 2011, was rejected by the activists on the ground that it excluded several high functionaries from the ambit of the lokpal's jurisdiction.

Anna Hazare declared that he would once again go on a fast in the cause of a better lokpal bill. Now a fiasco occurred, with the government arresting him. Anna Hazare willingly went to jail and refused bail, and began his fast right there, putting the officials in a quandary. The streets of Delhi filled with protestors supporting him. The government had no option but to release him. Anna Hazare continued his fast at the Ramlila Grounds. A throng of supporters gathered to express solidarity. The protests were, on the whole, non-partisan, with most protesters unwilling to let political parties make use of them in pushing political agendas. The movement was nowhere near Jaya Prakash Narayan's 'Sampurna Kranti' (total revolution) agitation of 1974–77. The difference was that the protest in 2011 was held in full media glare; after all, the era of the 24×7 television had arrived. The government failed in its efforts to move Anna Hazare from his position. In the end, towards the end of August, Parliament passed a resolution moved by the then finance minister, Pranab Mukheree, that a revised Lokpal Bill would be passed, which would meet the main demands made by Anna Hazare and his supporters. This led to Anna Hazare breaking his fast.

The Anna Hazare protest did not succeed in making the government to immediately legislate on the lokpal. Also, the supporters split on the issue of forming a political party. Anna Hazare and some of the protesters were not ready to enter the political arena. However, Arvind Kejriwal was in favour of entering politics. Kejriwal and some others formed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on November 26, 2012. It was going to create history by getting a stupendous majority in the Delhi Assembly elections of 2015, decimating the Congress and reducing the BJP to a few seats.

The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill was first tabled in the Lok Sabha in December 2011 and, after being passed, was tabled in the Rajya Sabha in the same month. The vote failed to take place after a marathon debate. In May 2012, the bill was referred to a select committee of the Rajya Sabha. In December 2013, it was passed by both the Houses of Parliament. On January 1, 2014, it received assent from President Pranab Mukherjee (who had been elected President of India in 2012).

The **Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013** mandates the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for states to enquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters. The act extends to whole of India, including Jammu and Kashmir, and is applicable to 'public servants' within and outside India. The act laid out the organisation, jurisdiction, and powers of the Lokpal.

The jurisdiction of the Lokpal will include the prime minister. If, however, a complaint is filed against the prime minister, certain conditions will apply.

The Lokpal will also have jurisdiction over ministers and MPs but not in the matter of anything said in Parliament or a vote given there.

The Lokpal's jurisdiction will cover all categories of public servants. The Lokpal's own members have been included in the definition of 'public servant'.

Critics have found two important shortcomings in the

Lokpal Act: the Lokpal was not made a constitutional body; and the judiciary was excluded from the ambit of the Lokpal.

Conditions Before General Election

When the country went to the general elections in April–May 2014, much of the positive achievements of the UPA in its second term was relegated to the background, while the corruption allegations remained in most people's minds. The rural sector faced problems. Farmers committed suicide on a large scale, mainly due to indebtedness, crop failure, drought, and socio-economic factors. Farmer distress did not seem to have come down even though the UPA government in 2008 had announced a loan waiver of Rs 70,000 crore. The UPA government rolled out several socio-economic programmes, but their implementation was poor in most cases.

There was also dissatisfaction on a more general level. Common people were hit by price rise and unemployment, not to say lack of development. There was what analysts called 'a policy paralysis' in the second term of the UPA that led to stagnation on the development front, and many progressive economic ideas remained on paper. The fiscal deficit and a sharp downslide of the rupee led to instability in the economy.

It did not seem as if the UPA was coming back to power in 2014.

The 2014 General Election

The 2014 General Election, according to many analysts, was fought as if it were a presidential election. However, most of the elections to the Lok Sabha down the years have been based on projecting a strong personality: it was Jawaharlal Nehru's campaigning which, in the main, drew the people's support; then Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi too were the main draws. Even Sonia Gandhi when she took over the Congress leadership and campaigned was considered to be the future prime minister, though there were rumblings about her 'foreign origin'. In those times, however, the other parties

lacked a matching figure to project. The Congress now fielded Rahul Gandhi as the face of the party, who, if the party won, would be the prime minister. Manmohan Singh had clearly stated that he was not ready to be prime minister again. Rahul Gandhi had been appointed vice-president of his party in January 2013, reinforcing the perception that the party followed the dynastic path and was full of sycophants. The BJP, on the other hand, did have a more credible party structure in place: party decisions were based on discussion rather than on what a single individual said, party posts were filled through elections, and at this point of time, there were several young leaders, including state chief ministers, who could be projected as a future leader of the country. It was Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat, who was chosen as the prime ministerial candidate of the BJP.

Rahul Gandhi, as an opponent of Narendra Modi, had little political experience and was a lackadaisical politician lacking the skills of an effective speaker. In his years in the Lok Sabha, he had made no noteworthy contribution. He was no match for Modi's oratory skills and his indefatigable energy as he campaigned through the country. Even as Modi referred more than once to the dynastic nature of the Congress leadership, the lustre of the 'First Family' was fading, on the whole, in the public mind. Modi pushed sectarian concerns that were associated with the BJP to the back burner and made 'development' the plank of his campaign. The methods of campaigning adopted by the BJP were also modern; the party made wide and effective use of the social media, hiring professionals who gave striking slogans and brought the latest electioneering methods to work for the BJP. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) cadres went all out to help the BJP. Also, the BJP fought the elections as part of the NDA. It made effective alliances with the regional parties, which were part of the NDA.

The electorate was slowly but steadily changing. The public, especially the youth, had a new outlook. With growing

urbanisation and accompanying migration, caste equations had changed. Modi minimised appeals for votes on the basis of caste. Modi's firm commitment to development, industrialisation, and job creation appealed to the young and inspired hope in the public.

The country went to the polls to elect the 16th Lok Sabha in April–May 2014. When the votes were counted, the BJP emerged with a majority on its own, with 282 seats. The Congress won just 44 seats, its worst performance in elections so far. The BJP showed remarkable success in most states; the exceptions were West Bengal, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. Its vote share on all-India basis increased from about 19 per cent to about 31 per cent.

The NDA Government

(May 2014 – May 2019)

Though the BJP had a majority on its own, it did not ignore its allies; it was the NDA that formed the government on May 26, 2014. Narendra Modi took his oath as prime minister along with some members of his council of ministers; the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, administered the oath of office. The venue was the forecourts of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in Delhi. The swearing-in ceremony was the first where all SAARC heads were invited, and all attended. A non-Congress government was in power after 10 years, and a single party had a full majority after a long while.

The Modi government declared its intention to adopt a developmental agenda–*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas* (roughly translated, 'together with all, development for all'). There was to be greater inclusion, social and financial, and better accountability and transparency of government working. There was to be less government and more governance. The government said it would work for cooperative federalism, economic prosperity, and improving the image of India in the world. Its work at the end of five years was a mix of positives and negatives.

Digital India: a Step Forward in e-Governance

One of the basic aims of the Modi government was to encourage electronic governance. Considering the importance of reducing the paperwork involved in the public-government interface and thereby lowering the corruption levels, the Modi government launched the Digital India campaign within three months of taking office, in August 2014. The success of several socio-economic and governance programmes, existing as well as intended to be launched, depended upon the efficacy of Digital India.

The idea was to electronically empower the Indian citizen and the economy. The programme was designed to get all government departments and the people of India to connect with each other digitally or electronically, so that governance could be improved. The government also intended to enhance and improve connectivity of all villages and rural areas through internet networks.

There is no doubt that e-infrastructure, e-participation, and government e-services were put in place and made to work to improve transparency. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI), a payment system allowing mobile-enabled money transfers between bank accounts, and the Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) for a less-cash economy were developed and put to good use, and certainly proved helpful to the citizens.

Socio-Economic Policies and Programmes of Importance

The NDA government under Narendra Modi took some noteworthy steps in the economic field. While some of the policies leveraged past ideas, such as Aadhaar or the Goods and Services Tax (GST), other ideas, like demonetisation and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, were new.

Disbanding Planning Commission and Setting up NITI Aayog

Almost one of the first acts of the NDA government was to scrap the Planning Commission and set up in its place

the NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog. The Independent Evaluation Office submitted an assessment report to Prime Minister Modi on May 29, 2014, recommending that the Planning Commission be replaced with a 'control commission'. The union cabinet scrapped the Planning Commission in August 2014. On January 1, 2015, after a cabinet resolution was passed to replace the Planning Commission with the NITI Aayog, the formation of the NITI Aayog was announced by the Government of India. This body, too, like the Planning Commission was established by executive order. The NITI Aayog was conceived as a policy think tank of the Government of India. Its aim was to enhance cooperative federalism by fostering the involvement and participation of state governments of India in the economic policy-making process using a bottom-up approach. It, unlike the Planning Commission, would not allocate funds to the states for different programmes. NITI Aayog comprises, in the main, the Prime Minister of India as the chairperson and a governing council comprising the chief ministers of all the states and lieutenant governors of union territories.

JAM Trinity: Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile

The NDA government was instrumental in bringing about an important reform which was given a catchy abbreviated form, JAM, for Jan Dhan Yojana, Aadhaar, and mobile number. The reform was to directly transfer subsidy to the beneficiary.

The **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana** was announced by the prime minister in his Independence Day speech, and it was launched on August 24, 2014. It was one of the largest schemes in the world for financial inclusion, directed towards helping those persons so far without a bank account to open a bank account (without minimum balance requirement), get a debit card, and access to social security schemes like insurance and pension. There is no doubt that the scheme served to bring about a huge increase in bank accounts being opened, and over the years bring in a considerable amount of money into the formal banking system. The first steps of

moving unbanked Indians towards organised finance were thus taken. Criticism that privacy and security are affected need to be addressed, but the advantages of the poor getting access to modern finance cannot be denied.

A tool for identity mapping that was launched by the UPA in January 2009, **Aadhaar** was strengthened and institutionalised by the new government. The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) was established as a central government agency with the objective of collecting the biometric and demographic data of residents, storing them in a centralised database, and issuing a 12-digit unique identity number called Aadhaar to each resident. Aadhaar was put to use by the NDA government in improving the delivery of services to the citizens. The NDA government managed to get Parliament to enact the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act in March 2016. The Centre began identifying the recipients of the LPG subsidy by insisting that consumers link their gas connections and bank accounts to their Aadhaar.

Though the Supreme Court restricted the use of Aadhaar to welfare schemes in which the people receive benefits from the government, the system brought down wastage and corruption in the transfer of benefits.

Several subsidy schemes that had been designed to ensure a minimum standard of living to the poor took different routes to reach the beneficiary. The Centre and the states supplied rice, wheat, pulses, cooking oil, sugar, and kerosene at heavily subsidised prices through the PDS. Power, fertilisers, and oil were sold below market prices to certain sections of the population. The MGNREGA operated through the panchayats which paid minimum wages to the workers. As these subsidies made their way to the target beneficiary, there were leakages on the way, with corruption and inefficiencies reducing the final amounts. The **JAM trinity** was intended to reduce the leakages and ensure that the real beneficiaries got their due by doing away with the intermediaries: Aadhaar would help in foolproof identification

of the correct citizens, while Jan Dhan bank accounts and mobile phones would facilitate direct transfers of funds into the targeted person's accounts. To get the money into people's hands, greater use of **mobile payments** technology was to be used. Transfer of money could be quick as well as secure and convenient through use of mobiles. Over time, if leakages are stopped and savings for the government increased, the burden on the taxpayer would go down. Moreover, with lower subsidies and fiscal deficit, India's international credit standing would improve.

Health Policy

A new **National Health Policy** was launched in January 2015. Government spending was not increased; instead, the role of private healthcare organisations was emphasised. In this, the Modi government showed a different path from that of the UPA government, which had supported programmes to assist public health goals. Several national health programmes, including those aimed at controlling tobacco use and supporting health care for the elderly, were merged with the National Health Mission. In 2018, the **Ayushman Bharat** programme, a government health insurance scheme, was launched.

On October 2, 2014 was launched the **Swachh Bharat Mission** (Clean India Mission)**,** Prime Minister Modi's flagship sanitation campaign, the belief being that sanitation was basic to ensuring good health. It was a nationwide campaign in India aimed at cleaning up the streets, roads, and infrastructure of India's cities, towns, and rural areas, and doing away with manual scavenging. The main aim was to make the country free of open defecation to which purpose government encouraged the building of toilets. In 2018, the World Health Organisation said thousands of deaths from diarrhoea were averted in rural India after the launch of the sanitation mission.

Steps Directed Towards Economic Reform

The Modi government's economic policies focused on liberalising the economy. The foreign direct investment

policies were liberalised to allow more foreign investment in several industries, including in defence and the railways.

Well aware that the job situation was not good and that India's demographic dividend could rapidly turn from an asset to a liability, the Modi government initiated the **Make in India** scheme in September 2014. It was a flagship programme to boost the domestic manufacturing industry and attract foreign investment in the Indian economy. Along with it, many other programmes were also put in place, such as **Start Up India, Stand Up India, Skill India**, and so on. The success of these programmes was not up to expectations, but they did make some progress.

Parliament amended the **Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996** to expedite the arbitration of commercial disputes. The amended law tackled issues of conflicts of interest and brought disclosures by arbitrators into the ambit of the law. Time limit was set on the arbitration procedure.

The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code** was a new law enacted in 2016 to consolidate the existing laws related to insolvency in India and to simplify the process of insolvency resolution so as to enable easy exit in cases of insolvency of individuals and companies. This law replaced several overlapping provisions contained in various laws, such as the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985, the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993, the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (also known as the Sarfaesi Act), and the Companies Act, 2013, among others. With the new law in place, banks and other creditors could hope to recover their loans from the bankrupt companies in a time-bound and efficient way, entrepreneurship could be promoted, availability of credit could be maximised, and a balance of the interests of all the stakeholders maintained.

