



M.A.(HISTORY) PART-II PAPER-IV

(SEMESTER-III)

**(CONSTITUTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN
INDIA 1858-1930)**

UNIT NO. 1

SECTION-A

**Centre for Distance and Online Education
Punjabi University, Patiala**

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LESSON NOS.

- 1.1 : The Transfer of Power from the Company to the Crown and the Queen's Proclamation-1858
- 1.2 : Forces and Circumstances Leading to the Growth of Indian Nationalism and Establishment of the Indian National Congress
- 1.3 : The Indian National Congress : Controversy regarding its Genesis, Aims and Objectives
- 1.4 : Indian National Congress-Its Programmes and Methods, 1885-1905
- 1.5 : Rise of Extremism : Circumstances responsible, Differentiation From Liberalism, and the Surat Split of 1907
- 1.6 : Minto-Morley Reforms 1909

**PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA
(RUSA SCHEME 2014)**

**Group –C Modern India
M. A. PART-II SEMESTER-III**

**PAPER-IV: NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
1858-1930.**

Maximum Marks: 100

(Theory 75 and Internal Assessment 25)

Time allowed: 3 hours

Pass Marks (Theory – 26, Internal Assessment-9)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER SETTER/EXAMINER

For Distance Education

The question paper will consist of three sections: A, B, and C. Section A and B will have four questions each which will carry 12 marks each. Candidates are required to attempt two questions each from the sections A, and B of the question paper and the entire Section C. Section C will consist of 9 short answer type questions which will cover the entire syllabus and will carry 27 marks. The answer to each of these questions will be of 30-40 words and will carry 3 marks each.

The breakup of 25 marks for internal assessment (Theory Papers) is below:

1. Test	: 10 Marks
2. Class Attendance	: 05 Marks
3. Project Work/Assignment/Seminar/Field	: 10 Marks
Total Marks	: 25 Marks

SECTION-A

1. Queen's Proclamation of 1858; Government of India Act – 1858.
2. Emergence of Indian National Congress; Moderates; Their Programme; Methods and Estimate of their Achievements.
3. Extremists in Indian Nationalism: Estimate of their Achievements, Surat Split.
4. Minto – Morley Reforms, 1909.

SECTION-B

5. Revolutionaries in India and Abroad;The Ghadar Movement, Komagata Maru Incident, The Home Rule Movement.
6. Agitation against Rowlatt Bills; Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and it's Impact.
7. Government of India Act 1919; Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movement.

8. Swarajist Politics, Simon Commission and its Reaction

Essential Books

- Bipan Chandra Pal : India's Struggle for Independence (Delhi, Penguin, 1989)
Sumit Sarkar : Modern India 1885- 1947 (Delhi, Macmillan, 1985)
G. N Singh : Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development
Anil Seal : Emergence of Indian Nationalism
(Cambridge University Press, 1971)
Danial Argov : Moderates and Extremists in Indian National Congress.
R.C. Majumdar : History of Freedom Movement in India Vol. II & III
Tara Chand : History of Freedom Movement, Vol. IV.
B. L. Grover and S. Grover: A New Look at Modern Indian History

Reference Books

- Bisheswar Prasad : Bondage and Freedom
(Rajesh Publication, Bombay, 1977)
S.R. Mehrotra : Emergence of the Indian National Congress
S. R. Mehrotra : Towards India's Freedom Struggle and Partition
B. E. Nanda : Making of a Nation: India's Road to Independence
(Harper's- Collins, New Delhi, 1998).
A. R. Desai : Social Background of Indian Nationalism
(Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1986).
H. Kulke : History of India,
(Australia, Kruk Rothermund, Helkms, 1986)
Judith Browne : Modern India: Rise of an Asian Democracy Delhi, 1984.

**M.A. (HISTORY) PART-II
(SEMESTER-III)****PAPER- IV
GROUP C, OPTION (iii)****Constitutional Development and National Movement in India 1858–1930**

LESSON NO. 1.1

**THE TRANSFER OF POWER FROM THE COMPANY TO THE CROWN AND
THE QUEEN'S PROCLAMATION****Structure of the Lesson**

- 1.1.1 Objectives
- 1.1.2 Introduction
- 1.1.3 Power Derived from the Crown and the Parliament
- 1.1.4 Concessions secured from the Mughals and Others
- 1.1.5 The Position of the Company from 1757 to 1765
- 1.1.6 Company's Territorial Sovereignty and Constitutional Anomaly
- 1.1.7 The Beginning of Parliamentary Control
- 1.1.8 Factors favouring the Transfer of India to the Crown
- 1.1.9 Provisions of the Act of 1858
- 1.1.10 Significance of the Act of 1858
- 1.1.11 Queen's Proclamation of 1858
- 1.1.12 Importance of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858
- 1.1.13 Self - Check Exercise
- 1.1.14 Recommended Readings

1.1.1 Objectives

The purpose of this lesson is to:

- To shed light on the establishment of East India company in 1600.
- To examine the process of transfer of power from the East India company's rule to the British Crown.
- To evaluate factors behind the Growing interest of England in Indian affairs
- To discuss the main Provisions of Lord North's Regulating Act, 1773
- To examine Pitt's India Act, 1784
- To evaluate how the Charter Acts Strengthening of Parliament's Control over the Company
- To study Queen's Proclamation of 1858 and its impact on India.

1.1.2 Introduction

On the last day of the year 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted to the merchants of London, a Royal Charter which constituted the East India Company, then named "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading with the East India. From 1600 to 1765, writer S.C. Ilbert, "The East India Company were primarily traders but with the passage of time, this trading company assumed territorial role and by the year 1765, its territorial

character was more or less established. In fact, in that year the traders had become the rulers of India.”

S.C. Ilbert further writes, “British authority in India from 1600 to 1765 may be traced historically to a two-fold source. It derived partly from the English Crown and Parliament and partly from the Great Mughal and other native rulers of India.” As a trading corporation, the company was bound by the provisions of the acts of the British Crown and after 1688 by the provisions of the acts of the British Parliament. The second source of Company’s authority obtained commercial concessions and after the grant of Diwani in 1765 governmental and revenue powers as well. The actual position in the principal settlements, however, presented a strong contrast between the facts and the theories. It was in 1858, that the legal and political sovereignty in respect of Indian Empire was indisputedely vested in the British Crown.

1.1.3 Power Derived from the Crown and the Parliament

The Charter granted in 1600, was renewed from time to time by the British Kings and after 1688, by the Acts of Parliament when the prerogative of the Crown in respect of conferring monopoly rights of trade came to an end. In 1609 James I renewed the Charter and made it perpetual but it contained the provision of revoking it after three years notice. This made the position of the Company quite strong. In 1618, the Company was empowered to enforce martial law for the maintenance of discipline on long voyages. In 1623, the Company's power of controlling and punishing its servants was further extended by another Charter. In the reign of Charles I the company received a set back because he granted a licence to Sir William Courten in 1635 for trade in the East Indies and consequently a rival trading body known as Courten’s Association, came into existence. Charles II and however, extended great patronage to the East India Company and granted it as many as five Charters between 1661 and 1683. Consequently Company’s stock rose in price. It also secured the rights to coin money; the erect fortifications, exercise jurisdiction over English subjects residing in the East, make peace or war and form alliances with non-Christian peoples. In 1686, James II granted the Company a Charter by which he renewed and confirmed its former privileges. The Charters of 1693, 1694 and 1698 confirmed the existing privileges of the Company and further strengthened its position. In 1708, the two trading concerns were merged under the name of “The United Company of Merchants of England trading with the East Indies.”

The half a century which followed the union of two-Companies greatly strengthened their power and position. The acts passed in 1711, 1739, 1744 gave many privileges to the Company in return for the huge loans. The Charters of 1719, 1726, 1754, 1757 and 1758 gave the Company certain powers in connection with the regulation of military forces in India, distribution of booty and the occupation of new territories.

Thus from 1600 to 1758, the Home Government by various charters and grants considerably increased the powers and privileges of the East India Company in India.

1.1.4. Concessions secured from the Mughals and Others

From 1600 to 1758, the Company secured from others remarkable concessions which conferred upon it partial rights of territorial sovereignty. During 1615-1619, Sir Thomas Roe was sent as an ambassador of the English King to secure a treaty settlement with the Mughal Emperor but he could not secure anything more than a permission from Prince Khurram, the viceroy of Gujrat to manage the affairs of the English factory and trade, free from local interference. In 1639, the local Hindi Prince of Wandī was granted by the Company the rights of building a fortress, minting money and of governing Madras under certain conditions. In 1672, the British established their control over Madras but at the same time they also recognized the sovereignty of the Mughal Emperor over Madras by agreeing to pay quit rent. In 1752, the Nawab of Karnatak renounced the quit rent and Company's authority over Madras became absolute.

In 1690, the Company established a settlement at Sutanati, a site where future Calcutta developed. Six years later this place was fortified and named as St. Fort William, in 1698, the Company secured the Zamindari rights over the three villages of Sutanati, Calcutta and Govindpur in return for a payment of Rs. 1200/- (twelve hundred) annually.

During 1714-1717, a mission under Surman was sent to Emperor Farrukhsiyar.

Surman was able to secure three firmans from the Emperor addressed to the local chiefs of Gujrat, Hyderabad and Bengal, confirming the existing privileges of the Company. But at that time the Mughal authority was no more obeyed in far off provinces and the firmans had no value.

1.1.5. The Position of the Company from 1757 to 1765

During 1757 to 1765, the British acted as the king makers of Bengal. Britishers got maximum concessions from the puppet Nababs from time to time. In June 1757 Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula was defeated in the Battle of Plassey and in his place Mir Jafar was made the Nawab of Bengal. The latter gave to the Company the Zamindari rights of 24 Parganas (nearly 900 square miles of territory in the south of Calcutta). After three years Mir Jafar was removed and replaced by Mir Kasim who ceded the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the English East India Company. Later on Mir Kasim was defeated in the Battle of Buxur (1764) and Mir Jafar was again made the Nawab of Bengal but he died after a year and was succeeded by Najib-ud-daula. The Company made a treaty with him by which it got of the Nizamat of Bengal in return for the payment of a fixed amount of 53 (fifty three) lakhs rupees. In 1765, the Company secured the right of Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and some parts of Orissa from the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam in lieu of the districts of Kara and Allahabad (which the Nawab Wazir of Oudh had ceded to the Company according to the terms of the Treaty of 1765) and an annual pension of Rs. 26 (Twenty Six) lakhs. The Nizamat meant the executive authority and the administration of criminal justice while Diwani meant the right of collecting land revenue and administering justice in civil cases.

1.1.6. Company's Territorial Sovereignty and Constitutional Anomaly

By the year 1765, the Company had established its defect to authority over Bengal, Bihar and a part of Orissa. Thus a body of merchants had come to acquire vast Indian territories. This transformation of the Company from a commercial concern into a semi-sovereign body produced important consequences. It brought into limelight the important question of its relation with the British Crown and the Parliament. According to the English law, no subject could possess territory except in the name of the Crown. Hence the position of East India Company had become anomalous; a serious constitutional problem faced the British government. The anomalous development made it necessary for the British government. The anomalous development made it necessary for the British Crown either to regularize the Company's territorial possessions in India or to assume the power itself : since the later action was against the principle of the sacredness of property which was so fully recognized in the 18th century, an active Parliamentary interference had to be made to regulate Company's position.

The system of government established in Bengal is known as Dual Government. The Company had acquired Diwani from the Emperor and Nizamat from the Nawab of Bengal. But the Company itself did not undertake its duties as Nazim or Diwan. The actual work of civil, criminal and police administration was carried on by the Nawab who received a fixed amount from the Company to run the administration but the real authority rested with the Company which not only directed the Nawab in the conduct of his work but also maintained a large army for the defence of the province of Bengal.

The greatest defect of his system was the unfortunate divorce of power from responsibility. The working of diarchy was doing havoc to the people. The servants of the Company did all they could, to add to the miseries and suffering of the people. The famines of 1770, further added to their misfortune. Lecky writes, "Never before had the natives experienced a tyranny which was at once so skillful, so searching and so strong".

1.1.7. The Beginning of Parliamentary Control

Throughout the later-half of the 18th century, there was a gradual growth of the feeling that the British nation itself, through Parliament, rather than through a private trading company, however powerful and wealthy, must ultimately be responsible for the British rule in India. The educated public opinion in England through the press and Parliament began to ask for control by the state over the political activities of the English East India Company. The servants of the company nicknamed as "English Nawab" brought huge fortunes to England, and with the help of their money they corrupted by politics of England. The administrative scandals in Bengal during the diarchy instituted by Lord Clive and the greed of the Directors in England drew the attention and intervention of the British Parliament into the Company's affairs.

1.1.7. (a) Lord North's Regulating Act, 1773

Parliamentary control of effective nature is to be traced from the year 1773. Though Company's servants were arrogant and opulent but the Company itself was struggling with impending bankruptcy. So, when the Company

approached the Parliament in 1773 for financial help, Lord North's Government took this opportunity to streamline the system of the administration of the Company's Indian possessions by passing some Acts. The first Act granting a state loan to the Company limited their dividends and obliged them to submit their accounts to the Treasury. The second and the more important Act known as the Regulating Act, gave the Company a new constitution it provided for the appointment of a Governor-General in Bengal, who was to be assisted and controlled by four Councilors. All members had equal powers, every question was to be decided by majority. However the Governor-General who was the President, had a casting vote in case of a tie.

It also provided for the establishment of a Supreme Court of Judicature at Calcutta which was to be independent of the Governor-General and his Council.

The Regulating Act is a landmark in the transition of power from the Company to the Parliament. It recognized the political functions of the company. According to Alfred Lyall, "the system of administration set up by the act of 1773, embodied the first attempt at giving some definite and recognizable form to the vague and arbitrary rulership that had developed upon the Company".

The establishment of the Parliamentary control over the affairs of the Company was a significant step. The Act required the Company to submit regular reports on the revenues of India to the British Treasury. The reports concerning the civil and military Government of India were to be regularly submitted to the Secretary of State. This was indeed the first step towards subordinating the commercial interest of the company to the political interest of India which ultimately led to the abolition of the company itself when the Administration of India passed to the Crown. According to G.N. Singh, "The Act of 1773 is of great constitutional importance because it definitely recognized the political functions of the Company, because it asserted for the first time, the right of the Parliament to dictate the form of Government in what were considered till then the private possessions of the Company; and because it was the first of the long series of Parliamentary statutes, that altered the form of Government of India". But this Act did not remove the existing evils and it has been justly condemned as violating the first principles of administrative mechanics. It created a Governor-General who was powerless before his own Council, which in turn was powerless before a supreme court which was immune from all responsibility for the peace and welfare of the country.

The Amending Act of 1780-81 removed some of the anomalies and settled the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. But the whole question was reopened in 1783, when the Company was again obliged to petition for financial help. Three proposals came forward, namely those of Dundas, Fox and Pitt the Younger, while the first two were rejected, the third was carried through the Parliament under the title of Pitt's India Act, 1784.

1.1.7 (b). Pitt's India Act, 1784

Pitt's famous status was the culminating point of State inspection into the Indian affairs. The measure practically made the Company in everything except its patronage and commerce, a subordinate department of the state. Civil and military matters were to be controlled by six Commissioners to be

appointed for the affairs of India, popularly known as the Board of Control. In practice the Board soon became a phantom body and all real powers passed into the hands of the President of the Board of Control. The Pitt's India Act into the hands of the President of the Board of Control. The Pitt's India Act thus practically placed the Company and its affairs under the control of the Parliament. Hence forth the Parliament through its Board of Commissioners for the affairs of India was to superintend, direct and control the civil and military Government of India. The so far vague and ineffective Parliamentary control over the Company's administration became real and affective. According to Prof. Shri Ram Sharma, "The Pitt's India Act altered the foundation of the direction the Indian affairs in England. The Court of Proprietors lost its political power. The Directors now played second fiddle to the British Government who possessed almost unlimited power of issuing orders which the Directors were bound to obey." Thus the Pitt's India Act removed one of the *main* defects of the Regulating Act so far as the establishment of parliamentary control over Company's affairs was concerned.

The Pitt's India Act also established the dual government at home. It divided the commercial and political business of the Company into two distinct parts the commercial activities and the political activities. The management of the commercial functions of the Company was left in more or less the undisputed charge of the Directors while its political functions were subjected to the supervision and control of the Board of Control. Thus a dual system was established for the management of Indian affairs.

1.1.7 (c). The Charter Acts Strengthening of Parliament's Control over the Company

Although Pitt's India act had established Parliamentary control over Company's Indian administration yet it failed to satisfy the British Government which felt the need of a more effective control over Company's affairs. Hence there was a conscious effort on the part of the British Parliament to extend its control in the forthcoming years. The periodic renewal of the Company's Charter was therefore accompanied by definite enactments which aimed at further strengthening the Parliament's control over the affairs of the Company.

The constitution of the Board of Control was somewhat remodeled by an act of 1793, when the real power went into the hands of the President of the Board of Control. The appointment of the Governor-General was virtually in the hands of the Cabinet.

Very few Acts of constitutional importance were passed during the period 1793 to 1813. But during 1813 to 1853 three Charter Acts were passed each at twenty years interval; the Act of 1853, extended the life of the Company for twenty years. Each time some administrative change was made but the constitutional significance of the Charter Acts was that they asserted the sovereignty of the Crown over the territories of the Company for any definite number of years. It was provided in the Charter Act of 1853 that the Indian territories would remain under the Government of the Company, in truth for the Crown until the Parliament decided otherwise.