Unaccounted money has been a bane of Indian economy. The **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act**

of 2016 tightened the law in the use of unaccounted, tax-evaded money for what is known as 'benami' transactions through the purchase of property. Under the amended law, authorities were empowered to provisionally attach and eventually confiscate benami properties. Jail terms of between one and seven years and a fine are prescribed for offenders.

The **Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act** of 2016 was another policy initiative of the NDA government. As per the law, a regulator—the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA)—was to be established in every state to oversee the sector and "protect the interest of consumers in the real estate sector" through an adjudicating mechanism and appellate tribunal. It was made mandatory for every real estate project to be registered with its state's RERA. Unfortunately, this law required to be enforced by state governments.

The **Fugitive Economic Offenders Act** (FEOA), which came into force in April 2018, was required to tackle the large fraud cases reported by banks. Under the law, if an economic offender flees the country to avoid due process, he/she can be declared a 'fugitive economic offender' and their properties can be confiscated and auctioned to recover at least part of the debt.

The government adopted the **Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy** (HELP) in 2016, with the major guiding principles of enhancing domestic oil and gas production; bringing substantial investment; generating sizeable employment; enhancing transparency; and reducing administrative discretion. The policy envisaged providing a uniform licence for exploration and production of all forms of hydrocarbon, such as oil, gas, coal bed methane, etc., instead of the earlier system of issuing separate licences for each kind of hydrocarbon; an open acreage policy, i.e., giving the option to a hydrocarbon company to select the exploration blocks throughout the year without waiting for the formal bid round from the government; easy-to-administer revenue

sharing model; and the freedom to market and price the crude oil and natural gas produced (subject to a ceiling price). This policy was in keeping with government's stated intention of 'Minimum Government Maximum Governance'.

On November 8, 2016, a controversial and the most criticised step of the Modi government was taken when the prime minister in a sudden address to the nation announced that the Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes would cease to be legal tender with effect from that midnight. The step of **demonetisation** was taken suddenly so as to catch on the backfoot the corrupt who held on to unaccounted money, and to curb the fake notes and terror financing from across the border. The impact of the project was mixed at best. Sudden withdrawal of notes led to problems on the ground besides the hardship borne by ordinary people as they sought to exchange the old notes for new. Real estate was adversely affected, growth slowed due to reduced demand, supply chains were disrupted, and uncertainty increased, at least in the short term. There was a decline in cash-sensitive stock market sectoral indices like realty, fast-moving consumer goods and automobiles, small and medium enterprises, and the informal, cash-driven economy suffered greatly. The agricultural sector was also adversely affected because transactions in this sector are heavily dependent on cash.

Critics pointed out that, in essence, demonetisation had not met the government's goal of wiping out black money from the Indian economy. But the move succeeded in that it brought most of the cash into the formal system. At least some of it could have been unaccounted, which could now be tracked. Among the positive impacts of demonetisation, one can point to the increase in AUM (assets under management) of mutual fund industry. The government managed to widen its tax base, leading to an increase in the tax revenue. People began to increase bank balances instead of hoarding cash (even if legitimate) in different corners of the house. People also began to turn to the digital payment

systems. At another level, demonetisation proved that Indians can adapt to changes, and it made people financially aware about the different spending options. Even the local traders selling from their carts quickly and smoothly switched over to e-commerce payment systems.

The Modi government tried to bring in black money through several schemes, none of which were amnesty schemes. One was the **Income Declaration Scheme** (IDS) in 2016. The other option was the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana** (PMGKY) launched in December 2016 after demonetisation, which provided an opportunity to declare unaccounted wealth and black money in a confidential manner and avoid prosecution after paying a fine of 50 per cent on the undisclosed income. Reportedly, a total 64,275 people disclosed Rs 65,250 crore under the IDS, while assets worth Rs 5,000 crore were declared under the PMGKY. In 2015, the government had enacted the **Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act** under which the government provided a one-time window for compliance.

It is doubtful if demonetisation had an adverse effect on the BJP politically. In elections to state assemblies held in 2017, the BJP and its allies won the required majorities to form the government in six out of seven state legislative assemblies, and among these was the most populous state of Uttar Pradesh.

The biggest reform push of the Modi government came in the form of the **Goods and Services Tax** (GST). It overhauled the Centre-state financial relations in a major way. The move towards GST began long ago, but was expressed by the then union finance minister under the UPA in his budget speech for 2006–07. At the time, the proposal was opposed by many political parties, including the BJP. The government then could not push it through. The NDA government achieved something noteworthy in getting the states to cooperate in the effort to introduce GST, considered

to be the biggest tax reform since independence. It was in 2016 that the Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act could be enacted after duly being ratified by the required number of states, after which the GST could be launched. It changed the system of how the Centre and states taxed goods and services and shared the revenue. After the GST was in place, imposition of taxes on goods and services was not to be through legislation but was placed in the domain of the GST Council that consisted of the central and state finance ministers. GST replaced a number of central and state taxes and eased the flow of goods across state borders. It, however, left five petroleum products and alcohol for human consumption out of its ambit. There were glitches in implementation, and frequent changes as directed by the GST Council. It was criticised for the inept implementation as well as for the huge compliance burden for small enterprises in its initial launch. But such a major step was bound to have certain problems.

Efforts were also made to tackle the non-productive assets of public sector banks.

Farmers

Problems in the agriculture sector increased over the years. So many years after independence, Indian agriculture still depended on monsoons and proved to be a gamble. The Narendra Modi government had declared its intention of doubling farmers' income in real terms by 2022, moving away from the historical focus on increasing production. New crop insurance scheme and higher funding for irrigation to counter weather risks were announced by the NDA government.

Several schemes were rolled out for the agriculture sector. The government tried introducing some new ideas at the beginning of the term, such as neem-coated urea, soil health cards, and crop insurance, but the crisis in agrarian sector was not resolved. A number of marketing reforms were initiated to create 'one nation, one market' in agriculture.

An attempt was made to get farmers to sell online. But as the subject of agriculture is a state subject, reforms needed to be endorsed by the states. The APMC Act could not be reformed.

The government agreed to the demand for a higher minimum support price. In 2019, it announced the central sector scheme, 'Pradhan Mantri **KI**san **SA**mman **N**idhi (PM-KISAN)'. The aim was to supplement the financial needs of the farmers in procuring various inputs to ensure proper crop health and appropriate yields, commensurate with the anticipated farm income. This followed the announcement in the interim budget of February 2019 that farmers with less than five acres each, who account for over 85 per cent of India's farm holdings, would get Rs 6,000 each annually.

Over the years, India became self-sufficient in food grains, but a large number of farmers remained impoverished. The sector suffers from some basic problems, which no government has been able to tackle. The young gradually left farming as an occupation, preferring to migrate to the towns and cities. Suicides by farmers, mainly because of indebtedness and crop loss due to vagaries of weather, did not abate.

Infrastructure

The Modi government did well in the infrastructure sector: the speeding up of highway construction, the new Bharatmala and Sagarmala projects, the building or revival of regional airports and regional air connectivity, the Udaan scheme, and much work on modernising and expanding railways are all achievements to its credit. The Ujala LED bulb scheme may have been started by the previous regime, but the Modi government expanded the scheme and halved the price of each bulb.

Welfare Schemes

The NDA government delivered on a large number of important public goods schemes, some of which were built on the initiatives of the previous government, and others of

its own design. The major positive aspect of the programmes conducted by the NDA government lay in its implementation which was more efficient.

As part of the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** initiative, the number of rural houses built increased considerably, with several beneficiaries getting their due. There was also a large push on rural electrification to ensure all villages had an electricity connection by 2018 under the **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana**. Under the **Ujjwala Yojana**, the government aimed to provide LPG connections to below poverty line households in the country to replace polluting cooking fuels used in rural India with the clean and more efficient liquefied petroleum gas.

The **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme** was launched in 2015 with the aim of reducing the female infanticide rate by encouraging education and welfare of the girl child. Also launched in 2015 was the **Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana**, the primary objective of the scheme being the promotion and implementation of the welfare programmes for the girl child.

The **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme** (MGNREGS) had been criticised by Modi when the UPA was implementing it. But after coming to power, the Modi government did not discontinue the scheme, but improved it in various ways, especially by focusing on productive work to be undertaken, geo-tagging the assets created under the scheme in an attempt to bring transparency at the click of a button and check leakages.

Several pension schemes which had been initiated by earlier governments were continued with modifications, and some new ones were begun.

Security

Tackling Maoists

The Maoist threat seems to have been suppressed in many regions where they were operating earlier. Chhattisgarh, however, faced Maoist attacks every now and then. But the

situation improved in recent years. While Maoist-led violence remained a major concern in Bastar division, significant progress has been made in restricting Maoists to the state's southern districts. Improved road connectivity and better equipped and trained security forces helped to improve the situation.

In 2015, the government had launched a National Policy and Action Plan for the security and development of areas affected by Naxalite/Maoist insurgency, and for improving the training and equipment of the security forces. In the wake of the demonetisation drive, there was a halt in insurgent activity, as funds had, indeed been squeezed out.

In May 2019, however, an IED blast was carried out by Maoists in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra. The Maoists targeted an anti-insurgency operations team. Gadchiroli and Gondia have areas contiguous with the Dandakaranya region of Chhattisgarh.

Kashmir Situation and the Pakistani Involvement

The situation in Kashmir cannot be discussed without considering the actions of Pakistan. The volatile security scenario in the Indian state is a manifestation of Pakistan's proxy war with India, combined with the unsettled political issues of the state.

In November–December 2014, elections were held to elect the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly. The regional People's Democratic Party (PDP) emerged as the single largest party but could not form a government on its own. It was only in February 2015 that the BJP and the PDP decided to join together to form a government. In March, the coalition government was sworn in, and for the first time, the BJP was part of a government in the state. Mufti Mohammed Sayeed of the PDP became the chief minister. But in January 2016, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed died, and this created problems for the coalition as the mufti's daughter and successor as head of the PDP, Mehbooba Mufti, was not keen to take the post of chief ministership in association

with the BJP. As the alliance seemed to be in a crisis, Governor's rule was promulgated. With the problems somewhat ironed out, Mehbooba Mufti took her oath as chief minister of the state in April 2016, the first woman to hold the position in the state.

Street protests started in Kashmir in July 2016 following the killing of Burhan Wani, a commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen, by security forces. Curfew was imposed, but the protesters defied curfew and indulged in stone pelting against security forces and police. Indian security forces, trying to control the protesters, used pellet guns, which, although considered 'non-lethal', caused permanent eye damage in many cases. This only worsened the situation. In August 2017, Abu Dujana, the Pakistani commander of banned terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, and his aide Arif Nabi Dar, were killed after a gun battle with government troops in Kashmir's Pulwama district. There were violent protests over this too.

Differences in the coalition government came to the fore. Ultimately, the uneasy coalition came to an end in June 2018 when the BJP pulled out of the government. The immediate cause for the break between the two parties lay in their differences over the continuation of the Ramzan ceasefire. The militants continued with their terror tactics even during the ceasefire: the several terror incidents included the murders of journalist Shujat Bukhari and of army jawan, Aurangzeb. The union home minister was firm that terrorism had to be dealt with, ceasefire or no ceasefire. The alliance, in any case, had no ideological affinity and even lacked functional coordination. Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti tendered her resignation. The state was later placed under Governor's rule again.

In the meanwhile, terrorist attacks on Indian forces took place every now and then. The Pathankot Air Force Station was attacked in January 2016, purportedly by terrorists belonging to Jaish-e-Mohammed. On June 25, 2016, a Central Reserve Police Force convoy was ambushed en route

from Pantha Chowk to the town of Pampore, in Pulwama district, for which the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba subsequently claimed responsibility. Early morning on September 18, 2016, four heavily armed persons entered the administrative block of the army camp in the Uri sector, some 100 km from Srinagar, and killed a number of soldiers. It was the most serious attack on an army camp in 26 years. After a gun battle, all four terrorists were killed. Jaish-e-Mohammed was suspected of being involved in the attack. India conducted **surgical strikes** in retaliation on September 29, 2016, against terrorist launch pads across the Line of Control in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The Indian Army said that a number of militants were neutralised in the operation. However, this did not act as much of a deterrent as, on the night of October 3, 2016, terrorists fired at and lobbed grenades on a Rashtriya Rifle battalion in Baramulla. The attackers were reported to have been Pakistani nationals belonging to Jaish-e-Mohammad. The border continued to be tense for some time, with several attacks being perpetrated by the Pakistanis and the Indian side forced to return fire.

On February 14, 2019, a convoy of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was the target of a bomb blast when it was attacked by a vehicle-borne suicide bomber in the Pulwama district on the Jammu Srinagar Highway. The attack, said to be the deadliest against Indian forces in Kashmir in decades, killed 40 CRPF personnel besides the attacker. The Jaish-e-Mohammad claimed responsibility for the attack.

In the early hours of February 26, Mirage fighter jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF) took off from various air bases in India and crossed the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, and targeted the Jaish-e-Mohammed terror camp in Balakot in the Khyber Pakhtunwa province with missiles. India termed the airstrike an 'intelligence-led, non-military, pre-emptive' operation. According to IAF briefings to the government, 80 per cent of the bombs had been successful in hitting the targets and had inflicted the requisite damage

to the enemy locations. Pakistan's military, however, said that the damage was just to an uninhabited wooded hilltop area near Balakot. International media too said that the attacks did not hit the said target, as satellite pictures showed structures standing intact. There was some confusion on the issue as media was not allowed near the said spot by the Pakistani authorities till April. In its report, the IAF observed that the Spice bomb that was used in the attack penetrates a target, killing people inside rather than inflicting damage to the outside of a building. So, the IAF did not have much evidence by way of pictures to prove that the Balakot strikes actually took place, the report said. A fragmentation bomb would have flattened the structures that would have been easier to present as evidence, it said.