Incidentally during this period the interest taken by the British people in

general and by the Parliament in particular in Indian affairs was growing. Popular interest in the Indian affairs was inspired by the orators like Burke in connection with the historic impeachment of Warren Hastings. In Parliament, Indian affairs, especially its foreign policy, were totally debated. The attitude of the British Parliament to the eastern project of Napoleonic the revolutionary era was wholly dominated and influenced by the Indian question. The first Afghan war and Dalhousie's aggressive imperialism became subjects of keen controversy in the Parliament. Ministers like Palmerston practically guided India's foreign policy.

1.1.8. Factors favouring the Transfer of India to the Crown

In view of the above mentioned facts the extinction of Company's position as a political power was only a question of time. The dual system of control at home was not at all conducive to efficiency. There were constant clashes and bitterness between the Court of Directors and the Board of Control leading to unnecessary delay. The thinking mind in India and England had already criticized it several times and as such the anomaly had to be removed.

1.1.8 (a) Company was an undesirable Anomaly : A feeling had developed in the people and in the Parliament of England that it was anachronism to leave a private corporation in possession of so vast a dominion as India. The Queen had long regarded the Company as an undesirable anomaly. She had strongly disapproved the grant of medals by the Company for military service in India. The Industrial Revolution and the consequent evolution of liberalism in England had also a deep impact on the Indian Government and life. Liberals who were gaining importance in England believed that a system of government with ministerial responsibility was the best, and asserted that no peace could be found until it was introduced in India on the British pattern.

1.1.8 (b) The Effects of the Revolt of 1857 : Opportunity for the change came when revolt started in India in 1857. The outbreak of the revolt emphasized the undesirability of governing India through the Company. It strengthened the hands of those who wanted to bring the territories of the Company under the direct control of the crown-in-Parliament. The suppression of the revolt was deemed a fit time for the Crown to finally take over the control of the Indian Government.

1.1.8 (c) Company's "Grand Petition"

In July, 1857, Lord Palmerston became the Prime Minister of England. He brought to the notice of the Parliament the evils of the dual government at home and expressed his desire to take over the Indian administration. This alarmed the East India Company and it presented a grand petition against the proposed step. The petition was drawn by the famous philosopher John Stuart Mill, who was in the service of the Company. Through the Petition, Company pleaded that if there was anything wrong with the dual Government, it was introduced by Pitt's India Act and the Government in England was to be blamed for it. The Petition recounted the great services which the Company had rendered to India as well as to the Crown and mentioned how a great empire had been secured without any cost to the Crown. It was asserted that the taking over directly of the Government of India would be attended by many

dangers, Ross Mangles, the Chairman of the Company also expressed as surprise that through a Parliamentary enquiry, the Government proposed an immediate suppression of the Company.

1.1.8 (d) Lord Palmerston's Arguments

While introducing the Bill (Indian Bill) in the House of Commons, Palmerston gave an elaborate reply to all the objections. He said, "The principle of our political system is that all administrative functions should be accompanied by ministerial responsibility of the Parliament but in this case the chief functions in the Government of India are committed to a 'body not' responsible to the Parliament, not appointed by the Crown but elected by the persons who have no more connection with India than consists in the simple possession of so much Indian stock." He further said that the Bill was not tended to condemn or undermine the achievements of the Company. Its aim was rather to remove some of the glaring defects in the existing system. Plamerston did not agree to the view that the direct take over would involve any serious danger from India or elsewhere. The Indians people would rather welcome the change.

The Bill went through the second reading but fortunately for the Company, before it became law, Palmerston's Ministry was voted out of office and was replaced by Lord Derby's Conservative Government. Disraeli, the Chancellor of Exchequer in the new Government, introduced Disraeli's Indian Bill but it was ridiculed as complicated, unworkable and grotesque by Lord Palmerston. Ultimately, Stanley introduced another Bill which was passed in 1858 as "The Act for the Better Government of India."

1.1.9 Provisions of the Act of 1858

(a) Provisions relating to the Home Government

- (1) All territories in the possession of, and all powers hitherto exercised by the East India Company were vested in Her Majesty. Indian was to be governed in Her Majesty's name by one of the principal secretaries. Provision was made for this purpose for the appointment of the fifth Secretary of State to be as the Secretary of State for India. The military and naval forces of the company were transferred to the Crown.
- (2) The Board of Control and the Court of Directors were abolished and their powers were transferred to the Secretary of State for India and his Indian Council created under the Act.
- (3) The Secretary of State was given the power to superintend, control and direct the Indian affairs. He was to sit in the Parliament and was to be assisted by a parliamentary Under Secretary. He was to be a Cabinet Minister of England but his salary and that of his establishment was to be paid out of the revenue of India.
- (4) The Council of the Secretary of State was to consist of fifteen members. For the first term eight of them were to be appointed by the Crown while the remaining seven were to be elected by the Court of Directors from among themselves. At least half of them, in

each case, or in all at least nine were to be persons who must have served or resided in India for a minimum period of 10 years and must not have left India more than 10 years before appointment. Future vacancies in Crown's appointees were to be filled by the Crown, and vacancies among the seven others were to be filled by co-option.

- (5) India Council was to conduct its business under the direction of the Secretary of State who was to act as its President. He could overrule the Council except in matters of expenditure and loans.
- (6) Council was to meet at least once a week. Its quorum was fixed at 5. Every member was to hold office during good behaviour but could be removed by the Crown upon an address of both Houses of Parliament.
- (7) All dispatches to be sent to India were to be communicated to the Council but orders concerning the declaration of war or making of peace or negotiations with native rulers could be issued by the Secretary of State without any reference to the Council.
- (8) The Secretary of State was required to lay annually before the Parliament a financial statement of the expenditure and the Revenues of India.
- (9) The written approval of the Secretary of State, was required for any decision taken in his absence.
- (10) The appointments to the Covenanted Civil Service were to be made by open competition under the rules to be framed by the Secretary of State in Council with the aid of the Civil Service Commission.

1.1. 9 (b) Provisions relating to the Government of India

- (11) The responsibility of the Government of India was to be assumed directly the Crown and this assumption was to be declared to the Indian Princes by a Proclamation of the Queen.
- (12) All existing Acts, provisions of law, treaties, contracts and liabilities entered to by the Company were to continue in force and were to be binding on the Crown.
- (13) Governor-General was given an additional title, of Viceroy, thus making him the personal representative of the Crown. The Crown was to appoint the Governor-General of India and the Governors of the Presidencies. The Lieutenant Governor, however, was to be appointed by the Governor-General subject to the approval of the Crown while the members of the various Executive Council (Central and Provisional) were to be appointed by the Secretary of State-in Council. The Act made no change in the constitutions of the Executive Council of the Governor-General and in those of the Governors.

1.1.10 Significance of the Act of 1858

The passage of the Act of 1858 is of great significance in the Political and Constitutional history in India due to the following reasons :

It ended the rule of the Company and ushered the rule of the Crown

: The Act of 1858 finally relieved the Company of its political responsibilities and provided for the direct assumption of the Government of India by the British Crown acting through the Secretary of State for India. According to G.N.Singh, "The passing of the Act of 1858 closed one great period of Indian History and ushered in another great era the direct rule of the Crown." The East Indian Company, which had been constituted two hundred and fifty years ago, for the purpose, of extending British commerce to the East, came to an end. Marshman writes, "The Company transferred to the Crown, on relinquishing its functions, an empire more magnificent than that of Rome."

With the transfer of the Government of India to the Crown, the supremacy of the British Parliament was complete. All authority at all levels emanated from there. The Acts of the Parliament created and determined and powers and jurisdiction of various organs of the Government. It was open to Parliament to exercise control, either through legislation, enacted by itself or by requiring its approval to rules made under the power of delegated legislation. It controlled the revenue of India and could call upon State of India to account for any matter relating to the Indian administration. But the real practice proved much different from it. Critics point out that all this was a theoretical supremacy. Critics point out that Indian interest.

Before 1858, it was Parliament's habit to hold a regular inquiry into Indian administration before renewing Company's Charter but this practice was given up in the post-mutiny period. On this aspect, the Montague Chelmsford Report observed "Indeed we have the paradox that Parliament ceased to assert control at the very moment when it had acquired it." Ramsay Mac Donald once said, "Parliament has not been a just or watchful steward. It holds no great debates on Indian questions."

The indifference of Parliament to Indian affairs was due to many reasons much as pre-occupation with the affairs at home, in Ireland, and in the continent, the great distance between Britain and India, the absence of the rapid means of communication and the ignorance of Indian conditions on the part of an average member of the British Parliament.

1.1.10 (a) The Act gave a Death Blow to the Dual Government: The Act is also significant for giving a death blow to the dual Government at home, represented by the Court of Directors and the Board of Control which was notorious due to its complex and dilatory in character. But the reaction against this system became more pronounced after 1857. Dodwel writes, "It was generally admitted the division of the functions between the two authorities was injurious and inexpedient". The demand for the abolition of dual Government had become vocal in higher circles also. Hence the Act was abolished it.

1.1.10 (b) The Change introduced by the Act was a Formal One : According to Sir H.S. Cunningham, "To assumption of the government of India by the Crown was rather a formal than a substantial change." He argues that all real power has passed into the hands of the President of the Board of Control long before the actual change took place. The Pitt's India Act and the increasing power of the Board of Control had reduced the Company to a "quasi-state department." The Court of Directors occupied the position of an advisory

body. The Act of 1853 had weakened the position of the Directors all the more. They were deprived of their patronage and their number was reduced from 24 to 18. Unlike the previous occasions, the Act of 1853 did not renew the Charter of the Company of years. It merely stated that the Indian territories would remain under the Act, administration of the Company, in trust for the Crown, until the Parliament decided otherwise. It was thus evident that the Act of 1853 was preparing the way for the assumption by the Crown of the Government of India in name as well as *defacto*. Thus, the Act of 1853 merely completed the process begun much earlier than the Secretary of State for India took the place of the President of the Board of Control, and the Indian Council took the place of the Court of Directors and of the Board of Control. Ramsay Muir writes, "The transfer of the Indian Empire to the Crown involved far less change than might at first appear, for the Crown had steadily been increasing its control over the company's affairs almost since the beginning of its territorial sovereignty."

1.1.11. Queen's Proclamation of 1858

The assumption of the Government of India by the Crown was announced to the princes and the people of India by Queen Victoria through the Proclamation of 1st November 1858. Queen's Proclamation was far better known to the Indians than the above Act of 1858. The original draft of the Proclamation was not liked by the Queen and she asked the Prime Minister Lord Derby to reframe it, "bearing in mind that it is a female sovereign, who speaks to hundred millions of Eastern people, on assuming the direct government over them and after a bloody ward, giving them pledges which her future reign is to redeem and explaining the principles of her Government. Such a document should breathe the feelings of generosity, benevolence, and religious toleration and point out the privileges which the Indians will receive in being placed on equality with the subjects of the British Crown and the prosperity following in the train of civilisation." The Proclamation gave following assurances to the princes and people of India :

- (a) "We have resolved to take upon ourselves, the Government of the territories in India, either to administered in trust for us by the Honourable East India Company.
- (b) "We hereby call upon all our subjects within the said territories to be faithful and to bear true allegiance to us our heirs and successors.
- (c) We appoint Viscount Canning to be our first Viceroy and Governor-General in our said territories.
- (d) "We confirm all the civil and military officers employed by the East India Company.
- (e) "We gladly accept all treaties and engagements which the native Princes of India have concluded with East India Company and we will scrupulously maintain them."
- (f) We desire no extension to our present territorial possessions, and we will permit no aggression upon our rights to be attempted with impunity; we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others.
- (g) We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of the native Princes

as our own.

- (h) We disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our religious convictions on any of our subjects. We will not interfere with religious beliefs and the modes of worship of our subjects.
- (i) All shall enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the Law.
- (j) Our subjects, of whatever race or creed, will be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service.
- (k) In framing and administering the law, due regard will be paid to ancient rights, usages and customs of India.
- (l) The Queen also expressed her regret over the acts of the mutiny. She gave her approval of the policy of clemency (mercy) which was being followed by Canning. Clemency was granted to all offenders except those found convicted having directly taken part in the murder of the British subjects.
- (m) In the end, the Queen declared that it was her earnest desire “to stimulate peaceful industry, to promote works of public utility (i.e. improvement) and to administer the Government for the benefit of all our subjects resident therein.”

1.1.12 Importance of the Queen’s Proclamation of 1858

The above Proclamation remained the basis of the British Policy in India for more than 60 years. It was a momentous declaration. H.G. Rawlinson writes, "The most fundamental change of attitude was that Proclamation foreshadowed the relationship between the British Government and the Indian Princes – the Princes therefore heard with utmost relief the announcement that their rights, dignity and honour would be respected and that all treaties made with Company would be maintained."

The Proclamation is significant from another viewpoint also. It helped the British in restoring trade and pacifying the people of India. According to P. Mukherji, “it sealed the unity of Indian Government and opened a new era.”

Key Words: Parliamentary, Regulating, Legislative, Government, British, Trade, East India, Company

Self-Check Exercise:

- East India Company was established in the year.....
- Battle of Plassey fought between British and....
- Board of Control established in
- Treaty of Allahabad concluded between..... ..

Short Questions:

1. Write short note on the establishment of East India Company.
2. Write short note on Lord Clive.
3. Who abolished dual system of administration in Bengal.
4. Write short note on Board of Control.
5. How many charter Acts were passed in India by British government.

6. Write objectives of the Charter Acts.

Long Questions:

1. What were the factors responsible for the passing of Government of India Act 1858?
2. Examine main provisions of Pitt's India Act'1773.
3. Discuss importance of the Charter Act of 1813.
4. Write an essay on the Regulating Act of 1784.
5. How Queen's Proclamation changed the methods of control of the government of India?
6. What were the main provisions of Charter Act of 1833?

Suggested Readings

1. Punniyah, K.V. : The Constitutional History of India
2. Singh, G.N. : Landmarks in Indian Constitutional and National Development, Vol. 1, 1600-1919, Chapter IV.
3. Keith, K.B. : A Constitutional History of India, 1600-1935.
4. Sharma, Shri Ram : A Constitutional History of India.
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6. Roberts, P.E. : History of British Rule in India under the Company and the Crown, pp. 378-86.

**M.A. (HISTORY) PART II
(SEMESTER-III)****PAPER IV****(CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPEMENT AND NATIONAL
MOVEMENT IN INDIA FROM 1858-1930)****LESSON NO. 1.2****Author: Dr. B.L. Grover****Forces and Circumstances Leading to the Growth of Indian Nationalism
and Establishment of the Indian National Congress****Structure of the Lesson**

- 1.2.1. Objectives
- 1.2.2. Introduction
- 1.2.3. Growth of English Language
- 1.2.4. The development of Vernacular Languages
- 1.2.5. Political and Administrative unification of India
- 1.2.6. The role of press in the development of Nationalism
- 1.2.7. The Policy of racial antagonism and Indian reaction
- 1.2.8. The economic exploitation of India
- 1.2.9. Growth of modern political ideas and political associations
- 1.2.10. Trends towards a Grand United National Political Organisation and the Establishment of the Indian National Congress
- 1.2.11 Self Check Exercise
- 1.2.12 Suggested Readings

1.2.1 Objectives:

- To shed light on the factors responsible for national consciousness.
- To examine the political and administrative measures in India.
- To disclose the policy of economic exploitation of India by British.
- To discuss growth of press and political associations in India and establishment of Congress.

1.2.2. Introduction

The process of Indian renaissance began in the early decades of the nineteenth century and was largely the outcome of the action and inter-action of numerous forces and factors which developed in Indian society under the impact of British political and economic policies. As the forces of change unfolded themselves slowly and in stages, the development of Indian national consciousness was also a long drawn out process.

The establishment of British rule in all parts of India had massive social, political and economic changes that provided a congenial atmosphere for the rise and growth of modern political consciousness and nationalism. Among many forces and circumstances that promoted the birth and development of the nationalist movement and the spread of its influence, the following deserve special mention.

1.2.3 Growth of English Education

The introduction of English education in this country had a far reaching impact on the Indian mind. Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, Macaulay and Lord William Bentick, the then Governor-General of India, took a momentous decision in 1835 when they inaugurated the system of English language in India. Asked to give his opinion about the possible effect of English education system upon the probable maintenance of the British Government in India, Trevelyan said before the Indian Committee of the House of Lords in 1835 that the British raj in India could *not* last for ever, it was bound to die one day, either at the hands of those Indians who subscribed to the indigenous model of political change or at the hands of those who had been educated in English and subscribed to the new British model of political change. If it was to die at the hands of the latter, it would take a long time and the severance of the British connection with India would be neither violent nor harmful to Britain. Macaulay struck a different note though the end result he envisaged was not, very different. In the course of a speech before the House of Commons in 1833, Macaulay said, "It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system until it has out-grown that systems, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that having become instructed in European language, they may in some future age demand European institutions."

The English system of education though conceived by the rulers in the interest of efficient administration, opened to the newly educated Indians the floodgates of liberal European thought. The liberal and radical thought of European writers like Milton, Shelley, Bentham, Mill, Spencer, Rousseau and Voltaire inspired the Indian intelligentsia with the ideas of liberty, nationality and self-government and made clear to them the anachronism of the British rule in India.

The newly educated class usually adopted the professions of junior administrators, lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc. Some of them visited England to receive higher education. While in England they saw with their own eyes working of political institutions in a free country. On their return to India, these persons found the atmosphere cringing and slavish with total denial of basic rights to citizens. These *vilayat* returned Lords, with ever expanding English educated class, formed the middle class intelligentsia. This English educated intelligentsia, some what conscious of political rights, found that despite the promise contained in the Charter Act of 1833 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, the doors of higher services remained practically closed to the Indians. This realisation drove discontent and frustration among them and discontent proved infectious. Men like Surendranath Bannerji, Manmohan Ghose, Lal Mohan Ghosh and Aurobindo found the doors of the Covenanted Services closed to them. These intelligent and well-informed persons formed the nucleus of the newly growing political unrest and it was this section of the society which provided leadership to the early Indian political associations.

The spread and popularity of the English language in all parts of India gave to the educated Indians a common language (*lingua franca*) through the

medium of which they could communicate with one another and transact their conferences and congress. In the absence of such a *lingua franca* it would have been very difficult for the Bangalis, the Punjabis, the Tamilians the Maharashtrians etc. to come on a common platform or organise a movement of an all India character.

1.2.4. The Development of Vernacular Language

In the 19th, century the vernacular languages also developed at a phenomenal pace. Urdu became the court language of northern India, Hindi and Bengali also greatly developed. The English educated class conveyed their ideas of liberty to the masses through the medium of these vernaculars. In Bengal, Bankim Chandra Chatterji wrote his famous novel *Anand Math* in which appeared the patriotic song *Bande Matram*. The novel portrayed the evil consequences of the early British rule in Bengal. Bankim professed people to toe the religion of patriotism. The novel inspired the youth of India with heroic ideals of resistance to oppression and became virtually a *Bible* of the revolutionaries.

Socio-Religious Reform Movements and the Growth of Nationalism
The rise and spread of various socio-religious reform movements prepared the ground for the growth of national movement and watered the plant of patriotism.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of Brahmo Samaj, was the progenitor and father of modern India Besides reforming Hindu religion and society, the Brahmo Samaj injected nationalism in Indian body politic. Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj. His idea was to unite India socially, culturally and politically. His motto was "India for the Indians." He tried to inculcate in the people love for *Swadeshi* and their own culture. The Rama Krishna Mission and the Theosophical Movement inspired confidence in India's cultural heritage. Thus, these reform movements fostered the growth of Indian national consciousness.

1.2.5. Political and Administrative Unification of India

One of the most significant results of the British conquest was the political unification of India under one rule. The British established a state structure in India which was highly centralized and had ramifications in the remotest corners of the country. Even the administrations of the Indian states were indirectly controlled by the paramount power.

The necessity of administrative convenience, the urge for common penetration and commercial exploitation (i.e. developing India to specialize in the production of raw materials for the developing industry of England), and considerations of political defence were instrumental in the improvement of the means of transport and communications. The setting up of an efficient post and telegraph system and the accompanying development gave India the appearance of unity and fostered the spirit of one-mindedness.

1.2.6. The Role of Press in the Development of Nationalism

The growth of the modern press and with it of the public opinion was an offshoot of the English rule in India. It were the Europeans who first set

up printing presses in India and published newspaper and other literature. Gradually the vernacular press came into existence and developed on the Western pattern, Despite the numerous restrictions imposed on the press from time to time, Indian journalism made road strides. The years following the Revolt of 1857, saw an unprecedented growth of the vernacular press. In 1877, there were about 169 (one hundred and sixty nine) newspapers published in vernacular languages and their circulation reached the neighbourhood of 1,00,000 (one lakh).

The Indian press played a significant role in building and developing Indian nationalism. It was through the medium of newspapers and periodicals that the Indian nationalists popularized among the people the ideas of representative government, liberty, democratic institutions, *Swadeshi*, home rule and independence. Through the press the nationalists carried on a regular criticism of the oppressive measures of the Indian administration and tried to educate the people in the understanding of the political problems. Margarita Barnes has rightly said, "In India, from Ram Mohan Roy to Keshab Chander Sen, Gokhale, Tilak, Pherozeshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Bannerji, C.Y. Chintamani, M.K Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru, there is a distinguished line of public men who have used and are using the press as a medium for the dissemination of their ideas of moral values".

The political agitation in India might have slackened at times but the Indian press carried on an all-times non-stop agitation. The Indian press really acted as the fourth estate and played a very notable role in the development of Indian nationalism.

1.2.7. The Policy of Racial Antagonism and Indian Reaction

One unfortunate legacy of the revolt of 1857 was the feeling of racial bitterness between the rulers and the ruled. The *Punch* cautooned Indians as half-gorillas and half-Negroes. The Anglo-Indian bureaucracy developed an attitude of arrogance and contempt towards the Indians. They somehow, had come to the conclusion that the only argument that worked effectively with the Indians was superior force. Thus, the Europeans developed their own code of ethics and worked out the theory of superior race. The Indians were dubbed as belonging to an inferior race and no longer worthy of any trust. The damniger attitude manifested itself in an insolent treatment of the Indians in public life, at hill stations, in clubs, hotels, restaurants, shopping centres, railway compartments, Europeans insulting treatment of the native gentry in public, kicking and striking the domestic servants, labourers in the gardens of Assam, indigo plantations in Bihar and the jute mills of Calcutta and the shooting parties of English soldiers killing villagers. This narrow approach evoked a strong reaction in the Indian mind and strengthened the feeling of national consciousness.

The Ilbert Bill controversy (1883-84) also demonstrated the strong feelings of racial superiority held and practised by the white ruling race. It may be noted that the Ilbert Bill sought to abolish 'Judicial disqualification based on race distinctions' and gave to the Indian members of the Covenanted Civil

Service the same powers and rights as their European colleagues enjoyed. The Bill raised a storm of agitation among the members of the European Community and they all stood united against the Bill. Ripon's government had to accept a compromise which defeated the original purpose of the Bill. But the Bill proved an eye-opener to the Indian intelligentsia. It became clear to them that justice and fairplay could not be expected where as the interests of the European community were involved. Further, it demonstrated to them the value of organized agitation to secure concession from the government.

1.2. 8. The Economic Exploitation of India

The economic policies pursued by the East India Company and later by Crown's Government of India restricted in a lopsided development of the Indian economy and the impoverishment of the people. Indian handicrafts and industry languished under the discriminatory policy of the Government. The economy of India was geared to produce raw materials needed for the developing machine industry of England. Such a policy also made India a growing market for English-manufactured goods. The controversy over the removal of cotton duties and the adoption of free trade policy clearly demonstrated that the strings of the trade policy of the Government of India were controlled by the capitalist interests of England. The public debt of India swelled greatly. The Crown took over the entire debt of 70 millions from the East India Company which was largely the result of the aggressive and expansionist wars of Wellesely, Hastings, Auckland and Dalhousie. The public debt had doubled by 1876. The Government of India always kept a large army for the maintenance and expansion of the British influence in Burma, China, Afghanistan, Persia, Egypt and Abyssinia at the cost of the Indian exchequer. India was charged for developments hardly connected with India. Among the expenses that had swelled the public debt of India were the cost of the mutiny, the price of the transfer of the Company's rights to the Crown, the expenses of the simultaneous wars in China and Abyssinia, cost of every governmental items in London that was remotely related to India down to the fees of the charwoman in the India Office and the expenses of ships that sailed but did not participate in hostilities and the cost of the Indian regiments for six months training at Home before they sailed, L.H.Jenks writes: "The Sultan of Turkey visited London in 1868 as a state guest. His visit and expenditure on his visit was credited to India office. A lunatic asylum in Ealing, gifts to members of Zanzibar mission, the consular and diplomatic establishments of Great Britain in China or in Persia, part of the permanent expenses of the, Mediterranean fleet and the entire cost of a line of telegraph from England to India have been charged to the Indian treasury". The cumulative effect of British economic policies resulted in chronic misery and found expression in mass unrest. Periodical famines became a regular feature of the Indian economic life. During the second half of the 19th century, 24 famines visited various parts of the country taking an estimated toll of 28 million souls. The export of food grains even during famine years alienated the most loyal supporters of the British regime, Blunt, a British journalist touring India in 1882, recorded that India on the eve of Lytton's departure was on the verge of 'revolution'.

1.2.9. Growth of Modern Political Ideas and Political Associations

One important effect of the introduction of Western culture in India was growth of modern political concepts like nationalism, nationality, political rights etc. The Indian subcontinent witnessed the growth of political ideas and political organisations in 19th century.

1.2.9.1 Political Association in Bengal Presidency

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the pioneer of political movements in India. He was greatly influenced by Western ideas. He was a widely read man. His extensive studies had freed his mind from bigotry that characterized an average Bengali. His sympathies in the domain of politics were cosmopolitan and his heart went in sympathy for popular movements all over the world. In 1821 the Raja celebrated in Calcutta establishment of a constitutional government, in Spain. Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian to focus the attention of the Englishmen on the grievances of India and to ask for remedial measures. He demanded liberty of the press, appointment of Indians in civil courts and on other higher posts, codification of laws etc. It was generally believed that some of the beneficent provisions in the Charter Act of 1833 were due to his lobbying in England.

The task of organising a political association was, however, left to the associates of Rammohan Roy and the first such association called Bangbhasha Prikhit Sabha was formed in 1836. The association discussed topics connected with the policy and administration of the government and sought redress by sending petitions and memorials to the government. In July, 1838, the Zamindars Association, more popularly known as landholders society, was founded to safeguard the interests of the landlords. Although limited in its objectives, the Landlords Society marked the beginning of an organised political activity and use of the methods of constitutional agitation for the redressal of grievances. The Landholders Society of Calcutta cooperated with British India Society founded by Adams in London.

In April, 1843, another political association under the name of Bengal British India Society was founded 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." However, the Landholders Society and the Bengali British India Society did not flourish well and on 29th October, 1851, the two associations were merged into one named the British and its primary objective was to safeguard their interests. However, the Association struck a liberal note and when the time came for the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company, it sent a petition to the parliament praying for the establishment of a separate legislature of a popular character, separation of judiciary from the executive, reduction in the salaries of the higher offices, abolition of salt duty, *aabkari* (irrigation duty) stamp duty etc. The prayers of the Association were partially met and the Charter Act of 1853 provided for the addition of six members to the Governor-General's Council for legislative purposes. The British Indian Association continued its existence as a

political body down to the 20th century even though it was overshadowed by the more popular Indian National Congress.

By 1870's there appeared signs of change in the Indian Society. In the presidency towns higher education was well-established and the members of the new professions were acquiring status and developing new ambitions. A new elite had grown in all the Presidencies whose aspirations and status were roughly comparable. These were good developments for the formulation of more popular and broad-based associations. In September, 1875 Babu Sisir Kumar Ghosh founded the Indian League with the object "to stimulate the sense of nationalism amongst the people" and to encourage political education. Within a year of its foundation, the India League was superseded by the Indian Association, founded on 26th July, 1876 by Ananda Mohan Bose and Surendranath Bannerji. The Indian Association hoped to attract not only "the middle classes" but also "the masses" and therefore kept its annual subscription at Rs. 5 compared to the subscription of Rs.50 p.a. fixed by the British Indian Association. Soon the Indian Association became "the centre of leading representatives of the educated community."

Lytton's unpopular measures whipped up political activity in India. A Regulation of 1879, reduced the maximum age for appearing in the Indian Civil Services examination from 21 to 19 years. Since the examination was held only in London, young Indian had to face innumerable difficulties: The Association took up this question and organised an all-India agitation against it, popularly known as the Indian Civil Services Agitation, Surendranath Bannerji, went on a whirl wind tour of northern India in May 1877, and visited Benaras, Allahabad Kanpur, Lucknow, Aligarh, Delhi, Meerut, Amritsar and Lahore. At certain places new political organisations were set up to act in concert with the Indian Association of Calcutta. Next year, Bannerji went on a similar mission to the presidencies of Bombay and Madras.

1.2.9.2. Political Association in Bombay Presidency

While to the Bengali Hindus the Britishers might have appeared as deliverers from the tyrannical rule of the Muslim nawabs, in Maharashtra the British were looked upon as foreign tyrants who had displaced native rulers. Commenting on the nature of the British rule, Shri Bhaskar Pandurang Tarkhadkar wrote in the *Bombay Gazette* in 1861, "If I were to give you the (the English) credit for your having saved us from the Pindaris and Ramosis, your trading system stands in the way which has indeed more effectually emptied our purses in a few years than the predatory excursions of these tribes could do in some five or six hundred years". In short, it must be acknowledged that your progress in cunning and craftiness has kept place with your advancement in knowledge and wisdom."

On the lines of the British India Association of Calcutta was founded the Bombay Association on 26th August, 1852 with the object of "memorializing from time to time authorities in India and England for removal of existing evils and for the prevention of proposed measures which may be deemed injurious or for the introduction of enactment which may tend to promote the general interests of all connected with this country." The Bombay Association sent a

petition to the British Parliament urging the formation of new legislative council on which Indians should also be represented. It also condemned the policy of exclusion of the Indians from all higher services and lavish expenditure on sinecures given to Europeans. However, the Bombay Association did not survive for long.

The reactionary policies of Lytton and the Ilbert Bill controversy caused political commotion in Bombay as well. The credit for organising the Bombay Presidency Association in 1883 goes to Pherozeshah Mehta, R.T. Telang and Badruddin Tyabji, representing the three chief communities of Bombay town. At Poona, the Poona Sarvajank Sabha was established in 1867, with the object of serving as a bridge between the Government and the people. The Bombay Presidency Association and the Poona Sarbajanak Sabha worked in close collaboration.

1.2.9.3. Political Association in Madras Presidency

A branch of the British Indian Association of Calcutta was set up at Madras under the name of the Madras Native Association. The Madras Association also sent petitions of the parliament on the eve of the passing of the Charter Act of 1853, making demands similar to that the British Indian Associations. However, the Madras native Association, right from its inception, was worked by some officials, possessed very little vitality, and had hardly any hold the public mind and languished into obscurity after 1857.

Political trends similar to those prevailing in other presidencies were at work in Madras presidency also. A number of small local associations came into existence during the Viceroyalty of Ripon. The Madras Mahajana Sabha was formed in May, 1884 to coordinate the activities of local associations and “to provide a focus for the non-official intelligence spreading through the Presidency.” At its conference held from 29th December, 1884, to 2nd January, 1885, the Sabha demanded expansion of the legislative councils, representation of the Indians on these, separation of judicial from revenue functions etc.

1.2.10. Trends towards a Grand United National Political Organisation and the Establishment of the Indian National Congress

Although the idea of a common political organisation for the whole country was as old as the first stirrings of constitutional politics in India, it took decades to ferment and materialise. The East India Association founded in London in October, 1866, had hoped to set up branches in Calcutta and Bombay and claimed to work for “the public interest and welfare of the inhabitants of India generally.” In 1877, the Poona Sarvajnik Sabha had urged the representatives of Bombay and Bengal to work together and the following year sent a deputation to Calcutta “to hold a conference with the representative of the native press and political associations in Calcutta for the interchange of ideas.” There were protests all over India over the imposition of the Licence Tax (1878) and the abolition of cotton Duties (1879). In 1880, certain developments gradually pushed the hesitant leaders of various regional associations to a common and concerted action. Various schemes were in the air. In 1882 there was a plan to hold a national meeting. The

Indian Association of Calcutta prepared plans for a national conference. In 1883, Telang went from Bombay to Calcutta to arrange for “more political concert” between Calcutta and Bombay. There were also plans to form a federation of the native press, to start a native press and a national newspaper and to set up an Indian constitutional reform association.

During 1883, various local associations in the presidency towns were forging towards unity. In Calcutta, the Indian Association, the British Indian Association, the National Mohammadan Association and the Indian Union had worked together to form the National Conference. Two sessions of the National Conference (1883- 84) helped in giving concrete shape to the idea of the All-India Congress, ultimately resulting in the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885. However, it should be noted that there is a controversy about the genesis of this national organisation which we will discuss in the next lesson.

1.2.11 Self - Check Exercise

- Indian National Congress was established in the year of....
- Arya Samaj was founded by.....

Relevant Questions:

Write short note on the following:

1. Lord Maccallay
2. Raja Ram Mohan Roy
3. Zimindara Association
4. Political Association of Bombay Presidency
5. Indian National Congress

Long Questions:

1. What were the factors responsible for the national consciousness among Indians?
2. Examine development of press in India.
3. Write an essay on the establishment of Indian National Congress.

Key Words: Association, Congress, Magazines, established, Education, Press, National

1.2.12 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. R.C.Majumdar (ed) *History And Culture of the Indian People-British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Vol. X, pp. 465-523, 524-38, 570-94.
2. S.R. Mehrotra, *Emergence of the Indian National Congress*.
3. Brition Martin Jr., *New India, 1885-British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress*.
4. R.C.Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. I*.
5. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*.
6. C.R Andrews and Girija K. Mookerjee, *The Rise and Growth of Congress*.