The Balakot airstrike pushed India and Pakistan to the brink of an armed conflict. Pakistan Air Force attempted retaliatory strikes on February 27, 2019. The IAF scrambled its fighter jets in response, leading to a dogfight between the Indian and Pakistani jets in the skies over Jammu and Kashmir. An IAF MiG-21 Bison fighter jet shot down a Pakistani F-16 during the dogfight. But the MiG too was shot down and its pilot, Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, was captured by Pakistani forces. He was released two days later, thus lowering the tension between India and Pakistan.

In the wake of the skirmish, both Pakistan and India blocked airspace for each other. The closure of Pakistani airspace led to considerable losses for carriers—Indian and international—flying to the west of India as the flights were forced to take a longer route. Pakistan also lost the money that it would otherwise have earned from route navigation and airport charges levied on flights using its airspace or landing for maintenance or refuelling. It was in July 2019 that the airspace was opened.

Foreign Relations

India's foreign policy did not shift drastically on the NDA government's coming to power in 2014. However, a subtle

shift did develop over the years. As India's foreign secretary, Vijay Gokhale, observed, "India has moved on from its non-aligned past. India is today an aligned state—but based on issues."

Sushma Swaraj, one of the senior-most leaders of BJP, was placed in charge of the external affairs ministry in 2014, becoming the first woman in India to hold independent charge of the ministry. However, the prime minister was always closely overviewing the sector. Not only Sushma Swaraj but also Prime Minister Modi visited several foreign states and attended international summits.

An important plank of Modi's foreign policy was to improve relations with neighbouring countries. The government's 'neighbourhood diplomacy' was successful in improving relations with Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. In 2015, the Indian parliament ratified a land exchange deal with Bangladesh in the matter of some enclaves, which had been initiated by the UPA government but left pending. But relations with Pakistan saw a plunge, as discussed in the previous section. With China, there were glitches, but the talks between the two countries were maintained and the situation kept under control.

A major stand-off between India and China came in 2017 over Doklam. Doklam is an area of some 100 square kilometres, comprising a plateau and a valley, located at the junction between India, Bhutan, and China. The Chumbi Valley of Tibet, Bhutan's Ha Valley and Sikkim surround it. In 2017, the Chinese tried to construct a road in the area, and Indian troops, called in by their Bhutanese counterparts, objected to it, resulting in the stand-off. Doklam is strategic for India as it is close to the Siliguri Corridor, which connects mainland India with its north-eastern region. Bilateral ties were also affected over the US$ 60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a project pushed by President Xi Jinping of China to consolidate China's influence in the world.

With the United States, relations had already been improved by the earlier governments. Modi used his decisive mandate to further the partnership with the US. He was able to get the US president, Barack Obama, to visit India and gave an impetus to bilateral relations to get that country to invest its capital and technology in India's development effort. Modi succeeded in getting the US to sign the bilateral Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement in 2016 for facilitating logistical support, supplies, and services between the militaries of the two countries. Then, in 2018, the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) was signed to facilitate access to advanced defence systems.

With the advent of Donald Trump to the post of US president, the protectionist turn in US trade policies, to an extent, tempered Indo-US relations. Even so, the US remained supportive of India, and the bilateral relationship survived.

India agreed to be part of the quadrilateral involving the United States, Japan, and Australia.

Though the early steps towards a partnership with Tokyo began under the Manmohan Singh government, the relationship progressed greatly under Modi. Japan and India have become indispensable partners in the 'free and open Indo-Pacific', and this is important to the United States as well. Japanese security is, no doubt, founded in its alliance with the US, but in counterbalancing China, Japan sees in India a vital complementary partner.

The proactive nature of the NDA government's foreign policy is to be seen in turning the 'Look East Policy' into 'Act East Policy', which envisages the need to expand the Indian influence in East and Southeast Asia.

In West Asia, India managed to maintain a balance between Palestine and Israel without preference. India succeeded in getting invited to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for the first time since its inception. India

reached out boldly to both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with the idea of gaining politically and economically. In the long term, India, fighting the threat from cross-border terrorism, was bound to gain from the Gulf monarchies' growing opposition to Islamist terrorism.

India joined the Australia Group, which aims to prevent proliferation of biological and chemical weapons, and will ensure a more secure world. With this, India had become a member of three of the four nuclear export control regimes. Earlier, India joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2016 and the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) in 2017. India's membership bid for the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) was pending as China opposed India's bid.

India took a leading role in the establishment of the International Solar Alliance along with France to tackle the challenge that faces the planet—global warming and climate change.

Opponents of Modi may snigger at the bear hugs and the selfies with world leaders, but beneath all that lay an astute approach to foreign relations. The Modi government "redefined strategic autonomy as an objective that is attainable through strengthened partnerships rather than the avoidance of partnerships". The global scenario today is complex, and a country's approach has to be flexible. So, India's engagement with the so-called Quad enhances its strategic autonomy with regard to China, and when it confers with Russia and China for a trilateral, it enhances its strategic autonomy in relations to the Trump administration which seeks to challenge the basic tenets of the global economic order.

Social Situation

Communal riots were practically nil in the Modi regime, but there is a clear perception that the activities of a number of Rightist Hindu nationalist organisations increased and occupied centre stage after Modi became prime minister, and

it seemed with the tacit support of the government. A programme for Hindu religious reconversion (*Ghar Wapasi*), a campaign against the alleged Islamic practice of what was termed 'love jihad', and sporadic praise for Nathuram Godse, who assassinated Mahatma Gandhi, were some activities that adversely affected the social fabric. The anti-Romeo squads in Uttar Pradesh were raised ostensibly to protect women from harassment, but indulged in moral policing. Campaigns against so-called love jihad, though short-lived, were an infringement on the freedom of choice.

Individual Muslims were increasingly targeted for violent attacks for alleged cow slaughter in the main, but also for other reasons. Non-Muslims—especially Dalits and tribals—were also attacked on flimsy charges. A disturbing aspect of these attacks was that sympathetic observers videoed the lynching and uploaded it on social media. Some rightist fringe elements certainly assumed that they had the tacit support of the government in this violence. But in-depth historical research is needed before one can categorically assert that lynching increased under the Modi dispensation. If society was polarised between Hindus and Muslims by the BJP, only Muslims should have been lynched and only for cow slaughter. But one cannot then explain the rise of lynching of individuals on charges such as 'child-theft' and witchcraft.

The stupendous increase in the internet use coincided with the rise of BJP to power. The ubiquitous use of the smartphone and cheap internet connections became a common phenomenon only after 2010. In some cases, it appeared as if the entire episode of lynching was being played out for an audience. As, indeed, it was, because a video would be uploaded for everyone's edification. Before the era of handheld mobiles, it would take hours, if not days, for messages to spread about 'wrongdoings' of any person. However, post-mobile revolution, in just a few minutes the message gets spread. Hence, mobilisation is quicker.

WhatsApp was made use of in the most deplorable way to spread such messages. The proliferation of 'fake news' also became common.

Hyper-nationalism seemed very visible. On the social media, trolling and rise of vigilante groups with little regard for human life were evident. Vigilante groups mushroomed with political agendas to attack minorities.

The Supreme Court intervened and directed the government to take firm action on lynching and give guidelines to the authorities on steps to take to prevent it, and what to do when such incidents took place. It called for accountability from the officials.

Amidst all this, the prime minister remained silent for too long. Maybe things would have been different if he had reined in the fringe elements and reassured those facing violence at the first sign of trouble. Some political commentators have suggested, however, that the violence by some radical Hindu nationalists was aimed at undermining Modi's authority.

In spite of stricter laws, greater awareness and even campaigns, violence against women was unabated. Cases of child rape shocked the nation. The government responded by introducing the death penalty for rape of minors below 12 years, and provided for all rape cases under the stringent POCSO Act to be fast-tracked. However, law can only do so much in cases of rape and violence against women and children; attitudes of people and society in general need to change. Furthermore, law enforcement agencies need to be sensitised.

Several socially important legislations were passed under the NDA government, such as that on juvenile justice, child and adolescent labour, and mental health which decriminalised attempt to commit suicide.

Another landmark was the decision by the Supreme Court constitutional bench marking the first step in the

struggle by the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) community to gain social legitimacy. Homosexuality, as embodied in Article 377, much of which was a relic of Victorian British times, was decriminalised by the court. It was in 2001 that the issue of constitutional legality of Article 377 was first raised by the Naz Foundation in the Delhi High Court, which held the penal provision to be illegal in 2009, but that judgement was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2013. In 2018, the apex court overturned its own earlier stance. An August 2017 judgement of the Supreme Court upheld the right to privacy, and this laid the legal ground for a fresh interpretation of Article 377 in the matter of decriminalising homosexuality. However, other issues such as same-sex marriage, inheritance of property, and civil rights were not considered. Surprisingly, most political groups welcomed the decision, which marked a change from earlier times.

The judgement of Supreme Court in the Sabarimala Temple case got a mixed response. The decision allowed women of all ages to go on the pilgrimage. While this certainly supported the constitutional principle of equality, it went against age-old traditions. Opposition to the judgement was vocal and led to widespread protests in Kerala.

The Supreme Court also decided that the practice of triple talaq among Muslims was not to be allowed. While women generally welcomed this, conservative elements opposed it. The government's effort to legislate on it to make the practice unlawful did not succeed, and it took the ordinance route.

All this shows the Indian society in transition.

On another level, the Modi government disappointed. In the matter of job creation, there was little progress. A large proportion of India's labour force continued to be unskilled and poor. Unemployment rate was reported to have reached a very high level. The government did not succeed

in rejuvenating the manufacturing sector in industry to create jobs in spite of the Make in India initiative. But here too, like in agriculture, the reasons were many and complex. The low levels of skills among India's workers, available jobs being low paid, poor infrastructure, and India's antiquated labour laws were some factors.

General Election and Return of the NDA

April–May 2019 saw the Indian electorate casting votes to elect the 17th Lok Sabha. The elections were held in seven phases, and the votes began to be counted on May 23.
The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) got an overwhelming majority, winning 353 seats; the BJP on its own garnered 303 seats, a majority on its own. This was better than their performance in the 2014 elections, a feat none could have predicted. The BJP, for the first time, made striking inroads in West Bengal. Also, it did well in states which had just recently ousted the BJP in favour of the Congress in assembly elections. This reflected in the main the voters' perspicacity: they were clear about who would be better at the state level and who they wanted at the national level.

The Congress did better than in 2014 by winning 52 seats, while its other UPA allies won 33, but the picture was clear: the NDA had returned to power at the Centre.

A landmark was achieved in 2019: not only did the largest number of female candidates stand for election, the number of women who actually won was also the highest ever.

This was the first time a non-Congress government that had completed a full term returned to power for a second consecutive term with a majority in the Lok Sabha. Modi was the first BJP leader to have been elected for the second time after completion of a five-year tenure, a feat achieved before him only by two Congress leaders, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Manmohan Singh also was prime minister for two terms, but his party had not won a majority on its own.

Narendra Modi was administered the oath of office as prime minister by President Ram Nath Kovind on May 30, 2019 in the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan. Guests from abroad included leaders of the BIMSTEC, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Mauritius.

Even though the BJP had the required numbers to form the government on its own, it decided to accommodate its allies in the council of ministers. One surprise was the induction of S. Jaishankar, former foreign secretary, as foreign minister, but then he was well known for his diplomatic skills and had played a crucial role in foreign policy even under the Manmohan Singh government. Amit Shah, BJP president and Narendra Modi's close associate, who must be credited with leading the BJP to impressive victories in election after election, was also included in the cabinet as home minister.

Narendra Modi, in his speech to the new MPs, asked the members to work in the government without discriminating against anyone and win the trust of minorities. He said that the minorities had been cheated by the other parties for generations. Pointing out that the minorities had been made to live in an 'imaginary fear' for long, he said that this should be changed; he affirmed the need to win the *'vishwas'* (trust) of Muslims. *Sabka Vishwas* would be added on to *Sabka Satth, Sabka Vikas*. Apparently, Modi had become far more self-confident of steering his party and his government in the direction he wanted without the constraints of the ideological rigidities of the Sangh Parivar in this respect. In this context, it may be recalled that, as Gujarat's chief minister for three terms, he had subdued the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and other such organisations in the state. He had already made a crucial statement—that everyone should be taken along, even those who had not voted for the ruling alliance and had been its vociferous critics.

Factors behind the NDA Victory

The NDA victory for a second consecutive term was no doubt won mainly through the hard work of the cadre of the BJP

directed by the strategy devised by Amit Shah. The BJP was also able to take its allies along with it, despite disagreements expressed by some of them before the polls.

The BJP had an undisputed leader in Narendra Modi, its prime ministerial face. The opposite alliance, if it could be called that, had no alternative to project as Rahul Gandhi of the Congress was not a unanimous choice. Nor could the opposing parties agree on a credible alternative. Nor did all the opposing parties agree to join an alliance.

The campaign was not just aggressive but often degenerated into the abusive. But perhaps the Congress' favourite slogan of '*Chowkidar chor hai*' indicating that the prime minister was a thief, did not go down well with the public which thought it showed disrespect to the country's prime minister and not just the individual, Modi. To an extent, this backfired on the Congress, especially as the perception of the prime minister in the public mind was one of a hard working non-corrupt man. The Rafale deal somehow did not seem such a great disaster or something that had led to Modi making money out of it.

The welfare schemes that the Modi government implemented fairly efficiently certainly helped the NDA win a second term. True, the promises fell short, but even the people who had so far not got a gas connection or a toilet built had hope that if some people had benefited, in time others too would get there.