**M.A. (HISTORY) PART II
(SEMESTER-III)**

PAPER IV

**(CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA
FROM 1858-1930)**

LESSON NO. 1.3

Author: Dr. S.M. Verma

The Indian National Congress: Controversy Regarding its Genesis, Aims and Objectives

Structure of the Lesson

- 1.3.1. Objectives
- 1.3.2. Introduction
- 1.3.3. Theosophists' Convention at Madras, December 1884
- 1.3.4. Hume's Role in the Foundation of the Congress
- 1.3.5. Lord Dufferin's Role in the Foundation of the Congress
- 1.3.6. Allan Octave Hume as an Enlightened Imperialist
- 1.3.7. Congress: - The Child of Russophobia
- 1.3.8. Aims and Objectives of the Congress
- 1.3.9. Congress- A Platform for Pro-British and Anti-Russian Propaganda.
- 1.3.10. Exercises
- 1.3.11. Suggested Readings

1.3.1 Objectives:

- To assess A.O. Hume and Dufferin's role in the establishment of Congress.
- To examine the aims and objectives of the Congress.
- To evaluate various controversies regarding the origin of the Congress.
- To discuss the primary methods of working of the Congress.

1.3.1. Introduction: The genesis of the Indian National Congress had baffled scholars and the controversy continues unabated. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, a former Congress President and official historian of the Congress, described its origin as "shrouded in mystery" (*History of the Indian National Congress*, p.11). British writers and statesman, followed by many Indian historians, have traced the genesis of the Indian National Congress to the "civilising influences" of the Western impact on India and the introduction of the new policy of English education in India. Mrs. Annie Besant, the great Theosophist leader and a Congress President, gives credit to the meeting of seventeen Theosophists of Madras in December, 1884, as having acted "as precursor of the Congress." The Congress had also been described as the 'Child of Russophobia'. Dr. A.C. Mazumdar, another former Congress President states that the Indian National Congress of 1883 (organised by large measures Association of Calcutta) "anticipated the Congress by two years and in large measures prepared the ground for the great National Assembly." (*Indian National Evolution*, p.40). Allan Octavian Hume has been given credit for

having conceived the idea of the Indian National Congress and is popularly remembered as the father of the Indian National Congress. There, however, appears to be a snag somewhere in all these explanations and one is left with the impression that the real object behind the foundation of the Congress could not be publicly acknowledged by its British promoters. Sir, William Wedderburn, one of the founding father and a close associate of Hume, put great reliance on the general theory-greatly popularized and propagated by British statesmen and writers in the 19th century-that the British rule in India was productive of many civilising influences. In his Presidential Address to the 4th Congress session held at Allahabad (December, 1889) he said, "As regards its historical origin, we know that it is the direct result of the noblest efforts of British statemanship, the natural and healthy fruit of higher education and free institutions, freely granted to the people of India." W.C. Bannerjee voiced similar feeling when he said, "we launched the Congress on its enterprise, not of supplanting the existing rules of the country but of supplementing endeavors of the best and the most sagacious among them by proposing modifications and developments based on our peculiar and native knowledge and information suggested gratefully by that enlightenment and education which is one of the most precious gifts bestowed upon us by British rule." (*Speeches and Writings of Sir Williams Wedderburn*, p.2). In the same strain Surendranath Banerjee said that the Indian National Congress was "the outcome of these civilising influences which Macaulay and his co-authors were instrumental in implanting in the Government of the country." Thus, there was a belief that through the medium of English language, the educated Indians imbibed the ideas of Milton, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Wilber-force, Mill Bright and Gladstone and learnt their first lessons in patriotism, nationalism and in the methods of political organisation.

1.3.3. Theosophists' Convention at Madras, December 1884

Mrs. Annie Besant gives credit to her fellow Theosophists for having conceived the idea of an all-Indian political organisation for the good of India. Her narration of the events is as follows :

"In late December in 1884, seventeen men met in Madras in the house of the stalwart advocate of religion and reform, Deewan Bahadur Raghunath Rao. Nearly all of them had been delegates to the just-ended annual convention of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, and the others had been there as friends and sympathisers. But surely this new pride in India's mighty faiths throbbing in their hearts, this dawning hope of Indian's greatness in the future corresponde with the greatness of her past, this feeling that the discrowned East is not always to remain a thrall to the younger Western nations and that Asia, once the cradle of mighty empires shall again stretch out her hands to grasp the sceptre and the imperial ball-these dreams sent out the dreamers to take counsel together, and they resolved, greatly daring, 19 form themselves into a group of provisional committee, men from different towns to win others, each in this place, and to meet later for further consultation ... Seventeen good men and true, who out of their love and their hope conceived the idea of a political

national movement for the saving of the motherland.” (*How India Wrought For Freedom*, pp. 1-2). Professor Sunder Raman, who attended the first session of the Indian National Congress also *refers* to the meeting having been called by Raghunath Rao “to find ways and means of bringing together Indian politicians to inaugurate a political movement for the regeneration and reform of the methods of Government of this country calculated to promote a future Indian advance towards Swaraj.”

Hume did not attend this meeting. Although Mrs. Besant mentions the name of S.N. Banerjee as one of the seventeen delegates present at Madras, it seems that Banerjee did not attend this meeting Banerjee does not make any mention of this meeting in his autobiography. Further, Mrs. Besant herself mentions about the lack of any follow-up action after the Madras meeting. In her own words, “There seems to be no record of the work done in their own towns and provinces on their return home.” Thus the Theosophists meeting at Madras had very little direct bearing on the meeting of the Congress but it only reflected the direction in which the wind was then blowing in India.

1.3.4. Hume’s Role in the Foundation of the Congress

Allan Octavian Hume, a retired member of the Indian Civil Services, and a son of the founder of the Radical Party in England, undoubtedly played the leading part in organising the Indian National Congress. He refused the offer of a Lieutenant Governorship and accepted retirement in 1882. His first move was towards a definite all India political March. He started his address with the words, “Constituting as you do, a large body of the most highly educated Indians, you should in the natural order of things, constitute also the most important source of all mental, moral, social and political progress in India. Whether in the individual or the nation, all vital progress must spring from within and it is to you her most cultural and enlightened minds, her most favoured sons, that you and your country must look for the initiative. In vain may aliens like myself, love India and her children...they must assist with advice and suggestion, they may place their experience, abilities and knowledge at the disposal of the workers but they lack the essentials of nationality and the real work must ever be done by the people of the country themselves.” Urging the necessity for a political organisation Hume exhorted. “Scattered individuals, however capable and however well-meaning are powerless singly. What is needed is union, organisation, and to secure these an association is required, armed and organised with unusual care, having for its object to promote the mental, moral, social and political objectives regeneration of the people of India.” For setting up such an organization Hume appealed, “If only fifty men, good and true, can be found to join as founders, the thing can be established if you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation, cannot, scorning personal case and selfish objects, make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for your country then India truly neither lacks nor deserves any better government than she now enjoys.

1.3.5. Lord Dufferin’s Role in the Foundation of the Congress

According to Sir Wedderburn, Allan Hume was himself disposed to begin

his reform propaganda in the social side. The view is also supported by W.C. Banerjee, the first President of the Congress. To quote S.N Banerjee "Mr. A.O. Hume, had in 1884 conceived the idea that it would be of great advantage to the country if leading politicians could be brought together once a year to discuss social matters and be upon friendly footing with one another." He did not desire that politics should form part of their discussion, for there were recognised political bodies in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other parts of India.

According to Banerjee, the idea of the Indian National Congress as an all India political organisation owed its origin to the scheming brain of Lord Dufferin. The Viceroy convicted Hume that the latter's scheme of setting up an all-India organisation to remove the social evils of Indian Society would not be much use and instead suggested the need for an all-India political organisation which could point out to the Government the defects of administration and how these could be removed. The Viceroy's idea was that the proposed organisation should perform the same functions in India as Her Majesty's Opposition did in England. Hume placed the two schemes before the Indian politicians and Dufferin's scheme found favour with them.

Whatever Dufferin's views might have been in 1885, by 1888 he had turned his face against the Congress activities and expressed his surprise that it did not concern itself with social matters. His diatribe against the Congress came at St. Andrews Day dinner speech delivered on 30th November 1888. He said, "When the Congress was first started. I watched its operations with interest and curiosity and I hope that in certain fields of useful activity it might render valuable assistance to the Government. I was aware that there were many social topic connected with the habits and customs of the people which were of unquestionable utility but with which it was either undesirable for the Government to interfere or which it was beyond their power to influence or control.....When Congress was first started, it seemed to me that such a body, if they directed their attention with patriotic zeal to these (social questions) and cognate subjects, as similar congresses do in England, might prove of assistance to the Government and of great use to the fellow citizens....." (B.L. Grover, *A Documentary Study of British Policy Towards Indian Nationalism*, Pp. 184-85).

1.3.6. Allan Octave Hume as an Enlightened Imperialist

The big question is Hume's motivations in founding the Indian National Congress in 1885. Hume's liberalism and broad humanitarianism were evident right from the time he joined the Indian Civil Service. He worked for the spread of education, advocated temperance, worked for the setting up of juvenile reformatories and condemned social evils like infanticide, child marriage and forced widowhood. There is no doubt that he worked for the improvement of the lot of the Indians in office and out of office. He condemned racial discrimination and worked to get full justice for Indians in criminal cases, demanded a reasonable share for Indians in higher services; pleaded for an honest and sympathetic administration; and above all he wanted adequate representation for Indians in the legislative councils.

However, in spite of his deep devotion to the cause of Indian welfare, Hume did not visualize home rule for India, much less independence: He was a loyal subject of the Queen and wanted British rule in India to continue or to be strengthened. In fact it was Hume's faith in Anglo-Indian connection that prompted him to take the initiative for organising a loyal and innocuous political organisation like the Indian National Congress.

Hume, who had worked as Secretary in the Home Ministry, had unmistakable evidence in his possession about this wide spread discontent and spread of underground conspiratorial organisations in India. In the words of Wedderburn, "These ill-started measures of reaction, combined with Russian methods of police repression, brought Indians under Lord Lytton's administration within this measurable distance of a revolutionary outbreak." Ripon's healing measures only acted as palliatives. The controversy that raged over the Ilbert Bill left a deep sear on the Indian mind though it also demonstrated to them the lesson of organised and concerted action.

Indian discontent, if unchannelled, could take a dangerous course, snapping the ties between England and India, thought Allan Hume. Already the Indian National Conference launched by S.N. Banerjee had uncharted political programme. Hume considered it prudent to take the initiative from the hands of disgruntled and irresponsible leadership and to launch a "loyal" political organisation wedded to the policy of constitutional agitation. Hume believed that the interest of the British Indian Empire would be better served by providing it with a safety-valve for the escape of dangerous resentment rather than hermetically sealing the chimney-outlet and exposing the Empire to the risk of a dangerous explosion. This is abundantly clear from Hume's correspondence with Sir Auckland Colvin, the then Governor of the North-Western Provinces. In reply to a letter from Sir Colvin that the Congress movement was premature and dangerous, Hume wrote back, "I have, always admitted that in certain provinces and from certain point of view the future maintenance of the integrity of the British Empire, the real question when the Congress started was not, is it premature but is it too late-will the country accept it? A safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces, generated by our own actions, was urgently needed, and no more efficacious safety-valve than our Congress movement could possibly be devised." (*Wedderburn, op. cit.* p. 77).

1.3.7. Congress:- The Child of Russo phobia

Another likely reason which seems to have moved Hume to activity and impelled the official world to assume a posture of neutrality towards organised political work in India was the Russian advances in central Asia. Today, it might seem that a Russian invasion of India, considering the difficulties of the terrain involved, was fanciful but in the 1870's and 1880's it was regarded as a straight possibility. That one of the motives for the foundation, of the Congress in 1885, was the organisation of a 'strong home front' against Russian menace is corroborated by the public pronouncements of Wedderburn, a close associate of Allen Hume and one of the founders of the Indian National Congress. While delivering his Presidential Address at

the fifth Congress (December, 1889), Sir Wedderburn said that in their schemes for the invasion of India, the Russian Generals depended for success "on a hoped for rising of the native population." That the birth of the Congress in 1885 forestalled such Russian calculations is clear from a further passage of the Address "In 1885", said Wedderburn, "The Russians appear to have put this idea to test by a pretended advance. Had this move been followed by any signs of sympathy, or even by an ominous silence of expectancy throughout India, Russia would have rejoiced and we should have felt our position weakened. But India did not treat England's difficulty as her opportunity."

On the contrary, there went upon all sides a patriotic cry led by the native press, calling on all to join with men and money and make a common cause against the common foe. I think also the action of the Congress, when calmly viewed, will be seen to point in the same directions." Earlier Ripon had written to the Secretary of State, "As the Russians approach our frontiers more nearly, they may try to stir up discontent and trouble by intrigues, carried on within dominions, and the real question therefore is how such intrigues can be best met and defeated." Lord Dufferin was also worried about Russian designs. In a letter to Lord Reay, dated 17th May, 1885, in which Dufferin mentioned about Hume and his proposed political convention, he wrote, "The Russians seem to be making further difficulties." Watchful Britishers in India, Hume included, could well see the urgent need of organising a 'rational interior' as preferable to the building up of a 'scientific frontier'. That the proposed Indian National Congress would fulfill these needs, was Hume's calculation.

The Indian Association of Calcutta was last outgrowing its provincial outlook and becoming the nucleus of an all-India political organisation. Taking advantages of the opportunity provided by government's proposal to hold an international exhibition in Calcutta in 1883, and hoping that number of Indians would visit Calcutta on the occasion. Surenderanath Banerjee and its associates announced the holding of the first Indian National Conference at Calcutta from 28-30 December 1883. Explaining its purpose, Surenderanath Banerjee said, "The objects of the National Conference are not sectional nor regional but truly national. We have met to talk, to deliberate to

consult, and if possible, to arrive at a common programme of political action. Too often our energies are frittered away in isolated and individual efforts. One Association for instance, might be agitating for the reform of the civil service, a second for the reconstitution of the legislative councils, a third for retrenchment of expenditure. Our idea is to bring national forces, so to speak, into focus, and if possible to concentrate them upon some common objects calculated to advance the public good. Such I conceive to be the prevailing idea of the Conference.” Wilfrid Blunt, then touring India, noted in his diary that delegates from most of the big towns attended the National Conference. The Conference discussed questions like representative councils, self-government, technical and general education, the separation of judicial from executive functions, the wider employment of Indians in public services, etc. The questions which later formed the chief planks of the Congress programme. During his tour of upper India in 1884, Surendranath Banerjee made an appeal for the creation of a national fund to promote political work. The Conference had also announced its decision to hold its second all-India session in the Christmas week of 1885.

Allen Hume could not possibly be unaware of the existence of the National Conference. Then-why-it became necessary for Hume to organise a parallel body with almost an identical programme? It is plausible that Hume’s mind was set on eclipsing the National Conference sponsored by a dismissed government servant of advanced political views who had done much to popularize the ideals and teachings of Mazzini. Thus, Hume’s originality lay not so much in propounding the idea of an all-India political organisation but in by-passing the Indian National Conference and stunting it Evidently. Hume’s motives and ideals were somewhat different from those of Surendranath Banerjee.

Why did the Indian National Congress, founded by Hume, became popular and succeed in eclipsing the National Conference of Calcutta? Probably, Hume was a better organiser and his appeal, transcending all provincial boundaries, evoked a wider national response. But a far more important reason was the nationality of Hume-a Briton, who once held a high office in the Government and had launched the Indian National Congress after the due consultation despite the hostility of the official class. Gokhale explained this point thus: could neutralize the hostility of the official class. Gokhale explained this and said, “No Indian, could have started the Indian National Congress. If an Indian had come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials in India would not have allowed the movement to come into existence. If the founder of the Congress had not been a great Englishman and a distinguished ex-official, such was the distrust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or the other of suppressing the movement.” No wonder, Surendranath Banerjee and his associates read the writing on the wall and joined the Indian National Congress.

1.3.8. Aims and Objectives of the Congress:

W.C. Banerjee, the first Congress President, spelt out in his

Presidential address the objectives of the Congress under the following four heads:

1. The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the various parts of the Empire.
2. The eradication by direct friendly personal inter-course of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.
3. The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing social questions of the day.
4. The determination of the lines upon and the methods by which during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interest.

The First Congress session discussed and passed nine resolutions, demanding among other things, the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the working of the Indian administration, abolition of the Secretary of State's India Council, creation of legislative council for the North-western Provinces and Oudh, and the Punjab, more representation for Indians in the legislative councils and increase in their powers, reduction of military expenditure and its equitable apportionment between India and England, and holding of simultaneous civil service examinations in England and India and the raising of the age of eligibility for the candidates.

Explaining the aims and objectives of the Congress, Allan Octavian Hume, the General Secretary said in a speech which he delivered at Allahabad on 30th April, 1888, that the fundamental objectives were three-fold:

FIRST-The fusion into one national goal of all the different and, till recently discordant elements that constitute the population of India.

SECOND-The gradual regeneration along all lines, mental, moral, social and politics of the nation thus involved. THIRD-The consolidation of the union between England and India by securing the modification of such conditions as may be unjust or injurious to the latter country.

The Congress acted in the true national spirit and acted as a vigilant watchdog of the Indian interests. Year after year it voiced national reactions on the various policies and administrative measures adopted by the British rulers. The Congress also sought the redressal of Indian grievances and used all constitutional methods for the achievement of its objectives.

1.3.9. Congress- A Platform for Pro-British and Anti-Russian Propaganda

Allan Hume and other early mentors of the National Congress used the Congress platform for creating among the thinking portion of the Indian community a tradition of loyalty towards the British Crown and developing in their mind an implicit faith in the Englishman's sense of justice and fair-play. It will be no exaggeration to say that apart from becoming a forum for

ventilating Indian grievances, the Congress platform, to begin with, was also used for pro-British and anti-Russian propaganda. In his first presidential Address at Bombay (in December, 1885) W.C.Banerjee said, "Let him say once for all that he was only expressing the sentiments of every gentleman present, that there were no more thoroughly loyal and consistent well-wishers of the British Government than were himself and the friends around him." In the second Congress Session (Calcutta, 1886), its President recounted the great and numberless blessings which the British rule and conferred on them and added, "Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone-that we veritably desire its permanent continuance." The Third Congress President Badrudin Tyabji (Madras, 1887) openly decried Russian designs on India and warned the audience that if, ever Russia succeeded in its nefarious project of the conquest of India, the people "should have nothing but a haughty and despotic government, whose chief glory would consist in vast military organisation, aggression upon our neighbors and great military exploits." William Wedderburn, the fifth Congress President (Bombay, 1889) went further and declared that the originators of the Congress movement did not wish "to exchange the rule of England the freest and the most enlightened country in the world, for that of Russia which is one of the most barbarous and retrograde." A perusal of the early Congress Presidential Address and proceedings of the Congress meetings makes it clear that it was customary for the various Presidents to begin with a repudiation of the allegations of disloyalty and sedition against the Congress organisation to be followed by an affirmation in categorical language the loyalty of the Congress to the British Crown. Year after year resolutions were passed offering services of the people as volunteers against Russian menace.

1.3.10 Self- Check Exercise:-

First President of Indian National Congress was.....

Theosophist Convention at Madras held on December.....

Write Short note on the following:

1. A.O. Hume
2. Lord Dufferin
3. Surinder Nath Bannerjee
4. Dada Bhai Naoroji

Long Questions:

1. What were the aims and objectives of Congress.
2. Write Aims and objectives of the Congress.
3. Write an essay on various theories regarding the birth of Congress.

Key Words: Board, Indian National Congress, Dufferin, A.O. Hume, Zamindara, Press, Development

1.3.11 Suggested Readings:

1. R.C. Majumdar (ed) *History And Culture of the Indian People-British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance*, Vol. X, pp. 465-523, 524-38, 570-94.
2. S.R. Mehrotra, *Emergence of the Indian National Congress*.
3. Brition Martin Jr., *New India, 1885-British Official Policy and the Emergence of the Indian National Congress*.
4. R.C.Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. I*.
5. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*.
6. C.R Andrews and Girija K. Mookerjee, *The Rise and Growth of Congress*.

**M.A. (HISTORY) PART II
(SEMESTER-III)****PAPER IV****(CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPEMENT AND NATIONAL
MOVEMENT IN INDIA FROM 1858-1930)****LESSON NO. 1.4**

Indian National Congress - Its Programmes and Methods from 1885-1905**Structure of the Lesson:-**

- 1.4.1. Objectives
- 1.4. 2. Introduction
- 1.4.3. Programme of the Congress
- 1.4.4. The Economic Outlook and Programme of the Congress:
- 1.4.5. Period of Moderate Policies or Political Mendicancy
- 1.4.6. Official Attitudes towards the Congress
- 1.4.7. Assessment of the Policies of the Moderates (1885-1905)
- 1.4.8. Summary
- 1.4.9. Exercise
- 1.4.10. Suggested Readings

1.4.1. Objectives:

- To understand the Programmes and methods of working of Congress.
- To discuss British attitude towards the Congress.
- To assess the working of early political leaders of Indian National Congress who dominated the congress from 1885-1905.
- To evaluate the contribution of congress in freedom struggle.

1.4.2. Introduction

The Indian National Congress, as its very name indicates was launched to work for and promote the welfare of the whole nation. It was a national organisation as distinguished from sectional, sectarian or communal organisation. It was also national for it claimed to represent all races, all creeds and all communities living in India. Its membership was open to men and women of all communities who were willing to work for the sake of the country. And it will not be an exaggeration to say that members of all communities, Hindus, Muslims, Parsinoas, Christians, Sikhs and even Anglo-Indian and Europeans have contributed to its growth and development. True to its name, the Congress has, from its very existence, maintained its all-India character. Its name, sessions have been rotated, from place to place, from Karachi in north-west to Trivandrum in the south, from Gauhati in the east to Ahmedabad in the West. The Congress always displayed an all-India outlook and approached and suggested solution to various problems facing the country from an all India point of view.

Though the Congress was truly national in character yet during its chequered course of more than 60 years till 1941, the aims and objectives of the Congress have undoubtedly undergone many significant changes. The

emphasis on different problems facing the country have also changed from time to time, as also the methods adopted by the organisation to achieve the set objectives.

For the sake of broad analysis, the period from 1885 to 1905 has been described as the phase of liberalism in the Congress politics with the keynote of moderate approach towards conducting political agitations.

During the period 1885-1905, the Congress demanded a few concessions and not home rule of self-government for the nation. True, Lokmanaya Tilak used the word *Sawaraj* towards the last decade of the 19th century but it did not become popular nor did it figure in the official resolutions of the Congress. Presiding over the Poona Congress in 1895, Surendranath Banerjee declared that the Congress had never asked for representative institution for the masses but "representative institutions of a modified character for the educated community, who by reason their culture and enlightenment, their assimilation of English ideas and their familiarity with English methods of government might be presumed to be qualified for such a boon."

1.4.3. PROGRAMME OF THE CONGRESS

Explaining the programme of the Congress at the Banaras session (1905). Gopal Krishan Gokhale grouped it under four heads viz :

- (1) Those which aimed at securing for the Indian people a larger and larger share in the administration and control of the affairs of the country, included reforms in the legislative councils, the appointment of Indians to the Secretary of State's Council (India Council) and the executive council in India, and a steady substitution of the Indian for the European agency in the public services of the country.
- (2) Those which sought to improve the methods of administration such as the separation of judicial from executive functions, police reform and so forth.
- (3) Those which proposed re-adjustment of financial arrangement with the object of securing a reduction of the burdens of the taxpayers and a more efficient application of the resources of India. Under this head came a reduction of military charges, the moderating of land-assessments and so forth.
- (4) Those which urged the adoption of measures calculated to improve the condition of the mass of the people these included a vigorous extension of primary education, facilities for industrial and technical instruction, grants-for improved sanitation, and real attempts to deal with the alarming indebtedness of the peasantry.

The demand for the reform and expansion of the supreme and provincial legislative councils more representation of elected Indians in them, creation of legislative councils for other provinces and the enlargement of the powers of these councils were voiced in the very first session of the Congress at Bombay in 1885 and these were reiterated at almost every subsequent Congress session. The Indian Council Act (1892) somewhat extended the legislative council but fell far short of the nationalist demands. The Act did not concede

what the Congress demanded i.e. a real living representation in the legislative councils. The Congress demand for a further expansion and reform of the supreme and provincial legislative council was passed in its session of 1904 and reiterated in 1905.

The Indianization of services was another important demand of the Congress. The first session of the Congress (1885) demanded the holding of competitive examinations for the civil services simultaneously in England and India and the raising of the age of candidates to afford more chances to Indian candidates to take this examination. In 1893, the House of Commons adopted a resolution in favour of this Congress demand but it remained unimplemented during the period under review.

Imbued with the spirit of European enlightenment and liberalism the Moderate leaders were great enthusiasts for individual liberty and the extension 'of the Rule of law to India. They demanded separation of the executive from judicial functions and the repeal of the laws of preventive detention. The second Congress session (1886) placed on record the expression of its 'universal conviction' for these demands and reiterated these demands year after year. In 1899, some experienced administrators including Lord Hobhouse, former Legal Member of the Viceroy's Council, sent a memorial to the Secretary of State for India urging the desirability of the separation of executive from judicial function. During 1899-1902, the Congress passed with added emphasis strong resolutions in support of these demands. In 1902, P.C.Ray issued a compilation of authoritative opinions and statements of the subject in the form of a book, titled *The Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions in British India*. The Moderate leaders, a good number of whom were connected with the legal profession, were also critical of the appointment of civil servants to the Bench. They urged that the judges should be recruited from the legal profession.

1.4.4. The Economic Outlook and Programme of the Congress: The chief economic spokesmen of the Congress during this period were Dadabhai Naoroji, M.G.Ranade, R.C. Dutt & G.K.Gokhale. Their thinking was greatly influenced by the economic philosophy of the leaders of the West, but they did recognise the unique features of the Indian economic situation. The existence of Indian poverty was glaringly patent and the worsening economic situation so evident that no nationalist organisation could shut its eyes to these problems. The second session of the Congress (1886) expressed grave apprehension at the 'increasing poverty of the vast numbers of the population in India. The resolution on Indian poverty was passed in one or the other form at almost, every succeeding session of the Congress. The Congress session in 1891, 1894 and 1896 carried elaborate and strongly-worded resolutions on India's poverty. Discussing in the backdrop of the famine of 1899-1900, the 16th Congress session held at Lahore in 1900, expressed deep concern at the 'oft-recurring famines' in India and 'the manifestly decreasing power of resistance on the part of the population'. The 17th Congress session (Calcutta, 1910) resolved once again to "call the attention of the Government to the deplorable condition of the poorest classes in India, full forty millions of whom, according to high official

authority, drag out a miserable existence, on the verge of starvation even in normal years” (*Report of the Seventeenth Indian National Congress, p.2*) The remedial measures suggested by the Congress for the removal of Indian poverty in 1901 included, among others:

- (i) Permanent settlement of land revenue to be extended to those parts of the country where it did not exist; restrictions to be put on over assessment in those parts of India where it might not be advisable to extend the permanent settlement.
- (ii) Agricultural banks to be established and greater facilities to be accorded for obtaining loans under the Agricultural Loans Act.
- (iii) All possible steps to be taken to improve the agriculture of the country.
- (iv) The draining out of wealth of the country to England be stopped at least in part by the wider employment of the Indians in public services.
- (v) Stoppage of the government policy of administrative extravagance, both in the civil and military departments.
- (vi) Revival and development of indigenous arts and manufactures and introduction of new industries.

In the same year appeared two monumental books on Indian economic history, namely, Dadabhai Naoroji's *Indian Poverty and the Un-British Rule in India* and R.C. Dutt's *Economic History of India*. These books drove home the conclusion that British policies were responsible for the 'growing poverty' of India. Dadabhai pinpointed that Britain was 'bleeding India white.'

1.4.5. Period of Moderate Policies or Political Mendicancy

The national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, D.E. Wacha, W.C. Banerjee & S.N. Banerjee who dominated the Congress policies during the period 1885-1905 were staunch believers in liberalism and moderate politics and came to be labelled as the moderates to distinguish them from the neo-nationalists of the early 20th century who were referred to as the Extremists. The Moderate leaders explained their political outlook as a happy combination of liberalism and moderation. Believers in the spirit of liberalism, they worked to procure for Indians freedom from prejudices due to race and creed, equality between man and man, equality before law, extension of civil liberties, extension of representative institutions etc. As to their methods, M.G. Ranade explained, "Moderation implies the condition of never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals, but striving each day to take the next step in the order of natural growth that lies nearest to our hands in a spirit of compromise and fairness." (Quoted in M.R. Palande (ed), *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India*, vol. II, PP. 848-49). Thus the moderate leaders were convinced believers in the policy of gradual change and constitutionalism

During this period under reference, the Congress was dominated by the affluent middle class intelligentsia, men of legal, medical, engineering and literary pursuits and journalists. The ideas and methods of this middle class held the

field and governed the character of the national struggle. The educated middle class was enamoured of titles and services under the state and by its training and culture and isolated itself from the masses. The delegates to the Congress sessions were mostly drawn from the cities and had hardly any real contact with the masses. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta once remarked: "The Congress was indeed not the voice of the masses, but it was the duty of their compatriots to interpret their grievances and offer suggestions for their redress."

As the Congress had been founded by A.O. Hume after consultations with Lord Dufferin who was Viceroy from 1884-88, the Congress leaders were full of admiration for British history and culture and spoke of the British connection as 'providential'. It was their cardinal faith that British rule in India was in the interest of Indians. They believed that in course of time, British would help them to acquire the capacity to govern themselves in accordance with the highest standards of the West. In 1886, Dadabhai Naoroji, presiding over the Calcutta session of the Congress, dwelt at length on the 'Blessing of British Rule' and his remarks were cheered by the audience. A.O.Hume moved a resolution for three cheers for Her Most gracious Majesty the Queen Empress and a further resolution for the long life of the queen. Ananda Mohan Bose as Congress President in 1898, declared. "The educated classes are the friends and not the foes of England; her natural and necessary allies in the great work that lies before her." Thus, it was generally believed that the chief obstacle in the path of India's progress was not the British colonial rule but the social and economic backwardness of the Indian people and the reactionary role of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy.

The Moderate Leaders stood for the maintenance, rather strengthening of the British Empire. This approach was the outcome of their apprehension that anarchy and disorder would reappear in India if British Government was superseded. In their eyes British rule was the embodiment of peace and *order* in the country and as such British rule was indispensable in India for a long time to come Gokhale explained this view-point when he said, "Whatever the shortcomings of bureaucracy, and however intolerable at times the insolence of the individual Englishman, they alone stand today in the country for order, and without continued order no real progress is possible for our people. It is not difficult at any time to create disorder in our country- it was the position for centuries but it is not so easy to substitute another form of order for that which has been evolved in the course of a century." The Moderates sincerely believed that India's progress could be possible only under the supervision of the British. Hence their loyalty to the British Crown Badruddin Tyabji, the third Congress President declared that nowhere among the millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India were to be found "more truly loyal, nay more devoted friends of the British Empire than among these educated natives." Thus, the Moderates would do nothing to weaken the empire. Loyalty to the Crown was their faith and an important article of their political creed.

Most of the Congress leaders of the period believed that the British people were just, righteous and freedom-loving. They were further convinced that the British people meant justice to be done to India. Indians had certain

grievances, these were only due to the reactionary policy of the British bureaucracy in India or ignorance of the British people about these grievances. As such the nationalist leaders believed that all they had to do was to prepare their case and present and plead it before the British Parliament and nation and their grievance would be redressed and justice done. As a natural corollary the Congress leaders put great emphasis on Congress propaganda in England. In July, 1889, The British Committee of the Indian National Congress with Sir William Wedderburn as Chairman and Digby as Secretary, and a number of Englishmen and two Indians namely, W.C.Bannerjee and Dadabhai Naoroji as members, was set up in London which published a weekly journal *India* to present India's view before the British public. Dadabhai Naoroji was never tired of telling the Congress leaders; "Nothing is more dear to the heart of England and I speak from actual knowledge-than India's welfare; and if we only speak out loud enough and persistently enough, to reach that busy heart, we shall not speak in vain." With a view to educating the English people about the real needs of India, in 1890 a decision was taken 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 afterwards never revived. Political propaganda was also carried on in other European countries. For example, Dadabhai Naoroji raised the Indian question at the Congress of the Socialists on 17th August 1904. At the end of the discussion, the President recorded: "This Congress unanimously stigmatizes the colonial policy of England."

1.4.6. Official Attitudes towards the Congress

Despite its moderate methods, its emphasis on loyalty to the British Crown, the Indian National Congress failed to evoke sympathetic response from the Government. In the beginning however, the official attitude was of an outward neutrality. It was in this spirit that Lord Dufferin gave a garden party to the delegates attending the second Congress session (1886) at Calcutta, taking care to explain that the invitation was not to the representatives of the Congress but to 'distinguished visitors to the capital. In 1887 the Governor of Madras gave some facilities to the organisers of the third session of the Congress at Madras. However the official attitude stiffened after 1887. The publication of Congress pamphlets like *A Tamil Congress Catechism Conversation between Maulvi Fareed-ud-din and one Ram Buksh of Kampakhtpur* which condemned despotic system of Government and absentee landlordism, brought about the hostility of the Government. The officials encouraged reactionary elements like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Raja Shiva Prasad of Banaras to organise the United Indian Patriotic Association to counter Congress propaganda. Further, Lord Dufferin challenged the very national character of the Congress and dubbed it as representing only a microscopic minority and Congress demands as a big jump into the unknown. In 1890, government employees were forbidden from participating in its deliberations or attending its meetings. Lord Curzon was more categorical in his pronouncements when he said that 'the Congress was tottering to system its fall' and one of his greatest ambitions in India was 'to assist it to a peaceful

demise.'

1.4.7. Assessment of the Policies of the Moderates (1885-1905)

In spite of the Indian National Congress having been the principal political organisation of India, its achievements during this period were derided by the Radical or the Extremist leaders of the early twentieth century. The policy of the Moderate leaders or the 'Old Guard' was criticised as 'political mendicancy', Lala Lajpat Rai wrote: "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." (*Young India*, p. 156).

Bankim-Chandra Chatterji criticised its lack of contact with the masses which according to him was a must for a political organization if it wanted to do any effective work. Some younger elements pointed at the lack of all political activity on the part of the Congress except for three days every year when it was in session. Ashwani Kumar Datta, regretted this aspect at the Congress session of Amarvati in 1897 by sarcastically calling it as a 'three days *Tamasha*' (fun).