A large section of the population were convinced that the other parties wooed the minorities just for votes, and in the process 'appeased' them. The Hindutva plank certainly played a role in the support enjoyed by the BJP. But it is also to be noted that the BJP was able to cut across caste divisions to get the majority it did.

The firm way in which the government seemed to have handled Pakistan—the surgical strikes and later the air force strike in Balakot in February 2019—turned the tide in favour of the NDA in a big way. There is no doubt that national

security was a big issue pushing into the background important issues, such as slowing economic growth, joblessness, and farmers' distress. It did not help the opposition in that it chose to question the government on its achievement; it seemed as if it was questioning the army's capability.

The huge victory of the NDA, however, should not blind us to the fact that the opposition in Parliament has been reduced commensurately. A democracy can be healthy only if there is a strong opposition to question and keep in check the executive.

APPENDICES

1. Personalities Associated with Specific Movements

Swadeshi Movement

Lokmanya Tilak spread the message of swadeshi to Poona and Bombay and organised Ganapati and Shivaji festivals to arouse patriotic feelings. He stressed that the aim of swadeshi, boycott, and national education was the attainment of swaraj. He opened cooperative stores and headed the Swadeshi Wastu Pracharini Sabha.

Lala Lajpat Rai took the movement to Punjab and parts of northern India. He was assisted in his venture by Ajit Singh. His articles, which were published in *Kayastha Samachar,* endorsed technical education and industrial self-sufficiency.

Syed Haider Raza popularised the Swadeshi Movement in Delhi.

Chidambaram Pillai, who joined politics following the partition of Bengal, spread the Swadeshi Movement to Madras and organised the strike of the Tuticorin Coral Mill to protest against the working conditions in the mills. He founded the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in Tuticorin on the east coast of the Madras Province to break the trade monopolly of the British India Steam Navigation Company. He bought the SS *Lavo* and SS *Galia* from France and started regular services between Tuticorin and Colombo (Sri Lanka) though the British tried their best to suppress his efforts. His ships flew flags emblazoned with 'Vande Mataram'. In 1908, he was sentenced to two life terms for sedition for his political activities. He was not seen as a political prisoner but was reportedly put to hard labour and even tortured. Though his sentence was reduced by the Madras High Court and he was released in 1912, he faced hardship as his lawyer's licence had been revoked and he could not practise. He opened a shop for a livelihood. An erudite scholar,

he wrote his autobiography in Tamil verse. He also wrote a commentary on the *Thirukural* and compiled the ancient works of Tamil grammar, *Tholkappiam*.

Bipin Chandra Pal of the Extremist clan played a major role in popularising the movement, especially in the urban areas. He was the editor of *New India.*

Liaquat Hussain of Patna suggested boycott and organised the East Indian Railway strike in 1906. He also wrote fiery articles in Urdu to rouse nationalist sentiments in Muslims. He was supported by other Muslim swadeshi agitators like **Ghaznavi, Rasul, Din Mohammed, Dedar Bux, Moniruzzaman, Ismail Hussain, Siraji, Abdul Hussain,** and **Abdul Gaffar.**

Shyamsundar Chakrabarti, a swadeshi political leader, helped in organising strikes. He was one of the 'Pabna Group' of Bengali revolutionaries. He was a nationalist journalist who was the sub-editor of the revolutionary journal *Sandhya*, later joining the Bengali nationalist newspaper *Bande Mataram* as an assistant to its editor Aurobindo Ghosh, afterwards becoming its editor. He was deported to Burma in 1908 for his political activities. Much later, he became a supporter of the non-violent methods of the Indian National Congress.

Ramendra Sunder Trivedi called for observance of *arandhan* (keeping the hearth unlit) as a mark of mourning and protest on the day the partition was put into effect.

Rabindranath Tagore composed several songs to inspire freedom struggle and revived Bengali folk music to rouse national pride. He also set up some swadeshi stores and called for the observance of *raksha bandhan* (tying of threads on each other's wrists as a sign of brotherhood).

Aurobindo Ghosh was in favour of extending the movement to the rest of India. He was appointed as the principal of Bengal National College founded in 1906 to encourage patriotic thinking and an education system related to Indian conditions and culture. He was also the editor of *Bande Mataram* and through his editorials encouraged strikes, national education, etc., in the spirit of the Swadeshi Movement. He was assisted by **Jatindranath Bannerji** and **Barindrakumar Ghosh** (who managed the Anushilan Samiti).

Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar hailed from Maharashtra but was domiciled in Bengal. He was a close associate of Aurobindo Ghosh and a good writer in Bengali. He is probably best known for his book, *Desher Katha*, that described the British exploitation of India. In this book, Deuskar considered the state of the country and the good and evil of British rule, the mental degradation of the people of this country who had been hypnotised and their minds conquered by the British (or the West), the ruin of the peasants and the artisans of Bengal, and the decline of indigenous industries. Deuskar was influenced by the writings of Naoroji and Dutt on the economic conditions of India under British rule, and wrote in the vernacular to spread the idea among the masses. The book proved immensely popular and served as an inspiration to the Swadeshi Movement. The government banned the book in 1910 and confiscated all the available copies but, by then, it had been read by innumerable people. Deuskar is reputed to have introduced the Shivaji festival in Bengal. The earliest modern political use of the word '*swaraj*' is considered to have been by Deuskar in his pamphlet on Shivaji (1902).

Sarala Devi Ghoshal (Chaudarani), daughter of Janakinath Ghoshal, one of the founding members of the Indian National Congress, was Rabindranath Tagore's niece. A bright student, she pursued higher education at Bethune College under Calcutta University to become the first woman to achieve the highest marks in that university and receive the '*Padmaboti Swarnapodok*', the gold medal. She worked for a while as assistant superintendent at the Maharani Girls School in Mysore before returning to Calcutta where she edited the Bengali magazine, *Bharati Patrika*. She wrote a book, *Ahitagnika*, to generate awareness concerning the freedom struggle among school children and also launched an underground revolutionary group as she believed aggression and violence to be the only way to get freedom from the British. She is considered to have contributed to the music of *Bande Mataram*, the national song, and written several other songs used by revolutionaries. She was among the first to promote the use of swadeshi products and opened a shop called Lakhir Bhandar in the Bowbazar neighbourhood of Calcutta that sold only swadeshi products. Sarla Devi founded the Bharat Stree

Mahamandal, the All India Women's Organisation, a pioneering venture; it was a semi-revolutionary group in Allahabad, Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi, Karachi, Hyderabad, Kanpur, and Calcutta. Married to Rambhaja Dutta Chowdhury, a noted freedom fighter from Punjab, she moved to Lahore with her husband. She continued with her revolutionary work in Punjab besides opening several associations and organisations for women, one of which was a home for widows. She was associated with the newspaper *Hindusthan* as editor and publisher. Towards the end of her life, she was involved in writing her biography, *Jiboner Jhora Pata* (the 'Scattered Leaves of My Life').

Surendranath Banerjea, who held moderate nationalist opinion, launched powerful press campaigns through newspapers like *The Bengalee* and addressed mass meetings. He was assisted by **Krishnakumar Mitra** and **Narendra Kumar Sen.**

Ashwini Kumar Dutt, a schoolteacher, set up Swadesh Bandhab Samiti to propagate the Swadeshi Movement and led the Muslim peasants of Barisal in their protests.

Promotha Mitter, Barindrakumar Ghosh, Jatindranath Bannerji founded the Anushilan Samiti in Calcutta.

G.K. Gokhale, president of the Benaras session of the Indian National Congress, 1905, supported the Swadeshi Movement.

Abdul Halim Guznavi, a zamindar and a lawyer, set up swadeshi industries and helped Aurobindo Ghosh to extend revolutionary activities outside Bengal. He was assisted by **Abul Kalam Azad.**

Dadabhai Naoroji at the 1906 Congress session declared that the goal of the Congress was to attain swaraj.

Acharya P.C. Roy, in order to promote swadeshi, set up the Bengal Chemicals Factory.

Mukunda Das, Rajanikanta Sen, Dwijendralal Roy, Girindramohini Dasi, Sayed Abu Mohammed composed patriotic songs on swadeshi themes. **Girishchandra Ghosh, Kshirode Prasad Vidyavinode,** and **Amritlal Bose** were playwrights who contributed to the swadeshi spirit through their creative efforts.

Ashwini Coomar Banerjee, a swadeshi activist, led the jute mill workers to form an Indian Millhands' Union at Budge-Budge in August 1906.

Satish Chandra Mukherji through his Dawn Society promoted an education system under indigenous control.

Motilal Ghosh of the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* group contributed several fiery articles in the paper to arouse patriotic sentiments and was in favour of Extremism.

Brahmabandhab Upadhyay through his *Sandhya* and *Yugantar* (brought out by a group associated with Barindrakumar Ghosh) popularised swaraj and the Swadeshi Movement.

Jogendrachandra set up an association in March 1904 to raise funds to facilitate students to go abroad for technical and industrial training.

Manindra Nandi, a zamindar from Kasim Bazar, patronised several indigenous industries.

Kalisankar Sukul brought out several pamphlets on Swadeshi Movement and argued that a new kind of business class should be built to promote national interests.

Sunder Lal, a student from UP, was drawn towards terrorism.

Kunwarji Mehta and **Kalyanji Mehta** began organisational work through the *Patidar Yuvak Mandal.*

Lala Harkishan Lal promoted Swadeshi Movement in Punjab through the Brahmo-leaning group which began the *Tribune* newspaper. He also founded the Punjab National Bank.

Muhammed Shafi and **Fazal-i-Husain** were leaders of a Muslim group in Punjab involved in constructive swadeshi, rather than boycott.

V. Krishnaswami Iyer headed the 'Mylapore' group in the Madras Presidency.

G. Subramaniya Iyer, T. Prakasam, and **M. Krishna Rao** were other leaders in the south but were opposed to **V.K. Iyer. Prakasam** and **Krishna Rao** started *Kistnapatrika* in Masulipatnam in 1904.

Subramaniya Bharati, a member of Tamilian revolutionary group and an eminent poet, played a significant role in arousing nationalism in the Tamil areas.

Prabhat Kusum Roy Chaudhuri, Athanasuis Apurbakumar Ghosh were lawyers who helped in organising labour; **Premtosh Bose** was another pioneer labour leader.

Hemachandra Kanungo was one of the first revolutionary leaders, and after his return from Paris (he had gone there to get military training), a combined bomb factory and religious school was set up in Calcutta.

Khudiram Bose and **Prafulla Chaki**, two revolutionaries, murdered Kennedy on April 30, 1908.

Pulin Das organised the Deccan Anushilan, with the Barrah dacoity as its first major venture.

Madan Mohan Malaviya and **Motilal Nehru** were in favour of cooperation with provincial governments and non-political Swadeshi Movement.

Sachindranath Sanyal emerged as a revolutionary leader in Benaras through contacts with **Mokhodacharan Samadhyay** (the editor of *Sandhya* after the death of Brahmabandhab).

The **Savarkar** brothers founded the *Mitra Mela* in 1899 and were directly involved in extremism in Maharashtra.

Dinshaw Wacha persuaded mill-owners in Maharashtra to sell *dhotis* at moderate prices.

Non-Cooperation Movement

M.K. Gandhi issued a manifesto in March 1920, announcing his doctrine of non-violent Non-Cooperation Movement. He was the main force behind the movement and urged the people to adopt swadeshi principles and habits including hand spinning, weaving and work for removal of untouchability. He addressed lakhs of people during his nation-wide tour in 1921. He suspended the movement after an outburst of violence at Chauri Chaura in UP in February 1922.

C.R. Das moved the main resolution on non-cooperation in the annual session of the Congress in Nagpur in 1920 and played a major role in promoting the movement. A successful lawyer, he boycotted the law courts and gave up a lucrative practice. His three subordinates and supporters, **Birendranath Samsal** in Midnapore, **J.M. Sengupta** in Chittagong and **Subhash Bose** in Calcutta played a major role in uniting the Hindus and Muslims.

Jawaharlal Nehru carried on the non-cooperation propaganda and encouraged the formation of kisan sabhas to take up the cause of the peasants exploited by government policies. He was against Gandhi's decision to withdraw the movement.

J.M. Sengupta, a Bengali nationalist leader, supported the labourers on tea plantations in Assam in their protests and strike.

Basanti Debi, wife of C.R. Das, was one of the first women volunteers to court arrest in 1921.

Birendranath Sasmal organised the anti-union board agitation in the Contai and Tamluk sub-divisions of Midnapore. In November–December 1921, Samsal initiated a no-tax movement among the Mahishya substantial tenantry of Midnapore.

Jitendralal Banerjee organised the peasants in 1921–22 to resist settlement operations in Bogra, Pabna, and Birbhum.

Subhas Chandra Bose supported the movement and resigned from the civil service. He was appointed the principal of the National College in Calcutta.

Ali brothers (Shaukat Ali and Muhammed Ali) who were the foremost Khilafat leaders vehemently supported Gandhi in his nationwide tour to spread the movement. At the All India Khilafat Conference, Muhammed Ali declared that 'it was religiously unlawful for the Muslims to continue in the British Army'. The Ali brothers were arrested later.

Motilal Nehru renounced his legal practice in response to the non-cooperation call by Gandhi. He was arrested in 1921. Other notable lawyers who gave up their practice included **M.R. Jayakar, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Vallabhbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari, T. Prakasam,** and **Asaf Ali.** Their sacrifice inspired many others, who boycotted government jobs and entered the mainstream of freedom struggle.

Lala Lajpat Rai was initially not in favour of the policy of non-cooperation (he was against the boycott of schools), but later he supported the movement. In fact, he protested against its withdrawal in 1922.

Rajendra Prasad actively supported the Gandhian movement in Bihar.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel spread the movement in Gujarat and regarded non-cooperation as a feasible alternative to revolutionary terrorism to fight against a colonial government.

Motilal Tejawat organised the Bhils, and the Bhil movement strengthened the non-cooperation activities.

Alluri Sitaram Raju led the tribals in Andhra and combined their demands with those of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Hasrat Mohani, a Khilafat leader, condemned the arrest of the Ali brothers and demanded complete independence.

Purushottamdas Thakurdas, Jamnadas Dwarkadas, Cowasji Jehangir, Phroze Sethna, and **Setalvad**, all of whom belonged to the industrialist section, launched an Anti-Non-Cooperation Association in 1920.

Kunjahammed Haji, Kalathingal Mammad, Ali Musaliar, Sithi Koya Thangal, and **Imbichi Koya Thangal** acted as presidents of the Khilafat Republics set up at a number of places.

K. Madhavan Nair, U. Gopala Menon, Yakub Hasan, and **P. Moideen Koya** were the Khilafat leaders and supporters of the Non-Cooperation Movement. They were arrested in February 1921.

Muhammad Osman, another Khilafat agitator, organised volunteer groups and trade unions in Calcutta.

Swami Vishwanand (supported by **Ramjas Agarwala**, a Marwari mine owner) and **Swami Darsananand** organised the coal miners of the Raniganj-Jharia belt for the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Kishan Singh and **Mota Singh** called for no-revenue movements and headed the 'Babbar Akali' group, which emerged as a dissident of Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandhak Committee, in 1921 in Jullundur and Hoshiarpur.

Jairamdas Daulatram was a close associate of Gandhi and promoted the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Swami Govindananda, a supporter of Gandhi, was jailed for five years on charges of sedition in May 1921. He later became a critic of the Congress.

S.A. Dange, R.S. Nimbkar, V.D. Sathaye, R.V. Nadkarni, S.V. Deshpande, and **K.N. Joglekar** were members of a radical student group and promoted the movement although they were not in line with Gandhi's views. They were influenced by **R.B. Lotwalla**, a millionaire with a socialist leaning. Dange, in April 1921, wrote *Gandhi versus Lenin* and was in favour of swaraj which would nationalise factories and distribute zamindari land among farmers.

Thiru Vika supported the labour uprising and strike at the Buckingham and Carnatic textile mills from July to October 1921.

Singaravelu Chettiar was a lawyer and labour organiser in Madras and played a significant role in merging the labour and

freedom movements. He was the first communist in South India and was in favour of using non-violent non-cooperation against 'capitalistic autocracy'.

Konda Venkatappaya, A. Kaleswara Rao, T. Prakasam, and **Pattabhi Sitaramaya** led the Non-Cooperation Movement in the Andhra delta region.

Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya inspired the inhabitants of the small town of Chirala-Parala in Guntur district to resist the government's plan to make the town a municipality and the hike in local taxes.

Nabin Chandra Bardoloi, freedom fighter and political leader from Assam, favoured non-cooperation but was against strikes in plantations, as he himself was a planter. After the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, he gave up his law practice and joined the freedom movement. He was popularly known as Karamveer.

'Assam Kesari' **Ambikagiri Roy Chaudhuri's** poetry had a profound impact on the Assamese and helped in arousing nationalist spirit in them.

Muzaffar Ahmad formed the pioneer communist group in Calcutta. He was influenced by **M.N. Roy** and **Nalini Gupta.**

Someshwar Prasad Choudhury, a student in Calcutta, organised the peasants protesting against indigo cultivation on the Rajshaski-Nadia and Pabna-Murshidabad border.

Purushottamdas Tandon, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Govind Ballabh Pant, and **Lal Bahadur Shastri** began their political careers in 1920–21, with the onset of the Non-Cooperation Movement.

Premchand, a well-known novelist, resigned his post in a Gorakhpur government school in February 1921 and started contributing to the journal *Aaj.* His novels *Premasharam, Rangbhumi* etc., reflect Gandhian principles and values and endorse non-cooperation as an effective weapon to gain freedom.

Baba Ramchandra organised peasants' revolt in south and south-east Awadh and helped merge the peasants' revolt with the Non-Cooperation Movement. He was arrested in February 1921.

A. Shah Naim Ata announced himself 'King of Salon' and initiated no-taxes movement.

M.N. Roy, a communist leader, was the editor of the communist journal *Vanguard.* He condemned the sessions court's

sentence to death to 172 of the 225 accused in the Chauri Chaura incident (later, 19 were hanged and the rest transported) as against 22 policemen killed.

Bhagwan Ahir, an army pensioner in Gorakhpur village, was beaten up by the British police. The incident flared up nationalist sentiments in the village, which then led to the killing of 22 policemen in Chauri-Chaura, by the peasants.

Civil Disobedience Movement

M.K. Gandhi formally launched the Civil Disobedience Movement on April 6, 1930 by picking a handful of salt after the completion of the historic 'Dandi March' from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi, thus breaking the salt law imposed by the government. He was the major force behind the movement and inspired grassroots participation in the freedom struggle.

C. Rajagopalachari led a salt march from Trichinopoly to Vedaranniyam on the Tanjore coast in Tamil Nadu, in support of the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was arrested on April 30, 1930.

K. Kelappan, a Nair Congress leader, launched the Vaikom Satyagraha and marched from Calicut to Payanneer in defiance of salt laws.

Jawaharlal Nehru was actively involved in the movement and was arrested on April 17, 1930 for defiance of the salt law. He formulated a radical agrarian programme and suggested formation of the Constituent Assembly as the prime political slogan.

P. Krishna Pillai defended the national flag and resisted lathi-charge on the Calicut beach on November 11, 1930. He later founded the Kerala Communist Movement.

Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan formed a clan of non-violent revolutionaries, the Khudai Khidmatgars (known as Red Shirts), who played an active role in the movement.

Sarojini Naidu, the first Indian woman to become the president of the Congress, was involved in a march towards the Dharsana Salt Works, a government salt depot. Other leaders who participated in this total non-violent affair were **Imam Saheb**, Gandhi's comrade of the South African struggle, and **Manilal**, Gandhi's son.

Surya Sen's Chittagong Revolt Group carried out a raid on two armouries and declared the establishment of a provisional government. He issued a manifesto in the name of Indian Republican Army and called on the Indians to revolt against the British rule.

Abbas Tayabji, a leader of the nationalist Muslims in Bombay, took the place of Gandhi in the movement after the latter's arrest. However, he too was arrested by the government.

Ambalal Sarabhai and **Kasturbhai Lakhai** gave their cooperation to Motilal Nehru in removing the barriers between the Congress and the Bombay mill-owners and industrialists.

Industrialists such as **G.D. Birla** (who donated between one lakh rupees and five lakh rupees), **Jamnalal Bajaj** (who served as the AICC treasurer for several years and represented Gandhian leadership in Bombay), **Homi Modi, Walchand Hirachand, Lalji Naranji, Purushottamdas Thakurdas, Lala Sri Ram,** etc., supported the movement in its first phase. Homi Modi, in his presidential speech to Bombay Mill-owners' Association in March 1931 said that though the Swadeshi Movement had helped the Indian industry, frequent strikes had dislocated trade and industry. Naranji and Thakurdas, who had remained indifferent to the nationalist struggle in 1921, demanded Indian control over finance, currency, fiscal policy, and railways. However, from September 1930, there was a sharp decline in support from the industrialists and traders, with the prominent businessmen having differences of opinion with the Congress.

Chandraprabha Saikiani instigated the aboriginal Kachari villagers in Assam to break forest laws.

Subhas Bose and **J.M. Sengupta** led the faction group in Bengal Congress and set up rival organisations to conduct civil disobedience. Bose criticised Gandhi, when the latter suspended the movement in May 1933. He was supported by **Vithalbhai Patel.**

Bonga Majhi and **Somra Majhi** led the movement in Hazaribagh along the sanskritising lines with the Congress.

Kalka Prasad, a local leader in Rai Bareilly, promoted the no-rent campaign.

Santi and **Suniti Chaudhari** assassinated the district magistrate of Tippera, Stevens. Their action marked the entry of women in the revolutionary movement.

Seth Achal Singh, a nationalist landlord, financed the Gram Seva Sangh in Agra and remained indifferent to riots in the area, while strictly following the policy of non-violence.

Sheikh Abdullah, a Muslim graduate, started an agitation and attacked the Srinagar jail on July 31, 1931 where 21 persons were killed in police firing. He also developed close contacts with a group of anti-autocratic Jammu Hindus led by **P.N. Bazaz**.

Muhammed Yasin Khan, a Muslim leader in Punjab, organised the Meos (semi-tribal peasant community with leanings towards Islam) to protest against Maharaja Jaisingh Sawai's hike in revenue, *begar,* and reservation of forests for the purpose of hunting.

K.M. Ashraf, who became India's first Marxist historian, was associated with the movement.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who was an upholder of Gandhian policies since 1920s, began to drift away with the launch of Harijan campaign by Gandhi. He started a breakaway Congress Nationalist Party.

Satyamurthi, Bhulabhai Desai, M.A. Ansari, and **B.C. Roy** demanded a return to electoral politics by way of a revived Swaraj Party.

Jayaprakash Narayan, Achhut Patwardhan, Yusuf Mehrali, Ashok Mehta, and Minoo Masani wanted the Congress to have affinity with left-wing.

Sampurnanand formulated 'A Tentative Socialist Programme' for India, and a Congress Socialist Party was started in 1934, which was supported by **Narendra Dev.**

K.F. Nariman and **Yusuf Meher Ali** led the Congress youth wing and later emerged as socialist leaders.

Swami Govindanand led the movement in Karachi and Sindh.

N.V. Gadgil with his socialist leanings lent support to a temple entry movement in 1929 and established friendly ties with the non-brahmin Satyashodhak Samaj (represented by Keshavrao Jedhe of Poona).

B.R. Ambedkar, who was the leader of the untouchable Mahars, attended the Round Table Conference in 1930. However, the Congress failed to win over the political agitation of the Mahars.

Gopabandhu Chaudhuri popularised the movement in Orissa and led the salt satyagraha in the coastal areas of Balasore, Cuttack, and Puri districts.

Tarunaram Phookan and **N.C. Bardoloi**, two prominent Congress leaders, were against the movement in Assam. They refused to take up forest satyagraha officially.

Jadunandan Sharma activated the Kisan Sabha Movement in Gaya district of Bihar.

Duggirala Balaramakrishnaya of the Krishna district initiated a no-revenue campaign in 1931 in coastal Andhra. He also wrote a Telugu ballad *Gandhi Gita* which aroused patriotic sentiments.

N.V. Rama Naidu and **N.C. Ranga** organised a forest satyagraha in Venkatagiri estate in Nellore in 1931.

A.K. Gopalan, a schoolteacher, was a popular activist at Guruvayoor in Kerala and later became Kerala's most popular communist peasant leader.

Mannu Gond and **Chaitu Koiku** offered forest satyagraha in Betul in Central Provinces.

Maulana Bhasani, organised a large *praja sammelan* at Sirajgunj and demanded abolition of zamindari and reduction in debts.

B.T. Ranadeve and **S.V. Deshpande** in Bombay and **Abdul Halim, Somnath Lahiri,** and **Ranen Sen** in Calcutta were the young communist militants who organised several labour strikes. **V.B. Karnik, Maniben Kara, Rajani Mukherji,** and **Niharendu Dutta** were other leaders who started trade union activities.

M.N. Roy and his followers popularised socialist ideas in the villages and a no-tax campaign was started in Awadh.

Quit India Movement

M.K. Gandhi planned an all-out campaign to compel British withdrawal from India, after the failure of the Cripps Mission to reach a compromise. At the historic August meeting at Gowalia Tank in Bombay, Gandhi proclaimed his *mantra*—'do or die'. He was arrested on August 9, 1942. He undertook a 21-day fast in February 1943 to protest against the government actions against Indians involved in the movement.

Jayaprakash Narayan was a member of the Congress Socialist group and played a prominent role in the movement.

Ram Manohar Lohia, Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalani, Chhotubhai Purani, Biju Patnaik, R.P. Goenka, and **Achyut Patwardhan** were leaders associated with the underground movement and revolutionary activities in support of Quit India Movement.

Chittu Pande, who called himself a Gandhian, formed a parallel government and captured all the 10 police stations in Ballia, in east UP in August 1942.

Usha Mehta actively supported the movement and was an important member of a small group which ran the Congress Radio.

Jawaharlal Nehru initially supported the arch Moderates, who were opposed to Gandhi's plan, but later, he moved the Quit India Resolution on August 8, 1942.

Sumati Morarjee helped **Achyut Patwardhan** in his underground activities. She later became India's leading woman industrialist.

Rashbehari Bose, a revolutionary activist, was elected the president of the Indian Independence League (formed in March 1942) in June 1942. He was living in Japan since 1915 as a fugitive. He mobilised Indian soldiers taken as prisoners of war by the Japanese forces (after the British was defeated in South East Asia) for an armed rebellion against the British colonial rule.

Captain Mohan Singh, an Indian soldier fighting on behalf of the British, was taken as prisoner of war by the Japanese. He was persuaded by a Japanese army officer to work with the Japanese for India's freedom. He was appointed the commander of the Indian National Army.

Subhas Chandra Bose joined the Indian National Army in 1943. One of his most famous declarations was *"Tum mujhe khoon do, mai tumhe azadi doonga"* (You give me blood, I will give you freedom.) The INA played a significant role in the independence struggle under the leadership of Subhas Bose.

C. Rajagopalachari and **Bhulabhai Desai** were the arch-Moderates, who were in favour of recognising the rights of Muslim majority provinces to secede through plebiscites after independence had been gained. They resigned from the AICC in July 1942.

K.G. Mashruwalla brought out two militant issues of *Harijan* (after the arrest of Mahadev Desai) to arouse the sentiments of people.