A big charge against the Moderates was their loyalty to the Crown. It may be mentioned that the Moderate leaders believed that India lacked some of the essential elements which constituted a nation and British rule kept them together. As such they did not see any alternative to British rule in the foreseeable future. Their patriotism therefore demanded that they should be loyal to the British *raj*, for any termination of British rule was likely to be harmful to the Indian national interests. B.C.Pal then a Moderate leader, said in 1887, "I am loyal to the British Government because with me loyalty to the British Government is identical with loyalty to my own people and my own country.....I am loyal to the British Government, because I love self government."

In all fairness it must be said that men like Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Sir Dinshaw Wacha, Gopal Krishana Gokhale, Surindra Nath Banerjee were the most progressive men in Indian Society and true patriots. They earnestly wished the betterment of Indian society and worked to lessen the harshness of the British rule. Their main achievement was the appointment of the Public Service Commission in 1886. It recommended large number of positions to be held by the Indians. However, later due to government's unhealthy attitude, Indians were disappointed. Another important attainment of the Moderates was the enactment of the Indian Councils Act of 1892, though it did not modify the basic constitution. In addition, they did a lot of spadework. Their methods- the use of the prayers, press and protests- brought about political maturity.

A valuable job done by the Indian National Congress was that it provided a central forum to the provincial organizations. To begin with in Bengal and later in other provinces, annual Provincial Conferences and later District Conference were held regularly. They also selected the delegates to be sent to the Congress session, formulated the political views to be placed. Threats served as chief instruments of giving publicity to the proceedings of the Congress and carried them into effect. According to the authors of the *History of Culture of Indian*

People, A properly articulated systems was thus evolved with the Indian National Congress as its apex, and the local organizations as their broad base.” (Vol. X, p. 567).

Perhaps the greatest service of the Moderates was rendered when they assessed the economic impact of the British rule on India. They focused public attention on the fact of Indian poverty and explained that this poverty was largely due to the colonial exploitation of India’s economic resources by Britain. The economic drain theory popularized by Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C.Dutt, Dinshah Wacha and others was an open indictment of Britain’s economic role in India. The Drain Theory was used as a convenient stick by the Extremist leaders to malign and beat the British rule in India. At the end it would be useful to take of the opinions of some important authorities on the subject.

1.4.7.1.Gopal Krishan Gokhale’s Opinion

“Let us not forget that we are at a stage of the country’s progress when our achievements are bound to be small and our disappointments frequent and trying. That is the place with it has pleased providence to assign to us in this struggle, and our responsibility is ended when we have done the work which belongs to that place. It will no doubt be given to our countrymen of future generation to serve India by their success, we of the present generation must be content to serve her mainly by our failures. For, hard though it be, out of these failures the strength will come which in the end will accomplish the great task.

1.4.7.2. Pattabhai Sitaramayya’s Opinion “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 story by colonial self-government, Hume Rule within the Empire, Swaraj and on the top of all complete independence.”

1.4.7.3. Bipan Chandra’s Opinion

“The period from 1885 to 1905 was the seed time of Indian nationalism and the early nationalists sowed the seed well and deep. Instead of basing their nationalism on appeals to shallow sentiments and passing emotions, or abstract rights of freedom and liberty, or on obscurantist appeal to the past, they rooted it in a hard-headed and penetrating analysis of the complex mechanism of modern imperialism and the chief contradictions between the interests of the Indian people and British rule. The result was that they evolved a common political and economic programme, which united rather than divided the different sections of the people. In spite of their many failures, the early nationalists laid strong foundations for the national movement to grow upon and that they deserve a high place among the makers of modern India.”

1.4.8. Self-Check Exercise:

Chief Spokesman of Congress during 1886 was.....

Extremist leaders of the Congress were.....

Write short note on the following

1. Lord Dufferin
2. First President of Congress
3. Surat Split, 1907

4. Gopal Krishan Gokhale

Long Questions;

1. Narrate different theories concerning the genesis of Congress.
2. Examine programmes of the Congress in its initial years.

Key Words: Imperialism, Swaraj, Government, Drain Theory, Protests, Economic Outlook

1.4.9. Suggested Readings:

- Sitaramayya, Pattabhi B., *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I & II, Bombay, 1946.
- S.R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of Indian National Congress*, Rupa, New Delhi, 2004.
- Kundra, T.N., *Glimpses of Indian National Congress: From Inception to Attainment of Freedom (1885-1947)*, Regency Publications, 1996.

**M.A. (HISTORY) PART II
(SEMESTER-III)****PAPER IV****(CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPEMENT AND NATIONAL
MOVEMENT IN INDIA FROM 1858-1930)**

LESSON NO. 1.5

**Rise of Extremism: Circumstances Responsible, Differentiation from
Liberalism and the Surat Split of 1907****Structure of the Lesson**

- 1.5.1. Objectives
- 1.5.2. Introduction
- 1.5.3. Causes of the rise of extremism
- 1.5.4. The objectives and Methods of Extremist group
- 1.5.5. The Extremist Programme of Action
- 1.5.6. Differentiation between the Moderates and the Extremists
- 1.5.7. Towards Surat Split in 1907
- 1.5.8. Assessment of Extremism or the Extremist Movement
- 1.5.9. Exercise
- 1.5.10 Suggested Readings

1.5.1. Objectives:-

- To study causes of rise of extremism within Congress.
- To examine different methods of working of Moderates and the Extremists to achieve their objectives.
- To evaluate factors responsible for Surat Split in 1907.
- To assess the successes and failures of extremist.

1.5.2. Introduction:-

According to Bal Gangadhar Tilak "The extremists of today will be the moderates of tomorrow just as the moderates of today were the extremists of yesterday."

The closing decade of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century witnessed the emergence of a new and a younger group of nationalists within the Indian National Congress which was sharply critical to the ideology and methods of the old leadership. These 'angry young men' advocated the adoption of *Swaraj* (self-government) as the goal of the Congress to be achieved by more self-reliant and independent methods. The new group came to be called the Extremist Party in contrast to the older one, which began to be referred to as the Moderate Party. The process of split, in the Indian National Congress began when Lokamanya Tilak clashed with the Moderates (also called *sudharaks* or reformers) over the question of social reform. In July, 1895, Tilak and his group ousted Mahadeo Ranade and Gopal Krishan Gokhale from the control of poona Sarvajanak Sabha Gokhale organised a separate political association called The Deccan Sabha. There was no love lost between Tilak and

Gokhale. Tilak outmanoeuvred Gokhale from national politics over the 'apology affair', and the latter was labelled a *Kacha* reed i.e. a spineless fellow who could be brow beaten by the Government.

Tilak was made of a different stuff than most of the Congress leaders. He was for the right in his criticism of the Government and its policies and was prepared to make sacrifices to get wrongs redressed. He was the first Congress leader to suffer several terms of imprisonment for the sake of the country: As early as 1882, for criticising in strong language the treatment meted out to the Maharaja of Kolhapur, the Government tried and sentenced Tilak to four months imprisonment. Again in 1897, Tilak was while in England in 1897, Gokhale wrote a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* on 2nd July, 1897, condemning the behaviour of plague Officers at Poona. This letter coupled with the speech, on the same subject which Gokhale delivered in London alarmed the Secretary of State for India, who in turn wrote to the Governor of Bombay ordering an enquiry into the affair. On his return to Bombay Gokhale was asked by Lord Sandhurst to substantiate the charges against the Plague Commissioners found himself concerned. He offered an unqualified apology to the Government and publicly admitted that he had been misinformed charged with exciting feelings of disaffection to the British Government and sent to jail for 18 months rigorous imprisonment. At the Congress session-at Amravati (December, 1897) the supporters of Tilak made an attempt to push a resolution demanding the release of Tilak. The Moderate leaders who controlled the Congress did not permit it. Similarly at the Congress session at Madras (December, 1898), the Moderates failed the attempt of Tilak's admirers to move a resolution praising his spirit of sacrifice. Again, at the Lucknow session of the Congress (December, 1899), Tilak's attempt to move a resolution condemning Governor Sandhurst's administration of Bombay was also blocked by the Moderates leaders on the plea that the matter was of provincial interest and could not be discussed at the national Congress. It was because of ideology differences with Tilak and his group that the Moderated leaders were determined to keep Tilak and Congressmen of his line of thinking out of all positions of influence and responsibility in the Congress and never gave Tilak a chance to become the Congress President.

1.5.3. Causes of the rise of Extremism

The dissatisfaction with the working of the Congress had been expressed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee when he described the Congressmen as "place-hunting politicians." Aurobindo Ghosh wrote a series of articles during 1893-94 entitled 'New Lamps for Old,' wherein he described the Congress as being out of contact with the 'proletariat, its character as 'unnational' and its work as 'failure' and added: "Yet more appalling was the general timidity of the Congress, its glossing of hard names, its disinclination to tell the direct truth, its fear of too deeply displeasing our masters." He thought that the Congress was 'dying of consumption'. Among the causes and circumstances that helped the growth of Extremism, the following deserve special mention:

1.5.3.1. Recognition of the True Nature of the British Rule: The efforts of the early nationalist leaders paved the way for development of the next stage of

the nationalist movement. By their painstaking studies and writings, the early nationalist leaders had exposed the true nature of the British rule in India. They conclusively proved by elaborate statistical data that British rule and its policies were responsible for the economic ruin of India and her ever growing poverty. Dadabhai Naoroji, for example, exposed the exploitative nature of the British rule in India and proved that Britain was bleeding India white and the constant 'drain of wealth' from India was indirectly responsible for India's economic miseries. He characterized the British rule in India as 'a constant and continuous' plunder. Nationalist leaders like Ananda Charlu, R.N.Mudholkar, Din Shah Wacha, G.K.Gokhale, Madan Mohan Malaviya too exposed the exploitative nature of the British rule. R.C.Datta and G.Y.Joshi, examined threadbare the true nature of the British land revenue policy, while S. N. Banerjee explained at length the big gap between the professed aims and the practised policy of the Government of India in matters of recruitment to public service. The second session of the Congress (Calcutta, 1886) brought a resolution on 'increasing poverty' of India and this resolution was affirmed year after year at subsequent Congress sessions. The 'poverty verging on starvation' of fifty millions of the population was described by the Congress as due to the most extravagant civil and military administration, mounting Home charges, discriminating tariff policy (as evident from the frequent changes in the cotton duties, sugar duties etc.) short-sighted land revenue policy, indifference to technical and industrial development of India and exclusion of the sons of the soil from a share in the higher and lower public services. Scholarly writings of nationalist leaders like Ranade's *Essays in Indian Economics* (1898), Dadabhai Naoroji's *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (1941), B.C.Dutt's *Economic History of India* (1901), were the arsenals from which the new leader shot their arrows at the British rule. Thus, the Extremist ideology was a natural and a logical next step in the development of Indian political thinking.

1.5.3.2. Reaction to Increasing Westernization: The new leaders felt the stranglehold of excessive Westernization of Indian life, thought and politics. Christianity and Utilitarianism were a challenge to Indian religion and thought. The materialistic and individualistic Western civilization was eroding the value of Indian culture and civilization. Thus, it was rightly apprehended that the merger of Indian national identity in the British Empire was being attempted.

The intellectual and emotional inspiration of the new leadership (Extremists) was Indian. They drew inspiration from Indian spiritual heritage; they appealed to heroes of Indian history and to revive the glories of ancient India. The writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Vivekananda and Swami Dayananda appealed to their imagination. Though in the beginning Bankim had written in Bengali and on Bengal (*Anandamath*, published in 1880), by 1886 he had emerged as an Indian and dreamt of united India under the leadership of a superman like Lord Krishna (*Krishna Charitra*, Part I, 1886). Bankim saw in Lord Krishna a *Karmayogi*, i.e., a man of action who fought evil and stood for righteousness. He saw in Lord Krishna a good soldier, a clever strategist and a successful empire-builder, at the Kurukshetra War, Lord

Krishna deliberately worked for the destruction of petty states and for the emergence of *dharamrajya*. Service to the Motherland now acquired an added Significance. Vivekananda, a great Vedantist, gave new confidence to the Indians in India's ancient heritage. He exhorted his compatriots to realize the value of their cultural heritage. He imparted a feeling of self-confidence to the youth and gave them a new mission to conquer the West with India's spirituality. Swami Dayananda exploded the myth of Western superiority. By referring to India's rich civilization in the Vedic age when Europe was steeped in ignorance. Dayananda gave a new confidence to the Hindus and undermined the current belief in the superiority of the white races over the brown or black ones. Dayananda's political message was 'India for the Indians.'

1.5.3.4. Dissatisfaction with the Achievements of the Congress: The younger elements within the congress were dissatisfied with the achievements of the congress during the first 15 to 20 years and were disgusted with the cold and reactionary attitude of the Government. They had lost all faith in the British sense of justice and fairplays. They were strongly critical of the methods of a peaceful and constitutional agitation, popularly nicknamed as 3 Ps-Petition, Prayer and Protest-and described those methods as 'political mendicancy.' They became impatient with the slow, almost negligible achievements during the first fifteen years and advocated the adoption of European revolutionary methods to meet European imperialism.

On his return from England in 1905, Lala Lajpat Rai told his countrymen that the British people were too busy with their own affairs to do anything worthwhile for India, the British press was not likely to champion these aspirations; and it was very difficult to get a hearing in England. He exhorted the people that if they really cared for their country, they would have to strike a blow for freedom themselves, and they should be prepared to give unmistakable proof for their earnestness."

The younger generation of Congressmen (also called Nationalists or Extremists) had nothing but disgust for the old guard. According to them the only 'political religion' of the Congress was loyalty to the Crown: their only 'political aim' was to improve their chances of getting seats in the central and provincial legislatures or judicial services or acquiring titles etc: their only 'political activity' was excessive speeches and attending Congress sessions towards December-end every year. The moderate leaders were accused of limiting the range of their activities for the benefit of the middle class intelligentsia and limiting the membership of the Congress to the middle class for fear of losing their leadership if masses joined the movement. Thus the moderate leaders were accused of flattery and Congress sessions a holiday recreation'. Lajpat Rai dubbed Congress meetings as 'the annual national festivals of the educated Indians.' Both Tilak and Lajpat Rai believed that the Congress had no constructive activity. Tilak affirmed: "We will not achieve any success in our labours if we croak once a year like a frog."

1.5.3.5. Deteriorating Economic Condition of India: The economic miseries of the closing years of the 19th century provided a congenial atmosphere for the growth of Extremism in Indian national activity. The terrible famines of 1896-97

and 1899-1900 coupled with the bubonic plague which broke out in Maharashtra took a heavy toll of life. The Government relief machinery was inadequate, slow moving and badly organised. Tilak criticised the callous and overbearing Government Plague, Commissioners as those who caused more harm than good. He thundered that fear and anxiety was the cause of the disease and that 'plague is less cruel to us than the official measures'. Riots broke out in Deccan and Government tried to stifle public opinion and suppress lawlessness. The events revealed to the Indians their plight of utter helplessness. Even recurring famines were attributed to the national policy followed by the Government. In his Presidential speech in 1903, Lal Mohan Ghosh referring to the *Darbar* of 1902 said: 'Nothing could seem more heartless than the spectacle of a great Government imposing the heaviest taxation upon the poorest population in the world, and then lavishly spending the money so obtained ever fireworks and pompous pageants while millions of the poor were dying of starvation.'

1.5.3.6. Contemporary International Influences: Events outside India also exercised a great influence on the younger generation. The humiliating treatment meted out to the Indians in British colonies especially in South Africa, created anti-British feelings, Nationalist movements in Egypt, Persia, Turkey and Russia gave Indians new hopes and new aspirations. Indian nationalists gained more confidence and drew inspiration from Abyssinia's or Ethiopia's repulsion of the Italian army in 1896 and Japan's thumping victory over Russia the British grip was holding India back. Thus the spell of European invincibility was broken.

Curzon's seven years rule in India which was full of missions, omissions and commissions created a sharp reaction in the Indian mind. Curzon refused to recognise that India as a nation and characterized their activities as the 'letting off of gas.' He insulted the Indian intelligentsia and talked very low of the Indian character. At a Calcutta University convocation Curzon said: 'Undoubtedly truth took a high place in the codes of the West before it had been similarly honoured in the East, where as craftiness and diplomatic vile have always been held in high in the East.' The Calcutta Corporation Act, the Official Secrets Act and the Indian Universities Act created great resentment in India. The Delhi *Darbar* held in 1902, coming at a time when India had not fully recovered from the devastating effects of the famine of 1899-1900, it was interpreted as a pompous pageant to a starving population.'

1.5.3.7. The Partition of Bengal : The worst and most contemptuous act of Curzon's administration was the Partition of Bengal in 1905, into two provinces of Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam. The partition forced in the teeth of Bengal opposition and protests from the Indian National Congress in (1904), showed the contemptuous disregard Curzon and the home authorities had for the Indian public opinion. It was abundantly clear that the Partition of Bengal was a machiavellian device to divide the people on the basis of religion and to instigate the Muslims against the Hindus. The utter disregard which Curzon showed for public opinion gave ample evidence, if any proof was still needed, that the Moderates' policy of 'petitions, prayers and protests', was barren of

results.

1.5.4. THE OBJECTIVES AND METHODS OF EXTREMIST GROUP

The new turn in Indian politics found expression in two forms: (1) The information of the Extremist group within the Congress and (ii) The growth of terrorism or revolutionary movement in the country at large.