K.T. Bhashyam, a Congress leader in Bangalore, played an active role in the trade union field and organised strikes by about 30,000 workers.

Satish Samanta, a local Congress leader and the first *sarbadhinayak* of the Tamluk Jatiya Sarkar, helped in establishing a rebel 'national government' in Tamluk sub-division of Midnapore.

Matangini Hazra, a 73-year-old peasant widow in Tamluk, was killed in violence on September 29, 1942, when the Sutahata police station was captured. Matangini kept the national flag aloft even after being shot.

Lakshman Naik, an illiterate villager, led a large tribal population from Koraput to protest against the Jeypore zamindari and attack police stations. Lakshman Naik was hanged on November 16, 1942 for allegedly murdering a forest guard.

Nana Patil headed a rebellion in Satara.

2. Governors-General and Viceroys of India: Significant Events in their Rule

Governors-General

1. Warren Hastings 1773–85

(i) Regulating Act of 1773.
(ii) Act of 1781, under which the powers of jurisdiction between the governor-general-in-council and the Supreme Court at Calcutta, were clearly divided.
(iii) Pitt's India Act of 1784.
(iv) The Rohilla War of 1774.
(v) The First Maratha War in 1775–82 and the Treaty of Salbai in 1782.
(vi) Second Mysore War in 1780–84.
(vii) Strained relationships with Chait Singh, the Maharaja of Benaras, which led to Hastings' subsequent impeachment in England.
(viii) Foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784).

2. Lord Cornwallis 1786–93

(i) Third Mysore War (1790–92) and Treaty of Seringa-patam (1792).
(ii) Cornwallis Code (1793) incorporating several judicial reforms, and separation of revenue administration and civil jurisdiction.
(iii) Permanent Settlement of Bengal, 1793.
(iv) Europeanisation of administrative machinery and introduction of civil services.

3. Sir John Shore 1793–98

(i) Charter Act of 1793.
(ii) Battle of Kharda between the Nizam and the Marathas (1795).

4. Lord Wellesley 1798–1805

(i) Introduction of the Subsidiary Alliance System (1798); first alliance with Nizam of Hyderabad.

(ii) Fourth Mysore War (1799).
(iii) Second Maratha War (1803-05).
(iv) Took over the administration of Tanjore (1799), Surat (1800), and Carnatic (1801).
(v) Treaty of Bassein (1802).

5. Sir George Barlow 1805–07
Vellore Mutiny (1806).

6. Lord Minto I 1807–13
Treaty of Amritsar with Ranjit Singh (1809).

7. Lord Hastings 1813–23
(i) Anglo-Nepal War (1814–16) and the Treaty of Sagauli, 1816.
(ii) Third Maratha War (1817–19) and dissolution of Maratha Confederacy; creation of Bombay Presidency (1818).
(iii) Strife with Pindaris (1817–18).
(iv) Treaty with Sindhia (1817).
(v) Establishment of Ryotwari System by Thomas Munro, governor of Madras (1820).

8. Lord Amherst 1823–28
(i) First Burmese War (1824–26).
(ii) Capture of Bharatpur (1826).

9. Lord William Bentinck 1828–35
(i) Abolition of sati and other cruel rites (1829).
(ii) Suppression of *thugi* (1830).
(iii) Charter Act of 1833.
(iv) Resolution of 1835, and educational reforms and introduction of English as the official language.
(v) Annexation of Mysore (1831), Coorg (1834), and Central Cachar (1834).
(vi) Treaty of 'perpetual friendship' with Ranjeet Singh.
(vii) Abolition of the provincial courts of appeal and circuit set up by Cornwallis, appointment of commissioners of revenue and circuit.

10. Lord Metcalfe 1835–36
New press law removing restrictions on the press in India.

11. Lord Auckland 1836–42

(i) First Afghan War (1838–42).
(ii) Death of Ranjit Singh (1839).

12. Lord Ellenborough 1842–44

(i) Annexation of Sindh (1843).
(ii) War with Gwalior (1843).

13. Lord Hardinge I 1844–48

(i) First Anglo-Sikh War (1845–46) and the Treaty of Lahore (1846).
(ii) Social reforms including abolition of female infanticide and human sacrifice.

14. Lord Dalhousie 1848-1856

(i) Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848–49) and annexation of Punjab (1849).
(ii) Annexation of Lower Burma or Pegu (1852).
(iii) Introduction of the Doctrine of Lapse and annexation of Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Sambhalpur (1849), Udaipur (1852), Jhansi (1853), Nagpur (1854), and Awadh (1856).
(iv) "Wood's (Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control) Educational Despatch" of 1854 and opening of Anglo-vernacular schools and government colleges.
(v) Railway Minute of 1853; and laying down of first railway line connecting Bombay and Thane in 1853.
(vi) Telegraph (4,000 miles of telegraph lines to connect Calcutta with Bombay, Madras, and Peshawar) and postal (Post Office Act, 1854) reforms.
(vii) Ganges Canal declared open (1854); establishment of separate public works department in every province.
(viii) Widow Remarriage Act (1856).

15. Lord Canning 1856–57

(i) Establishment of three universities at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857.
(ii) Revolt of 1857.

Viceroys

1. Lord Canning 1858–62

(i) Transfer of control from East India Company to the Crown, the Government of India Act, 1858.
(ii) 'White Mutiny' by European troops in 1859.
(iii) Indian Councils Act of 1861.

2. Lord Elgin I 1862–63

Wahabi Movement.

3. Lord John Lawrence 1864–69

(i) Bhutan War (1865).
(ii) Setting up of the High Courts at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras (1865).

4. Lord Mayo 1869–72

(i) Opening of the Rajkot College in Kathiawar and the Mayo College at Ajmer for political training of Indian princes.
(ii) Establishment of Statistical Survey of India.
(iii) Establishment of Department of Agriculture and Commerce.
(iv) Introduction of state railways.

5. Lord Northbrook 1872–76

(i) Visit of Prince of Wales in 1875.
(ii) Trial of Gaekwar of Baroda.
(iii) Kuka Movement in Punjab.

6. Lord Lytton 1876–80

(i) Famine of 1876–78 affecting Madras, Bombay, Mysore, Hyderabad, parts of central India and Punjab; appointment of Famine Commission under the presidency of Richard Strachey (1878).
(ii) Royal Titles Act (1876), Queen Victoria assuming the title of 'Kaiser-i-Hind' or Queen Empress of India.
(iii) The Vernacular Press Act (1878).
(iv) The Arms Act (1878).
(v) The Second Afghan War (1878–80).

7. Lord Ripon 1880–84

(i) Repeal of the Vernacular Press Act (1882).
(ii) The first Factory Act (1881) to improve labour conditions.

(iii) Continuation of financial decentralisation.
(iv) Government resolution on local self-government (1882).
(v) Appointment of Education Commission under chairmanship of Sir William Hunter (1882).
(vi) The Ilbert Bill controversy (1883–84).
(vii) Rendition of Mysore.

8. Lord Dufferin 1884–88

(i) The Third Burmese War (1885–86).
(ii) Establishment of the Indian National Congress.

9. Lord Lansdowne 1888–94

(i) Factory Act (1891).
(ii) Categorisation of civil services into imperial, provisional and subordinate.
(iii) Indian Councils Act (1892).
(iv) Setting up of Durand Commission (1893) to define the Durand Line between India and Afghanistan (now between Pakistan and Afghanistan; a small portion of the line touches India in Pakistan occupied Kashmir).

10. Lord Elgin II 1894–99

Two British officials assassinated by Chapekar brothers (1897).

11. Lord Curzon 1899–1905

(i) Appointment of Police Commission (1902) under Sir Andrew Frazer to review police administration.
(ii) Appointment of Universities Commission (1902) and passing of Indian Universities Act (1904).
(iii) Establishment of Department of Commerce and Industry.
(iv) Calcutta Corporation Act (1899).
(v) Ancient Monuments Preservation Act (1904).
(vi) Partition of Bengal (1905).
(vii) Curzon-Kitchener controversy.
(viii) Younghusband's Mission to Tibet (1904).

12. Lord Minto II 1905–10

(i) Popularisation of anti-partition and Swadeshi Movements.

(ii) Split in Congress in the annual session of 1907 in Surat.
(iii) Establishment of Muslim League by Aga Khan (1906).

13. Lord Hardinge II 1910–16

(i) Creation of Bengal Presidency (like Bombay and Madras) in 1911.
(ii) Transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi (1911).
(iii) Establishment of the Hindu Mahasabha (1915) by Madan Mohan Malaviya.
(iv) Coronation *durbar* of King George V held in Delhi (1911).

14. Lord Chelmsford 1916–21

(i) Formation of Home Rule Leagues by Annie Besant and Tilak (1916).
(ii) Lucknow session of the Congress (1916).
(iii) Lucknow pact between the Congress and Muslim League (1916).
(iv) Foundation of Sabarmati Ashram (1916) after Gandhi's return; launch of Champaran Satyagraha (1916), Kheda Satyagraha (1918), and Satyagraha at Ahmedabad (1918).
(v) Montagu's August Declaration (1917).
(vi) Government of India Act (1919).
(vii) The Rowlatt Act (1919).
(viii) Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre (1919).
(ix) Launch of Non-Cooperation and Khilafat Movements.
(x) Foundation of Women's University at Poona (1916) and appointment of Saddler's Commission (1917) for reforms in educational policy.
(xi) Death of Tilak (August 1, 1920).
(xii) Appointment of S.P. Sinha as governor of Bihar (the first Indian to become a governor).

15. Lord Reading 1921–26

(i) Chauri Chaura incident (February 5, 1922) and the subsequent withdrawal of Non-Cooperation Movement.
(ii) Moplah rebellion in Kerala (1921).
(iii) Repeal of the Press Act of 1910 and the Rowlatt Act of 1919.

(iv) Criminal Law Amendment Act and abolition of cotton excise.
(v) Communal riots in Multan, Amritsar, Delhi, Aligarh, Arvi, and Calcutta.
(vi) Kakori train robbery (1925).
(vii) Murder of Swami Shraddhanand (1926).
(viii) Establishment of Swaraj Party by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru (1922).
(ix) Decision to hold simultaneous examinations for the ICS both in Delhi and London, with effect from 1923.

16. Lord Irwin 1926–31

(i) Visit of Simon Commission to India (1928) and the boycott of the commission by the Indians.
(ii) An All-Parties Conference held at Lucknow (1928) for suggestions for the (future) Constitution of India, the report of which was called the Nehru Report or the Nehru Constitution.
(iii) Appointment of the Harcourt Butler Indian States Commission (1927).
(iv) Murder of Saunders, the assistant superintendent of police of Lahore; bomb blast in the Assembly Hall of Delhi (1929); the Lahore Conspiracy Case and death of Jatin Das after prolonged hunger strike (1929), and bomb accident in train in Delhi (1929).
(v) Lahore session of the Congress (1929); Purna Swaraj Resolution.
(vi) Dandi March (March 12, 1930) by Gandhi to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement.
(vii) 'Deepavali Declaration' by Lord Irwin (1929).
(viii) Boycott of the First Round Table Conference (1930), Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931), and suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

17. Lord Willingdon 1931–36

(i) Second Round Table Conference (1931) and failure of the conference, resumption of Civil Disobedience Movement.

(ii) Announcement of Communal Award (1932) under which separate communal electorates were set up.
(iii) 'Fast unto death' by Gandhi in Yeravada prison, broken after the Poona Pact (1932).
(iv) Third Round Table Conference (1932).
(v) Launch of Individual Civil Disobedience (1933).
(vi) The Government of India Act of 1935.
(vii) Establishment of All India Kisan Sabha (1936) and Congress Socialist Party by Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan (1934).
(viii) Burma separated from India (1935).

18. Lord Linlithgow 1936–44

(i) First general elections (1936–37); Congress attained absolute majority.
(ii) Resignation of the Congress ministries after the outbreak of the Second World War (1939).
(iii) Subhas Chandra Bose elected as the president of Congress at the fifty-first session of the Congress (1938).
(iv) Resignation of Bose in 1939 and formation of the Forward Bloc (1939).
(v) Lahore Resolution (March 1940) by the Muslim League, demand for separate state for Muslims.
(vi) 'August Offer' (1940) by the viceroy; its criticism by the Congress and endorsement by the Muslim League.
(vii) Winston Churchill elected prime minister of England (1940).
(viii) Escape of Subhas Chandra Bose from India (1941) and organisation of the Indian National Army.
(ix) Cripps Mission's Cripps Plan to offer dominion status to India and setting up of a Constituent Assembly; its rejection by the Congress.
(x) Passing of the 'Quit India Resolution' by the Congress (1942); outbreak of 'August Revolution'; or Revolt of 1942 after the arrest of national leaders.
(xi) 'Divide and Quit' slogan at the Karachi session (1944) of the Muslim League.

19. Lord Wavell 1944–1947

(i) C. Rajagopalachari's CR Formula (1944), failure of Gandhi-Jinnah talks (1944).
(ii) Wavell Plan and the Shimla Conference (1942).
(iii) End of Second World War (1945).
(iv) Proposals of the Cabinet Mission (1946) and its acceptance by the Congress.
(v) Observance of 'Direct Action Day' (August 16, 1946), also known as the 1946 Calcutta Killings, by the Muslim League.
(vi) Elections to the Constituent Assembly, formation of Interim Government by the Congress (September 1946).
(vii) Announcement of end of British rule in India by Clement Attlee (prime minister of England) on February 20, 1947.

20. Lord Mountbatten 1947–1948

(i) June Third Plan (June 3, 1947) announced.
(ii) Introduction of Indian Independence Bill in the House of Commons.
(iii) Appointment of two boundary commissions under Sir Cyril Radcliff for the partition of Bengal and Punjab.

3. Indian National Congress Annual Sessions

Year/Place	President	Details
1. 1885 (Dec. 28) Bombay	W.C. Bonnerjee	first session, attended by 72 delegates; objectives of the Congress outlined.
2. 1886 (Dec. 28) Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji	attended by 436 delegates; witnessed the merger of National Congress and National Conference.
3. 1887 (Dec. 27–28) Madras	Syed Badruddin Tyabji	attended by 607 delegates; appeal made to the Muslims to join hands with other national leaders.
4. 1888 (Dec. 28–29) Allahabad	George Yule	attended by 1,248 delegates.
5. 1889 (Dec. 27–28) Bombay	William Wedderburn	
6. 1890 (Dec. 28–29) Calcutta	Pherozeshah Mehta	
7. 1891 (Dec. 26–27) Nagpur	P. Ananda Charlu	
8. 1892 (Dec. 28–29) Allahabad	W.C. Bonnerjee	
9. 1893 (Dec. 27–28) Lahore	Dadabhai Naoroji	
10. 1894 (Dec. 27–28) Madras	Alfred Webb	
11. 1895 (Dec. 28–29) Poona	Surendranath Banerjee	
12. 1896 (Dec. 27–28) Calcutta	Rahimtulla Sayani	
13. 1897 (Dec. 22–29) Amravati	C. Sankaran Nair	

14. 1898	(Dec. 27–28) Madras	A.M. Bose	
15. 1899	(Dec. 27–28) Lucknow	Romesh Chunder Dutt	demand for permanent fixation of land revenue.
16. 1900	(Dec. 27–29) Lahore	N.G. Chandavarkar	
17. 1901	(Dec. 27–28) Calcutta	Dinshaw E. Wacha	
18. 1902	(Dec. 23–26) Ahmedabad	Surendranath Banerjee	
19. 1903	(Dec. 28–30) Madras	Lalmohan Ghosh	
20. 1904	(Dec. 26–28) Bombay	Henry Cotton	
21. 1905	(Dec. 27–30) Benaras	Gopal Krishna Gokhale	expressed resentment against the partition of Bengal.
22. 1906	(Dec. 26–29) Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji	the word 'swaraj' mentioned for the first time.
23. 1907	(Dec. 26–27) Surat	Rash Behari Ghosh	split in the Congress into the Moderates and the Extremists.
24. 1908	(Dec. 29–30) Madras	Rash Behari Ghosh	constitution of the Congress drawn.
25. 1909	(Dec. 27–29) Lahore	Madan Mohan Malaviya	expressed disapproval over formation of separate electorates on the basis of religion (of the Indian Councils Act, 1909).
26. 1910	(Dec. 28–29) Allahabad	William Wedderburn	
27. 1911	(Dec. 26–28) Calcutta	Bishan Narayan Dar	
28. 1912	(Dec. 27–28) Bankipur	R.N. Mudholkar	
29. 1913	(Dec. 26–28) Karachi	Syed Mohammed	

Year/Place	President	Details
30. 1914 (Dec. 28–30) Madras	Bhupendra Nath Bose (or Basu)	reunion of Congress factions; the Lucknow Pact signed.
31. 1915 (Dec. 27–30) Bombay	S.P. Sinha	
32. 1916 (Dec. 26–30) Lucknow	A.C. Majumdar	
33. 1917 (Dec. 28–29) Calcutta	Annie Besant	strongly condemned the Jallianwalla massacre; and boosted the Khilafat Movement.
34. 1918 (Dec. 26–31) Delhi	Madan Mohan Malaviya	
35. 1919 (Dec. 27–28) Amritsar	Motilal Nehru	a new Constitution for the Congress framed.
36. 1920 (Dec. 26–31) Nagpur	C. Vijayaraghavachariar	
37. 1921 (Dec. 27–28) Ahmedabad	C.R. Das (in prison) Hakim Ajmal Khan (acting president)	the Swarajya Party formed.
38. 1922 (Dec. 26–31) Gaya	C.R. Das	
39. 1923 (Dec. 28–31) Kakinada	Maulana Mohammad Ali	
40. 1924 (Dec. 26–27) Belgaum	M.K. Gandhi	the Independence Resolution adopted; resolved to boycott the Simon Commission.
41. 1925 (Dec. 26–28) Kanpur	Sarojini Naidu	
42. 1926 (Dec. 26–28) Gauhati	S. Srinivasa Iyengar	
43. 1927 (Dec. 26–27) Madras	M.A. Ansari	the first All India Youth Congress came into being.
44. 1928 (Dec. 28–31) Calcutta	Motilal Nehru	passed the Purna Swaraj Resolution; authorised the Working Committee to

45. 1929 (Dec. 29–31) Lahore	Jawaharlal Nehru	launch civil disobedience programme. endorsement of Gandhi-Irwin pact, resolution on Fundamental Rights and National Economic Programme
46. 1931 (March 29) Karachi	Vallabhbhai Patel	passed.
47. 1932 (April 24) Delhi	Amrit Ranchhorddas Seth	the President urged the Congress to
48. 1933 (April 1) Calcutta	Nellie Sengupta	adopt socialism as its goal.
49. 1934 (Oct. 26–28) Bombay	Rajendra Prasad	the session held in a village for the
50. 1936 (April 12–14) Lucknow	Jawaharlal Nehru	first time.
51. 1936 (Dec. 27–28) Faizpur	Jawaharlal Nehru	National Planning Committee set up under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru.
52. 1938 (Feb. 19–21) Haripura	Subhas Chandra Bose	Rajendra Prasad took over as president after Subhas Chandra resigned.
53. 1939 (March 10) Tripuri	Subhas Chandra Bose	
54. 1940 (March 17–19) Ramgarh	Maulana Abul Kalam Azad	
55. 1946 (Nov. 23) Meerut	Acharya J.B. Kripalani	
56. 1948 (Dec. 18–19) Jaipur	Pattabhi Sitaramayya	

Year/Place	President	Details
57. 1950 (September 21–22) Nasik	Purushottam Das Tandon	Three candidates for the post of president—Purushottam Das Tandon (supported by Sardar Patel), J.B. Kripalani (supported by Nehru), and Shankar Rao Deo. Purushottam Das Tandon resigned in September 1951 after which J.L. Nehru became president.
58. 1951 (September), Delhi	Jawaharlal Nehru	
59. 1953, Hyderabad	Jawaharlal Nehru	
60. 1854, Kalyani	Jawaharlal Nehru	
61. 1955 (January 21–23) Avadi (Madras)	U.V. Dhebar	
62. 1956, Amritsar	U.N. Dhebar	
63. 1958, Gauhati	U.N. Dhebar	
64. 1959, Nagpur	Indira Gandhi	
65. 1960, Bangalore	Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy	
66. 1961, Bhavnagar	Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy	
67. 1962, Bhubaneshwar	Damodaran Sanjivayya (First Dalit president)	
68. 1963, Patna	Damodaran Sanjivayya	
69. 1964, Bhubaneshwar	K. Kamaraj	
70. 1965, Durgapur	K. Kamaraj	

(The sessions for the years 1930, 1935, and 1941–1945 could not be held.)

4. Socio-Religious Reform Movements (Late 18th to mid-20th century)

Name of the Movement/ Organisation and Place	People Associated with it	Nature and Objectives, and Media Efforts
Swaminarayan Sampradyaga; Gujarat (early 19th century)	Swami Sahajanand (original name Gyanashyama)—1781–1830	Belief in a theistic god, protest against epicurean practices of Vaishnavism; prescribed a moral code.
Brahmo Samaj (earlier Atmiya Sabha); Founded in Calcutta (late 18th-early–19th century)	Raja Rammohan Roy (1772–1833)—the founder; Debendranath Tagore—later formed Adi Brahmo Samaj; Keshub Chandra Sen—later associated with Brahmo Samaj of India (secessionists from this group formed Sadharan Brahmo Samaj)	Propagated monotheism, opposed incarnation, meditation, sacrifices, existence of priests, idolatry, superstition, sati; sought for reforms in Hindu society. Journals brought out by Rammohan Roy: *Sambad Kaumudi* (1821), *Mirat-ul-Akbar;* by Debendranath Tagore: *Tattva Bodhini Patrika;* Keshub Chandra Sen brought out *Indian Mirror;* Sadharan Brahmo Samaj brought out *Tattva Kaumudi, The Indian Messenger, The Sanjibari, the Navyabharat,* and *Prabasi.*

Name of the Movement/ Organisation and Place	People Associated with it	Nature and Objectives, and Media Efforts
Young Bengal Movement (1826–31)	Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (founder), Rasik Krishna Mullick, Tarachand Chucker-vati, Krishna Mohan Banerjee	Opposed the vices in society; believed in truth, freedom, and reason; brought out the *Jnanavesan* (journal) and established the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge (Derozio edited *Hesperus, The Calcutta Library Gazette,* and he was associated with *India Gazette*).
Dharma Sabha; Calcutta (1830)	Radhakanta Deb (1794–1876) (founder)	Emerged to counter Brahmo Samaj, aimed at protection of orthodoxy, condemned radical and liberal reforms, helped in the spread of western education.
Wahabi Movement (beginning in Rohilkhand—spread in Kabul, NWFP, Bengal, the Central Provinces; Sittana in NWFP—headquarters from 1850 onwards (19th century—founded in 1820; suppression by the British by 1870)	Syed Ahmed of Rai Bareilly (founder); Vilayat Ali, Shah Muhammad Hussain, Farhat Hussain (all from Patna); Inayat Ali	Popularised the teachings of Waliullah; opposed the British and fought against the Sikhs; stressed role of individual conscience in religion.

Namdhari or Kuka Movement (among Sikhs); NWF Province and Bhaini (Ludhiana district, Punjab) (1841–71)	Bhai Balak Singh and Baba Ram Singh (founders)	For political and social reforms among the Sikhs.
Taayuuni Movement; founded in Dacca (1839)	Karamat Ali Jaunpuri	Religious teachings of Shah Waliullah formed the basis; opposed Faraizi movement.
Students Literary and Scientific Society (1848)	—	Debated popular science and social questions.
Paramhans Mandali (1849)	—	Emphasised unity of godhead; against caste rules.
Rahanumai Mazdayasanan Sabha (religious reform association for Parsis—1851)	S.S. Bengali, Naoroji Furdonji, Dadabhai Naoroji and others	To improve the social condition of the Parsis and restore the purity of Zoroastrianism. Their journal was *Rast Goftar* (Truth Teller).
Radhaswami Movement; founded in Agra (1861)	Tulsi Ram or Shiv Dayal Saheb (Swamiji Maharaj—founder)	Preached belief in one supreme being, the *guru's* supreme position, simple social life for believers (the *satsang*); stress on achieving spiritual fulfilment without giving up material life.
The Deoband School of Islamic Theology (at Deoband Saharanpur, UP—1866)	Muhammad Qasim Nanaytavi (1832–80) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (founders), Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Mahmud-ul-Hasan, Shibli Numani	Revivalist movement whose religious teachings encompassed a liberal interpretation of Islam; for moral religious upliftment; did not take to Western influences in education;

Name of the Movement/ Organisation and Place	People Associated with it	Nature and Objectives, and Media Efforts
		opposed Syed Ahmed Khan's views to some extent; welcomed the formation of the Indian National Congress.
Prarthana Samaj; founded in Bombay (1867)	Atmaram Pandurang (founder), Govind Ranade (chief mentor), R.G. Bhandarkar	Worship and reform of society through emphasis on monotheism, upliftment of women, abolition of caste discrimination and religious orthodoxy.
Indian Reform Association; Calcutta (1870)	Keshub Chandra Sen	To create public opinion against child marriages; for upliftment of social status of women; to legalise Brahmo type of marriage.
Arya Samaj; founded in Bombay (1875)	Dayanand Saraswati (originally Mula Shankar—founder)	Asserted Hindu faith over other religions; within a revivalist framework, denounced rites, Brahmins' supremacy, idolatry, superstitions; Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) schools were established.

Aligarh Movement (the Aligarh School grew into the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1877 and later the Aligarh Muslim University (1875—year of founding the Aligarh School)	Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–98—founder of the Aligarh School	Religious reform through emphasis on principle of enquiry in religion, favoured scientific and rational outlook, recognised Western education, aimed at social reform; Sir Syed Ahmed founded a scientific society (1864), *Tahzib-al-akhlaq* (1870)— Urdu journal.
The Theosophical Society— founded in New York but headquarters shifted to Adyar, near Madras (1875)	Madam H.P. Blavatsky (1831–91), a Russian, and Col. H.S. Olcott (1832–1907), an American (founders); Annie Besant (one of its presidents)	Drew inspiration from *Upanishads,* philosophy of the Vedanta, etc., to aim at religious revival and social reform.
Deccan Education Society; Pune (1884)	M.G. Ranade, V.G. Chibdonkar, G.G. Agarkar (founders)	For contributing to education and culture in western India; established Ferguson College, Pune (in 1885).
Seva Sadan; Bombay (1885)	Behramji M. Malabari	Against child marriages, forced widowhood; to help socially exploited women
Indian National Social Conference; Bombay (1887)	M.G. Ranade, Raghunath Rao	Social reform
Deva Samaj; Lahore (1887)	Shiva Narain Agnihotri	Religious ideas closer to those of Brahmo Samaj; favoured a social code of conduct that was against

Name of the Movement/ Organisation and Place	People Associated with it	Nature and Objectives, and Media Efforts
		bribe-taking, gambling, alcohol consumption, and having non-vegetarian food.
Ahmadiya Movement; Qadiani in Punjab (1889)	Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839–1908)—founder	Defended Islam from attacks by Christian missionaries, Hindu revivalists; belief in a universal religion; Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed himself as a Messiah and as an incarnation of Lord Krishna.
Madras Hindu Association; Madras (1892)	Viresialingam Pantulu	Social purity movement; against *devadasi* system and oppression of widows.
Ramakrishna Mission founded in Bengal (centres at Belur and Mayavati became focal points—1897)	Vivekananda (originally Narendranath Dutta), 1863–1902 (its founder); Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1834–86)—Vivekananda's *guru*	Sought to revive Hinduism based on ancient India's religious texts and concepts (of Vedanta, etc.); against caste restrictions, oppression, superstition in Hinduism, aimed to uplift women and overhaul the education system.