Four prominent Congress leaders-Lokmanya Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Lala Lajpat Rai-defined the creed of the new group, articulated its aspirations and guided its operations. Tilak gave an Extremist slogan to the new group when he said. "*Swaraj* is my birthright and I shall have it". Tilak explained, "Swaraj or self- government is essential for the exercise of '*swadharama* Without swaraj there could be no social reform, no industrial progress, no useful education, no fulfilment of the national life. That is what we seek, that is why God has sent us into the world to fulfil them." B.C. Pal elaborated the demand of the new party thus: "It is not reforms, but reform which is the new cry of the people in the country. It is the abdication of the right of England to determine the policy of the Indian Government, the relinquishment of the right of the present foreign despotism to enact whatever law they please to govern the people of the country, the abandonment of their right to tax the people according to their own sweet will and pleasure, and to spend the revenues of the country in any way they like."

Aurobindo Ghosh described "*Swaraj* as the fulfilment of the ancient life of India under modern conditions, the return of the *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 ideal in politics- this is the true *swaraj* for India," Aurobindo emphasised ; "Political freedom is the life-breath of a nation: to attempt social reform educational, remarked, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom, is the very height of ignorance and futility." Lajpat Rai bemoaned: "A subject people has no soul, just as a slave can have none, a man without soul is a mere animal, a nation without a soul is only a dumb driven cattle." Thus, *Swaraj* was the first requisite for a nation and reforms or good government could be no substitute for it.

It should be clearly understood that the Nationalist (Extremists) demand for *Swaraj* was a demand for complete freedom from foreign control and independence to manage national affairs without any foreign restraints. The *Swaraj* of the Moderate leaders was merely a demand for colonial self-government within the Empire. The methods employed by the two groups (Moderates and Extremists) were different in their tempo and approach. While the Moderates had infinite faith in the efficacy of constitutional agitation, in appealing to the British sense of justice and fairplay, in holding annual conferences, in making speeches, passing elaborate resolutions and sending deputation to England, the Extremists had no faith in passive resistance, mass agitation and strong will to suffer to make self-sacrifices. The new leadership sought to create a passionate love for liberty, accompanied by a spirit of sacrifice and a readiness to suffer for the cause of the country. They'

strove to root out from the people's mind the omnipotence of the ruler and instead gave them self-reliance and confidence in their own strength.

1.5.5. The Extremist Programme of Action

The Extremist advocated boycott of foreign goods, use of *swadeshi* goods, national education and passive resistance. Economic boycott of British made goods, and use of *swadeshi* or home-made products was designed to encourage Indian industries and provide the people with more opportunities for work and employment. Lala Lajpat Rai explained that the original idea of launching the boycott of British goods was to cause pecuniary loss to the British manufactures and thus secure their sympathy and help for getting the partition of Bengal annulled. Soon it was discovered that economic boycott might prove a powerful weapon against economic exploitation by the foreigners. Further it proved to be a most effective weapon for injuring British interests in India. Besides, it was believed that the newly rising Indian manufacturing class would liberally provide funds for the Congress and thus strengthen it. Lajpat Rai summed up: "We desire to turn our faces away from the Government house and turn them to the huts of the people. This is the psychology, this is the ethics, this is the spiritual significance of the boycott movements."

National Scheme of Education was to replace the universities, colleges and schools by the national institutes. The Extremists tried to enlist the students in their service. When the Government threatened to take disciplinary action against the students, the national leaders advocated national universities independent of Government control. Sir Guroodas Banerjee headed the Bengal Council of National Education, and Vidyasagar organised the private colleges in Bengal. In Madras, the Pachaiappa National College was set up. In the Punjab the D.A. V. movement made considerable headway.

Tilak preached non-cooperation. In 1902, he said at Poona, "You must realise that you are a great factor in the power with which the administration of India is controlled. You are yourselves the great lubricants which enable the gigantic machinery to work so smoothly. Though down-trodden and neglected, you must be conscious of your power of making the administration impossible. If you but choose to make it." The Extremists also encouraged cooperative organisations. Voluntary associations were set up for rural sanitation, for preventive police duties, for regulation of fairs and pilgrim gatherings, for providing relief during famines and other national calamities. Arbitration committees were also set up to decide civil and non-cognizable disputes.

1.5.6. Differentiation between the Moderates and the Extremists

Both the Moderates and the Extremists came from the middle class: both were reacting to the British rule; and both voiced Indian grievances. Now coming to their differences, in the first place, the Moderates claimed social equality and a share in the British Government of India on the ground that they were British subjects but the Extremists, while demanding social equality, insisted on political emancipation as their birthright. Secondly, while the Moderates appealed to Englishmen in England and placed their reliance on English history and English political ideas, the Extremists drew sustenance from India's heritage and appealed to Indians by invoking religious patriotism.

Thirdly, While the Moderates emphasised the need for political apprenticeship under the providential guidance of the British rule, the Extremists rejected the idea of England's providential mission in India. It was an illusion, and stigmatised the constitutional agitation of the Moderates as mendicancy, and their stress on apprenticeship as an acceptance of an unending political servitude. Instead, they called for self-reliance and self-apprenticeship through *swadeshi*, boycott and passive resistance. In contrast, the Moderates stressed that their constitutional agitation was a practical statesmanship, the emotional idealism fraught with peril, that rashness was not courage, that British rule would not come to end because of boycott, and above all, the removal of British rule would result in chaos and anarchy.

1.5.7. Towards Surat Split of 1907

The difference between the Moderates and the Extremists came to surface over the course of action to be adopted to get the Partition of Bengal annulled. The discussion that followed revealed the differences in their political goals as well as the methods to be adopted for the achievement of the desired objectives.

The tussle between the two (the Extremists and the Moderates) started at the Banaras session of the Congress (December, 1905) presided over by Gopal Krishna Gokhale. At the session, the difference arose over the wording of the resolution on boycott and *swadeshi* movements. However, a compromise was reached and embodied in the Resolution which read: "That the Congress records its earnest and emphatic protest against the repressive measures which have been adopted by the authorities in Bengal after the partition. the people there had been compelled to boycott the foreign goods as a last protest and perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them of drawing the attention of the British public to the action of the Government of India in persisting in their determination of partition Bengal in utter disregard of the universal prayers and protests of the people."

The compromise Resolution pleased neither and each group worked hard to score victory over the other during the following year. Difference of opinion was expressed over the selection of the Congress President for the Calcutta session to be held in December 1906. The Extremists canvassed for the candidature of Tilak. The Moderates forestalled this move by inviting Dadabhai Naoroji for the Presidency. However, the Extremists' sentiments were placated over 'the acceptance of the resolution on *swadeshi*, boycott and national education. Both sides accepted these in the spirit of give and take. Dadabhai Naoroji, sensing the mood of the hour declared *swaraj* as the goal of the Congress. It is very significant to note that the work *swaraj* was uttered for the first time from the Congress platform, but its connotation was not spelt out. So the Moderates and the Extremists put different interpretations on it.

The controversies continued through out the year 1907, each side trying to erode the compromising spirit reached during the Congress session of 1905 and 1906. Here after the differences between the two groups arose at every step:" The Congress session of 1907, was due to be held at Nagpur but acute

differences arose between the members of the Reception Committee over the election of the President. The Moderates used their influence and shifted the venue of the session to Surat where the Reception Committee was supposed to be under the influence of the Moderate leader Pherozeshah Mehta.

Early in December, 1907, rumours got afloat at Surat that the resolution on self-government, *swadeshi*, boycott and national education would be excluded from the Surat Congress session. Differences also arose about the selection of the Presidential candidate. The Extremists preferred the candidature of the Lala Lajpat Rai while the Moderates wanted the election of Rashbehari Bose. Lajpat Rai wisely announced the withdrawal of their objection to the election of Rashbehari Bose for the Presidency if the previous year's resolutions on *swaraj*, *Swadeshi*, boycott and national education were affirmed at the Surat session. But the Moderates were no longer in any compromising mood.

On 27th December, 1907, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, the Chairman of the Reception Committee declared the election of Rash Behari Bose as the Congress President ignoring altogether the notice of an adjournment move given by Tilak. Tilak was on his feet again and wanted permission of the Chair to move the motion. The Chairman declared motion out of order. Tempers rose high, shouts and countershouts rent the air and pandemonium followed. Chairs were flung and a shoe was thrown at the Chair. The President declared the session adjourned *sine die*.

The split in the Congress ranks was complete. The Moderates met in a convention under the Chairmanship of S.N. Banerjee and appointed a committee to reconstitute the Congress. The committee met in April, 1908, at Allahabad and drew a rigid pro- Moderates constitution for the Congress which among other matters declared : (i) the attainment of self-government within the British Empire as the goal of the Congress to be achieved strictly by constitutional means and by gradual reform of the existing system of administration ; and (ii) required every future Congress delegate to express in writing his acceptance of this article of faith of the Congress.

Thus the Congress organisation passed under the control of the Moderate group which continued its hold till 1916.

1.5.8. Assessment of Extremism or the Extremist Movement

In any assessment of what is popularly known as Extremist thought and politics, one must not lose sight of the fact that it was not a consistent political philosophy. Advocates of Extremism ranged from active revolutionaries at one end, through secret sympathizers of revolutionary activities, to those who opposed to all violent methods at the other end.

Further its top leaders, Aurobindo, Tilak, Bipan Chandra Pal and Lajpat Rai differed in their emphasis on political ideals and the practical course of action. Even the views of individual leader underwent change with the changing circumstances. For example, Tilak's conception of *swaraj* meant some sort of self government while Aurobindo conceived *swaraj* as complete independence from foreign rule. Further, Tilak's revolutionary fervour somewhat

mellowed towards the end of his political career and he showed signs of cooperation with the Government while Aurobindo's concept of complete independence was transformed into human unity and world union in his later career. However, it must be stated that all Extremist leaders were one in realising the evils of foreign rule and in-demanding some degree of independence from colonial stranglehold. As such Extremism was in fact an attitude of mind and a practical strategy to meet a particular situation.

The Extremists talked of democracy, constitutionalism, progress and of broadening the social base of the national movement. Most of them represented the urban lower middle class and aimed to spread the Congress to the people. They spoke, wrote and edited newspaper in vernacular languages and thus succeeded in conveying their message to a large audience.

The Extremists well understood and highlighted the negative role of the British in India. They saw clearly the clash of interests between-the British rulers and the Indian people. Thus, the main focus of their politics was (a) to get a large share for Indians in the administration of their country, and (b) to end Britain's economic exploitation of India. They also realised that these objectives, could not be realized without pressure tactics and some sort of direct action. Hence the Moderates philosophy of cooperation gave place to non-cooperation and resistance to unjust acts of the Government. Thus, the Extremists gave new slogans to the Indian national movement such as non-cooperation, boycott, passive resistance, mass agitation, self-reliance, discipline of suffering etc. The Extremists transformed patriotism from 'an academic pastime' to 'service and sufferings for the nation.'

The policy of the Extremists yielded good dividends. The Partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911 which gave new self-confidence and self-assurance to the Indian nationalists. The aim of swaraj though denied by Lord Morley, was no longer, looked upon as a revolutionary demand. The shock of the First World War compelled the Government to proclaim during the War itself self-government as the goal of constitutional development in India.

1.5.9 Self Check Exercise;

Indian National Congress split into two parts at Its Session in.....
Bengal was partitioned in 1905 by

Write short note on the following:-

1. W.C. Bannerjee (2). Partition of Bengal 1905 (3). Bipan Chandra Pal (4). Lord Curzon

Long Questions;

1. Discuss the factors which led to the birth and growth of extremism in the Indian National Congress.
2. Discuss methods of working of Moderates.
3. Write an essay on achievements of Congress till 1905.
4. What were the causes responsible for Surat split in 1907.

Key Words: Extremist, Moderates, Processions, Peace, Struggle, Freedom

1.5.10 Suggested Readings :

- Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I & II, Bombay, 1946.
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**M.A. (HISTORY) PART-II
(SEMESTER-III)****PAPER- IV
GROUP C, OPTION (iii)****Constitutional Development and National Movement in India 1858-1930**

LESSON NO. 1.6**Author: Dr. P.R. Arya,**

The Indian Councils Act 1909(Minto-Morely Reforms)**Structure of the Lesson**

- 1.6.1. Objectives
- 1.6.2 Introduction
- 1.6.3. Circumstances
- 1.6.4. Official Objectives
- 1.6.5. Passing of the Bill
- 1.6.6. Provisions of the Act
- 1.6.7. Reaction of Political Parties in England and India
- 1.6.8 Merits of the Act
- 1.6.9 Demerits of the Act
- 1.6.10 Summary
- 1.6.11 Self- Check Exercise
- 1.6.12 Suggested Readings

1.6.1. Objectives:-

- To study the circumstances which led to passing of the Indian Councils Act 1909.
- To explore the official objectives and provisions of Minto-Morley reforms.
- To examine reactions against this bill in England and India.
- To evaluate merits and demerits of the Indian Councils Act.

1.6.2. Introduction

Legislative reforms were introduced by British government in India in 1909 popularly known as Minto-Morley reforms. Under these reforms, Muslims got reservation in the Councils. Elections to the seats reserved for Muslims were to be made by Muslim voters only. No such concession was made to other minority communities. This measure, besides being introduced was the anti-democratic in principle of communal representation.

1.6.3. Circumstances

There were many factors which were responsible for the passing of this Act.

- The Indian Councils Act of 1892 did not and could not satisfy the educated Indians. Members of the Legislative Councils could neither move resolution nor ask supplementary questions; budget was not to be voted item-wise; and above all the elected elements introduced in the Legislatures was too negligible rather it was farce. A new set of reforms could alone satisfy the Indians.
- The reaction to the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon gave a new flip to

the Indian national movement. His Calcutta Corporation Act was regarded as an attempt to crush the spirit of local self - government; his education policy was derogatory to public aspirations; his Partition of Bengal was a stunning blow to national integrity, efforts at over centralizing the administration caused disgust and disappointment. Even Lord Curzon's admirer Sir D. Ibbetson observed that never had a Viceroy found such a tangled web or such a heritage of difficulties (as Lord Curzon's successor as Viceroy).

- Unfortunately, the period between 1892 and 1905 witnessed horrors of dire famines followed by bubonic plague; thousands of people died and large tracts were converted into waste. It brought unbearable miseries to the people. People blamed the Government more than nature, and detested even the well-intentioned official measure for disinfecting against plague as gross acts of violation of their privacy. The above attitude and the actions of the Government excited the extremists and the terrorists.
- The famous trio of Bal, Pal and Lal became symbolic of Indian people's feelings. Bal Gangadhar Tilak's declaration, "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it", in fused courage and faith in the people. They were trained both physically and mentally, Lokmanya organized gymnasium where people were prepared to demand their rights. He organized clubs, brought out Kesari and Maratha and moved among the people for preparing them for the new task. The festivals of Ganpati (God of War) and Shivaji shook the people from their slavish slumber. Even though Tilak was imprisoned and departed but in captivity also he was a big force and a great guide to freedom. In Bengal, the extremist activities were carried on by Bipin Chandra Pal. He organized protest, meetings and inspired Indians to meet Curzon's ill-planned strategies with force. Direct assaults on Europeans and the destruction of their places was the effect of Pal's activities. In Punjab. Lala Lajpat Rai moved like a hurricane and roared against the imperialist British regime. He taught the people the lesson of self- help and art of honorable life.
- Extremist propaganda paved the way for the revolutionary movement, both inside and outside. Indian selfless heroes like Ajit Singh, Har Dayal and other prepared the people to fight. Violence was let loose; attempts were made on the life of Frazier, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The collector of Nasik was killed. District Magistrate of Dacca, Allen was gunshot; and two English ladies Mrs. Kennedy and Miss Kennedy were shot dead. Everywhere the terrorists openly and continuously preached sedition both through the press and through the largely attended public meetings. The result was that the Government had to take certain steps towards reforms in order to boost own image and that of the

Moderates among the people. The Indian Press added fuel to the fire. But, while Minto decided to deal with the Press for their outrageous utterances, he also came to the conclusion that liberal reforms must be carried out.

- The humiliating treatment meted out to the Indians in the foreign lands also developed disaffection against the British rule in India. It is a notable fact that a large number of Indians had migrated to other countries to seek fortunes in wider fields. There they were given second hand treatment. The racial discrimination in South Africa and heart-rending account of the treatment of Indians in Fiji and elsewhere made People think that their enslavement at home is responsible for their troubles at foreign land.
- Militant nationalism and the demand for self-government also gained strength from the occurrences in the neighbouring countries. The national movements in Egypt and Persia and the Islamic Movement also inspired India. Above all, the glorious victory of Japan over Russia in 1905 instilled confidence in the Indians. The myth of the invincibility of the West was broken. The reverberation of the victory went like a thunder-dab throughout the East. It symbolized the regeneration of the East. It gave a new hope to the people of India in their struggle for freedom.

Under these circumstances, the Government committed itself to a blended policy of repression and reform in order to cut the malignant growth of revolutionary ideas. It passed a series of penal laws, gagging the press and putting restrictions on public meetings. Taking advantage of the split in the Congress at Surat, the Government imprisoned Tilak and deported him to Mandalay (in Burma) for six years for his inflammatory articles in the *Kesari*. The same years Lala Lajpat Rai was also deported to Burma for six months on a mere suspicion without trial. However these repressive measures could not crush the movement but drove it underground. All legitimate opportunities being denied, militants organized secret societies and took to the cult of bomb. Bengal became honey-combed with terroristic organizations.