Bharat Dharma Mahan-mandala; Benaras (1902)	Madan Mohan Malaviya, Deen Dayal Sharma, Gopal Krishna Gokhale (founders)	Orthodox Hindus' (Sanatan-dharinis') organisation that opposed the Arya Samaj's teachings.
The Servants of India Society; Bombay (1905)	Gopal Krishna Gokhale	Famine relief and improving tribals' condition in particular.
Poona Seva Sadan (1909)	G.K. Devadhar and Ramabai Ranade	Economic uplift; employment for women.
Nishkam Karma Math (Monastery of Disinterested Work); Pune (1910)	Dhondo Keshav Karve	Educational progress of women; improving widows' condition. Founded a women's university in Pune—now in Bombay.
Bharat Stri Mandal; Calcutta (1910)	Saralabala Devi Chaudhurani	Women's education and emancipation.
Social Service League (1911)	Narayan Malhar Joshi	Improving the condition of the common masses; opened schools, libraries.
Seva Samiti; Allahabad (1914)	Hridyanath Kunzru	Improving the status of the suffering classes through social service, education.
The Indian Women's Association; Madras (1917)	Annie Besant	Upliftment of Indian women; annual conferences (All India Women's Conferences) were held.

5. Famous Trials of the Nationalist Period

Trial	Charges	Verdict
1. Bahadur Shah Zafar; January 27, 1858 to March 9, 1858 in Red Fort (Delhi)	treason, conspiracy, rebellion, and murder in 1857 revolt	convicted and exiled to Rangoon.
2. Surendranath Banerjea; May 4–5, 1883 in Calcutta High Court	contempt of court, on his remarks in *The Bengalee*	sent to civil jail for two years.
3. Bal Gangadhar Tilak; 1897, 1908, 1916	provocative articles in *Kesari*	18 months' imprisonment (1897); 6 years' exile to Mandalay and fine of Rs 1,000 for seditious writings (1908); no jail sentence was imposed (1916).
4. Aurobindo Ghosh and 37 others in Alipore Bombay Case Trial; 1908–09	attempt to murder district judge of Muzaffarpur	spent a year in jail as an undertrial prisoner.
5. V.D. Savarkar; 1910 and January 1911	delivering infuriating speeches against British and procuring and distributing arms	two consecutive life transportations (50 years); the International Court of Arbitration at the Hague also held him guilty; spent 10 years in Andaman jail (1911–21).

6.	Gandhi and Shankarlal Banker (publisher of *Young India);* 1922	four inflammatory articles against the British in *Young India*	sentenced to jail for 6 years; but set free in 1924.
7.	31 communists in the Meerut Conspiracy Case; March 1929	conspiracy against the British	received sentences varying from 3 years to life sentence.
8.	Bhagat Singh; June 1929	throwing a bomb in Central Assembly	received transportation for life.
	July 1929	killing police head constable, Saunders	sentenced to death.
9.	M.N. Roy; 1931-32	conspiracy and sedition	sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment (later reduced to 6 years).
10.	Shah Nawaz Khan, Prem Kumar Sehgal and Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon in the INA trials; 1945 at Red Fort, Delhi	waging war by murdering or abetment of murder	sentences of transportation for life were remitted; but those of cashiering and forfeiture of arrears of pay and allowances were confirmed.

6. Caste Movements

Movement/Year/Region	Causes and Consequences
1. Satyashodhak Movement, Satyashodhak Samaj, founded by Jyotiba Phule (1873; Maharashtra)	Against brahminic domination and for the emancipation of low castes, untouchables, and widows.
2. Aravippuram Movement, led by Shri Narayana Guru (1888; Kerala)	For the rights of the depressed classes (especially the Ezhavas or Iravas of Kerala); the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogum was set up in 1902–03.
3. Justice Party Movement led by Dr T.M. Nair, P. Tyagaraja Chetti, and C.N. Mudalair on behalf of intermediate castes (1916; Madras)	Against domination of brahmins in government service, education and political field; the South Indian Liberation Federation (SILF) was formed in 1916; the efforts yielded in the passing of 1930 Government Order providing reservations to groups.
4. Nair Movement led by C.V. Raman Pillai, K. Rama Krishna Pillai, and M. Padmanabha Pillai (1891; Kerala)	Against domination of brahmins; the Malayali Memorial was formed by Raman Pillai in 1891 and Nair Service Society by Padmanabha Pillai was set up in 1914.
5. Self-Respect Movement led by E. V. Ramaswami Naicker or Periyar (1925; Tamil Nadu)	Against caste bias by brahmins; *Kudi Arasu* journal was started by Periyar in 1910.

6. Nadar Movement by the untouchable Shanans who imitated the kshatriya customs to emerge as the Nadars (Tamil Nadu)	Against social bias and to promote educational and social welfare among the Nadars; the Nadar Mahajan Sangam was formed in 1910.
7. The Depressed Classes (Mahars) Movement led by B.R. Ambedkar (1924; Maharashtra)	For the upliftment of the untouchables; founded the Depressed Classes Institution in 1924, a Marathi fortnightly *Bahiskrit Bharat* in 1927, the Samaj Samta Sangh in 1927, the Scheduled Caste Federation in 1942 to propagate their views.
8. Congress' Harijan Movement (1917 onwards)	For elevating the social status of the lower and backward classes; All-India Anti-Untouchability League was established in 1932; the weekly *Harijan* was founded by Gandhi in 1933.
9. Kaivartas' Movement by Kaivartas who later became the Mahishyas (1897 onwards; Midnapore, Bengal)	Founded the Jati Nirdharani Sabha (1897) and the Mahishya Samiti (1901).

7. Peasant Movements

Movement / Year / Region	Causes and Consequences
1. Titu Mir's Movement, under leadership of Mir Nathar Ali or Titu Mir (1782–1831; West Bengal)	Against Hindu landlords who imposed beard-tax on the Farazis.
2. Pagal Panthis Movement of the Hajong and Garo tribes under the leadership of Karam Shah and Tipu Shah (1825–35; Mymensingh district, earlier in Bengal)	Against hike in rents; the movement was violently suppressed.
3. Moplah Uprisings (1836–54; Malabar)	Against rise in revenue demand and reduction of field size.
4. Indigo Revolt by Bengal indigo cultivators led by Degambar and Bishnu Biswas (1859–60; Nadia district)	Against terms imposed by European indigo planters; Indigo Commission was set up in 1860 to view the situation.
5. Deccan Peasants' Uprising by the Maratha peasants (1875; Kardeh village and Poona in Maharashtra)	Against corrupt practices of Gujarati and Marwari moneylenders; Agriculturists' Relief Act of 1879 was passed.
6. Phadke's Ramosi Uprising by Ramosi peasants led by Wasudeo Balwant Phadke (1877–87; Maharashtra)	Against the British failure to take up anti-famine measures.

7. Pabna Agrarian Uprising led by Shah Chandra Roy, Shambhu Pal, Khoodi Mollah and supported by B.C. Chatterjee and R.C. Dutt (1873; Pabna district, East Bengal, now in Bangladesh)	Against policies of zamindars to prevent occupants from acquiring occupancy rights; the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 was passsed.
8. Punjab Peasants' Revolt (during the last decade of the 19th century, Punjab)	Against prospects of losing their land; the Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1900 was passed, which imposed regulations on sale and mortgage of land and revenue demands.
9. Champaran Satyagraha by peasants of Champaran (1917; Bihar)	Against the tinkathia system imposed by the European indigo planters; the Champaran Agrarian Act abolished the tinkathia system.
10. Kheda Satyagraha by peasants of Kheda, led by Gandhi (1918; Gujarat)	Against ignored appeals for remission of land revenue in case of crop failures; the demands were finally fulfilled.
11. Bardoli Satyagraha by the Kunbi-Patidar land-owning peasants and untouchables, supported by Mehta brothers, Vallabhbhai Patel (1928; Surat, Gujarat)	Against oppression by upper castes and hike in revenue by 22 per cent by the Bombay Government; the revenue was brought down to 6.03 per cent.

Movement / Year / Region	Causes and Consequences
12. Eka Movement by members of Pasi and Ahir castes (1921–22; Hardoi, Barabanki, and Sitapur districts)	Against hike in rents.
13. Bakasht Movement (1936; Bihar)	Against the zamindars' policies regarding occupancy rights.
14. Tebhaga Movement by poor peasants and tenants and bargardars or share-croppers (Bengal)	Against zamindars and moneylenders; Bargardari Bill was passed.
15. Telangana insurrection (1946–51; Hyderabad)	Against practices of moneylenders and officials of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

8. Newspapers and Journals

Name of the Paper/Journal	Year and Place from which Published	Name of the Founder/ Editor
Bengal Gazette (also *Calcutta General Advertiser*), weekly	1780, Calcutta	Started by James Augustus Hicky (Irishman)
India Gazette	1787, Calcutta	Henry Louis Vivian Derozio associated with it.
Madras Courier (First paper from Madras)	1784, Madras	—
Bombay Herald (First paper from Bombay)	1789, Bombay	—
Indian Herald (in English)	1795, Madras	Started by R. Williams (English-man) and published by Humphreys
Digdarshana (First Bengali monthly)	1818, Calcutta	—
Calcutta Journal	1818	Started by J.S. Buckingham
Bengal Gazette (First Bengali newspaper)	1818, Calcutta	Harishchandra Ray

Name of the Paper/Journal	Year and Place from which Published	Name of the Founder/ Editor
Sambad Kaumudi (Weekly in Bengali)	1821	Raja Rammohan Roy
Mirat-ul-Akbar (First journal in Persian)	1822, Calcutta	Raja Rammohan Roy
Jam-i-Jahan Numah (First paper in Urdu)	1822, Calcutta	An English firm
Banga-Duta (a weekly in four languages—English, Bengali, Persian, Hindi)	1822, Calcutta	Rammohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, and others
Bombay Samachar (First paper in Gujarati)	1822, Bombay	—
East Indian (daily)	19th century	Henry Vivian Derozio
Bombay Times (from 1861 onwards, *The Times of India*)	1838, Bombay	Foundation laid by Robert Knight, started by Thomas Bennett.
Rast Goftar (A Gujarati fortnightly)	1851	Dadabhai Naoroji
Hindu Patriot	1853, Calcutta	Girish Chandra Ghosh (later, Harish Chandra Mukherjee became owner-cum-editor)

Somaprakasha (First Bengali political paper)	1858, Calcutta	Dwarkanath Vidyabhushan
Indian Mirror (fortnightly—first Indian daily paper in English)	Early 1862, Calcutta	Devendranath Tagore
Bengalee (this, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*—the first vernacular papers)	1862, Calcutta	Girishchandra Ghosh (taken over by S.N. Banerjea in 1879)
National Paper	1865, Calcutta	Devendranath Tagore
Madras Mail (First evening paper in India)	1868, Madras	—
Amrita Bazar Patrika (Bengali in the beginning, later English, a daily)	1868, Jessore District	Sisir Kumar Ghosh and Motilal Ghosh
Bangadarshana (in Bengali)	1873, Calcutta	Bankimchandra Chatterji
Indian Statesman (later, *The Statesman*)	1875, Calcutta	Started by Robert Knight
The Hindu (in English)—started as weekly	1878, Madras	G.S. Aiyar, Viraraghavachari, and Subba Rao Pandit (among the founders)
Tribune (daily)	1881, Lahore	Dyal Singh Majithia

Name of the Paper/Journal	Year and Place from which Published	Name of the Founder/ Editor
Kesari (Marathi daily) and *Maharatta* (English weekly)	1881, Bombay	Tilak, Chiplunkar, Agarkar (before Tilak, Agarkar, and Prof Kelkar were the editors respectively)
Swadeshamitram (a Tamil paper)	Madras	G.S. Aiyar
Paridasak (a weekly)	1886	Bipin Chandra Pal (publisher)
Yugantar	1906, Bengal	Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Bhupendranath Datta
Sandhya	1906, Bengal	Brahmabandhab Upadhyay
Kal	1906, Maharashtra	—
Indian Sociologist	London	Shyamji Krishna Varma
Bande Mataram	Paris	Madam Bhikaji Cama
Talvar	Berlin	Virendranath Chattopadhyaya
Free Hindustan	Vancouver	Tarak Nath Das
Ghadr	San Francisco	Ghadr Party
Reshwa	Before 1908	Ajit Singh

Bombay Chronicle (a daily)	1913, Bombay	Started by Pherozeshah Mehta, Editor—B.G. Horniman (Englishman)
The Hindustan Times	1920, Delhi	Founded by K.M. Panikkar as part of the Akali Dal Movement
The Milap (Urdu daily)	1923, Lahore	Founded by M.K. Chand
Leader (in English)	—	Madan Mohan Malaviya
Kirti	1926, Punjab	Santosh Singh
Bahishkrit Bharat (Marathi fortnightly)	1927	B.R. Ambedkar
Kudi Arasu (Tamil)	1910	E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Periyar)
Kranti	1927, Maharashtra	S.S. Mirajkar, K.N. Joglekar, S.V. Ghate
Langal and *Ganabani*	1927, Bengal	Gopu Chakravarti and Dharani Goswami
Bandi Jivan	Bengal	Sachindranath Sanyal
National Herald (daily)	1938	Started by Jawaharlal Nehru

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