The Government, alive to the new spirit, was now convinced of the necessity of the policy of conciliation. The best way to weaken the extremists and terrorists was to rally the Moderates by granting some liberal measures of reform. These reforms were embodied in the Indian Councils Act of 1909, popularly known as Minto Morley Reforms after the names of the Governor General of India Minto and the Secretary of State for India, Morley.

1.6.4. Officials Objectives

The objectives of reforms according to Minto and Morley, was only greater association of Indians with Government and not setting up of any responsible government of parliamentary system in India. Even when the Arudel Committee consisting of the four members of Viceroy's Council namely, Denzil Ibbetson, H.E. Richards and E.N.Baker with A.T.Arundel as Chairman, and H Risely as Secretary was appointed in August 1906 it was made clear

that Lord Minto had not intended any representative government. Lord Morley too was of the same view. He had refused to grant India the status of self-governing colony as demanded by Gokhale. In a speech Morley said, "I know it well that to turn India into self-colony is absurd and will not be attempted." In another speech, he assailed the doctrine that whatever is good in the way of self-government for Canada must be good for India and observed, "It is a thoroughly dangerous fallacy."

The Arundel Committee submitted its report to the Viceroy in October 1906. He sent it to the Secretary of State for India along with his proposals. His proposals were: (1) Constitution of Council of Princess; (2) Composition of Central Legislative Council and provincial Legislative Councils on the basis of race, community and interests; (3) Councils Enlargement of the sizes, powers and functions of the legislatures-adequate opportunity for debate on the budget moving resolutions and putting questions.

Similarly Lord Morely put forward a scheme for the improvement administrative machinery in India. While placing the proposals before the house of Lord's Morely described them as a well guarded expansion of the principles recognised the Council Acts of 1861 to 1892. It was vehemently asserted that the aim was not the introduction of parliamentary system. Finally on 17th December 1903, replying to the debate on reforms, Morely assured the House of Lords, "If I were attempting to set up a parliamentary system in India.....I for one, would have nothing to do with it..." It is thus evident that the representative government or parliamentary system was not intended. Simply the extension of the existing system was proposed.

The other main objective of reforms was to counterpoise to the Congress which stood and worked for national unity. Both Morley and Minto were keen on rallying the loyal elements which would support the British rule in India. In the opinion of

Lord Minto, the most effective measure was to win over the Muslims to the support of Government and to undermine the feelings of growing nationality which had already done more to unite the Hindus and the Muslims in a common cause. Lord Minto had laid the foundation of this policy as early as October, 1906, when he met at Simla the Muslim deputation" led by Aga Khan and recognized the right of the Muslims to send their own representation, commensurate with not only their numerical strength but with their political importance and contribution which they made to time defence of the Empire and with due regard to "the position they occupied in India a little more than a hundred years ago. The Muslim community thus not only obtained separate electorate but also an additional share in the general electorates. Thus, Trojan's horse of communalism was driven into the slowly rising citadel of nationalism.

Yet another objective of the Government was to meet the political unrest in India. The activities of the Extremists and the Terrorists were increasing fast and were posing a danger to British imperialism in India. It was considered essential to win over the Moderates to keep them in check, Lord Minto converted to the Secretary of State, Gokhale's observation that India was

going over to the extremist's side in the hope of getting rid of the British rule. The only way to recover the moral control was to do something that would appeal to native imagination. Morley held it out as sign qua non for the grant of reforms.

1.6.5. Passing of the Bill

The Arundel Committee submitted its report in October, 1906. Its proposals were thoroughly discussed and sent in their final form to the Secretary of State in October 1908.

He in turn introduced a short bill in the House of Lords on February 23, 1909. It was based in the proposals made by the Government of India save in one important respect. The Government of India has suggested the creation of advisory councils both at the Centre and at the Provincial levels, but this part of the proposal was turned down.

The Bill was finally passed on May 21, 1909. It received the Royal assent and came into force as the Indian Councils Act on May 25, 1909.

1.6.6. Provisions of the Act

The Indian Councils Act contained eight clauses. It merely laid down the framework of the new Councils. Regulations regarding their composition, powers and functions were to be made under the Act.

1.6.6.1. Composition of the Councils

The composition of the Councils was based on two fundamental principles. Firstly the Governor-General's Legislative Council must have a "substantial" though not an overwhelming majority of officials; secondly such official majority was not necessary for Provincial Legislatures as their powers were limited and the Governors had the power to withhold assent to any measure passed by them.

Central Legislatures: The membership of the Central Legislative Council was increased to sixty-nine, of them thirty-seven members were officials and thirty-two non-officials. Among the officials, all the members of the Governor-General's Councils were ex-official members. The remaining were nominated by the Governor-General. No qualifications were specified for nominated members in the Regulations made under the Act. Among the thirty-two non-official members seven were nominated by the Governor-General and the remaining twenty-five were elected.

For the elective element in the Legislative Councils the necessity of assuring adequate representation to important interest was borne in mind. It was observed that the territorial representation did not suit India. Therefore, representation by classes and interests were considered to be the only practicable method of embodying the elective principle in the constitution of the Central Legislative Council. Accordingly twenty-seven elected members of the Central Legislative Council were to be elected as follows:

1. Thirteen members by general electorates, consisting of the non-official members of the Provincial Legislative Councils. Two members each were to be elected by the non-official members of Bengal, Bombay, Madras and D.P. Legislative Councils, and one member each by those of the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa, Assam,

- Burma and C.P. Legislatures.
2. Six members by landholders-consistencies, one each from Bengal, Bombay, Madras, U.P., Bihar and Orissa, and C.P.
 3. Six members by separate Muslim constituencies—two from Bengal, and one each from Madras, Bombay, Bihar and Orissa, and U.P.
 4. Two by special electorates—one each by the Bengal and Bombay Chambers of Commerce.

1.6.6.2. Provincial Legislative Councils: For provincial Legislature the schemes are similar. In the Provincial Legislative Councils, as already noted, the principle of majority of official members was given up and membership was enlarged.

Composition of the enlarged Provincial Legislative Councils, excluding the experts, stood as under in 1912.

Province	Total Members	Elected	Nominated	Ex-officio and Non-officials Nominated Official
Madras	47	21	5	21
Bombay	47	21	7	19
U.P.	48	-21		21
Bengal	53	28	4	21
Eastern Bengal & Assam	41	18	5	18
Punjab	25	8	6	11
Burma	31	1	8	7
Bihar and Orrisa	44	21	4	19
Assam	25	11	4	10

Though in the Provincial Councils, there was no provision for majority of the officials, combination of the official and nominated non-official members could have an edge over the elected members. It was only in Bengal that the elected members had a clear majority.

The Regulations also prescribed certain qualifications both for the voters and the candidates. Persons not British subjects, government servants, women those below 25 years of age, persons of unsound mind, bankrupts, dismissed government servants, persons debarred from legal practice, persons sentenced to imprisonment exceeding six months or to transportation, and those declared by the Governor-General-in-Council as contrary to public interest were not eligible for election to the Councils. However, the disqualifications imposed on the last four categories could be removed by the Governor-General-in-Council.

As regards voting right, it was laid down that women, minors and persons of unsound mind could not vote at any elections to the Central

Legislative Council, land owners having at least a certain specified income, making payment of a certain minimum amount of land revenue, holding government titles or occupying certain honorary offices were given the right to vote in their constituencies. Among the Muslims, those who paid a specified amount of land revenue or income-tax or those who were members of Provincial Councils or fellows of the Indian Universities or graduates of some standing or government pensioners were included in the votes list.

1.6.6.3. Power and Prerogatives: Along with the size of the Legislative Councils, their powers and prerogatives were also enlarged. Legislative Councils as constituted in 1861 were empowered to discuss only bills actually before them. The Act of 1892 has merely extended the powers of the members to criticize the Budget and in that connection to express their views on any matter without being able to move amendments to or vote upon the Budget. But under the present Act the Governor-

General-in-Council, and the Governors and Lt. Governors-in-Council were empowered to make rules authorizing discussion of the Budget, and other matters of general public interest, and allowing questions by the members of the Legislatures. Most important of these was the extension of power of discussing the Budget in the Imperial Legislature, though the budget was not subject to vote still members were empowered to move resolutions, involving alteration in taxation, any new loan, and any additional grant to Provincial Governments etc. Such resolutions were to be moved, discussed and voted upon by the Legislature on a specified day. Thereafter the Financial Statement was discussed headwise and voted upon. After all heads were disposed, the financial member presented the Budget on or before, March 24 with a statement giving the reasons why a particular resolution passed by the Council, had not been accepted. Then general discussion was held on the Budget on a specified day but no member was permitted to move any resolution in regard thereto nor was it submitted to vote in the Council.

It was further provided that the Financial Statement before its submission in the Council had to be referred to a committee consisting of non-official members, half of whom were to be nominated by the Government.

Legislatures had also the right to discuss and vote resolutions pertaining to matters of general public interest. It is noteworthy here that the resolutions of the legislative were in the nature of recommendations to the Government and were not binding.

The right to ask questions was slightly enlarged by the new Regulations. A member who had asked a question was given the right to put a supplementary question to have the answer elucidated.

The Act also imposed certain restrictions within which the members had to work. They were forbidden to move resolutions to ask questions relating to foreign relations and relations with Princely States and matters under legal adjudication. The President of the Legislative Councils had the power of disallowance. Similarly they could not discuss expenditure on the state railways interest on debt etc. Certain heads of revenue were also excluded from the powers of discussion. The net result was that the executive could be

influenced but could not be controlled.

1.6.6.4. Change in the Executive Council: The Act of 1909 also contained a provision permitting increase in the size of the Provincial Executive Council of Madras and Bombay to four members. The underlying purpose of this enlargement was to provide that a legislator of them should be Indian. But as Morley said this was to be done not by any statutory provision but by practice and usage.

The Act was accompanied by a declaration of the intention to secure appointment to an Indian to the Governor-General's Executive Council. This proposal was acceptable to the majority of the members of the Governor-General's Executive Council. But looking to the unanimity of the British Cabinet, the King favoured the

Suggestion and asked for its sanction. It was unquestionably an important step.

S.P. Sinha was the first Indian to be appointed to the Governor-General's Executive Council on March 24, 1909.

Communal Electorates: Last, though not the least, important was the provision for separate electorate for Muslims. Elections to the seats reserved for Muslims were to be made by Muslim voters only. No such concession was made to other minority communities. This measure, besides being introduced was the anti-democratic in principle of communal representation.

1.6.7. Reaction of Political Parties in England and India

The Reforms were received with mixed reaction in England. Radical Parliamentarians hailed the Act as an "instalment, though a moderate one of the self-government", whereas the Conservatives regarded it as a revolutionary measure, wholly unnecessary and indeed harmful. Morley described these reforms only an extension of the principles on which the Indian Councils Act of 1861 and 1892 were based. In fact, the Act of 1909 did not substantially alter the constitutional position. It merely extended the opportunities of debate, discussion and eliciting information.

The attitudes of the political parties in India to the Act were also widely divergent. While the extreme nationalists felt no enthusiasm over it and on it – one Hindu civilian K.G. Gupta and the other a Mohamman Syed Hussain Bilgrami, the Principal adviser of the Nizam regarded it as a mere shadow without substance. The Moderates hailed it with unbounded jubilation. They sent their grateful thanks to Lord Morley and Minto. Rash Behari Ghosh paid glowing tributes to the English statesmanship. But the jubilation of Moderates proved to be of short duration. Exactly a year later at the Lahore Session of the Congress 14 held on 27 December 1909, President Madan Mohan Malviya gave expression to completely changed feelings. Morley's surrender on the question of Muslim representation came to Moderates as a great shock. Malviya cautioned "the Regulations for the first time in the history of British rule have recognized religion as a basis of representation and have thus raised a wall of separation between the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of His Majesty." Similar views were also expressed by S.N. Bannerjee and

G.K. Gokhale. The only party which expressed satisfaction with the

reforms was the Muslim League. It gained what it had wanted.

1.6.8. Merits of the Act

The Act had only a few good points and many bad ones. The bright side of the act was that it was a significant improvement in certain respects over the Indian Councils Act of 1892. It enlarged the Central Legislative Council and the Provincial Legislative Councils, extended their functions and for the first-time legally recognized the principle of election.

The Act provided majority of non-official members in the Provincial Legislative Councils. No doubt, it was not an effective majority since the nominated non-official also were always on the side of the Government, but still in principle, the importance of the non-official majority was asserted and recognized. That way, it was a good start in the right direction.

The principle of election came a little clearly on the surface for the first time. The elected member, with all restrictions imposed on them, secured opportunities to ventilate public opinion before the Government. It also explained its policy in greater details for it knew that now their explanations could reach the public.

The Act brought a new spirit under which two Indians were appointed to be Indian Council and to the Governor General's Executive Council. Indians now secured some opportunities of getting training in the art of self-government and became eager to secure more. Discussions were now thrown open on a large scale.

The right to ask questions and supplementary questions was also not an insignificant achievement, nor was the grant of the right move resolutions less important. Of course certain restrictions were imposed on the members. S.R. Sharma has correctly summed up the position in his comments that the constitutional autocracy that was set up, was bound to find its autocratic side challenged by the constitutionalist and a answer had to be found to that challenge.

1.6.9. Demerits of the Act

With all its good points, the demerits of the Act were of serious nature and of farreaching consequences.

Firstly, the reforms did not set up a parliamentary system in India deliberately. Morley, frankly admitted this fact in his reply in the House of Lords on 17th December 1908. He said, "If I were attempting to set up a parliamentary system in India, I for one would have nothing at all to do with it if my existence either officially or corporally were prolonged twenty times longer than either of them is likely to be a parliamentary system is not at all the goal to which I would for one moment aspire." Thus his intentions were very clear. In this light, the Act could not be expected to arrest the growing dissatisfaction of the nationalist or extremist forces.

Secondly, the most objectionable element in the Act was the separate electorates. Muslims were given a special representation through exclusive suffrage instead of being asked to fight from general constituencies and secure representation on a national basis. The more iniquitous feature of the scheme was the excessive representation conceded on an utterly untenable ground of

their claim to superiority in service to the government and political importance in the past. This was both false and insulting to other communities especially the Hindus who were far more advanced in education financial management and political organization than the Muslims.

Another equally vicious feature was the differentiation in qualification for the candidate and the voters belonging to Muslim and non-Muslim communities. For example, a Muslim graduate of five years had a right to vote while a non-official graduate even of twenty-five years standing was denied this right. Again Muslims paying land revenue or paying income-tax on a total yearly income of three thousand rupees were entitled to vote but non-Muslims paying income-tax even one lakh of rupees were not given franchise.

These communal features proved quite disquieting. They incited feelings of jealousy and fear and antipathy on both sides. Thus the reforms created a gulf which never bridged and ultimately led to the inevitable and unfortunate partition of the country thirty eight years later. This Act thus struck a fatal blow to the political unity of the country.

Thirdly, the qualifications prescribed in the Act for the candidates also left much to be desired. The regulations gave wide power to the Government of India to disqualify any candidate whom they thought undesirable. Besides, it automatically disqualified a number of eminent leaders because they had been deported or had suffered imprisonment. This was done in order to keep extremist elements at an arm's length from any kind of participation in the elections.

In the fourth place, only privileged and moneyed classes were given the voting right. In this the main objective was to give a large share only to the Indians of known loyalty that is the yes-men, in the Government of their country. The Government deliberately avoided territorial constituencies in order to keep away the educated middle classes as far as possible, and set the landlords and some other classes as a counterpoise to them in the Legislative Councils. Separate electorates and weightage to the Muslims were also entered to serve the same purpose. Even the Statesman, the leading Anglo-Indian daily of Calcutta, was constrained to remark, "The more carefully the Councils Reforms mooted by the Government of India and considered the more apparent does not become that the scheme amounts to little else than provision for including in the Legislative Councils more land-owners and more Mohammedans." The narrowness of the franchise is revealed from the fact that in certain cases the total number of votes in a constituency was not even ten. Being in such a small number, the voters could be easily influenced and bought off. This rendered the election system a farce.

In the fifth place, the functions and powers of the members of the Legislative Councils were such as could not afford any satisfaction. They could not discuss certain heads of revenue and expenditure, their resolutions, even if those related to public interest, could be disallowed. The Government could refuse to accept these even when passed by a Legislative Council. Thus the power left to the members was nothing but talk. The Montagu Chelmsford Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms aptly remarked, "We have at

present in India neither the best of the old system¹⁶ nor the best of the new. Responsibility is the savour of popular government and that savour the present councils wholly lack.

16. Under the old system i.e. prior to the implement of the Indian Councils Act of 1909, the Government of India was a despot.

Sixthly, the principles of elections and nominations were mixed together in such an intricate manner that whatever benefit the former could provide was robbed off. In the Imperial Legislative the non-officials were placed in minority while official majority was kept so strong that Government enjoyed almost in autocratic power that the official members were not permitted to ask any question to move any resolution without the permission of the Government, reveals the true nature of the functioning. They could not vote against the Government, as such they stood like a solid rock against the progressive moves of the non-official members. The elected members under the circumstances stood quite helpless. Thus, the increased non-official elements was all useless. In this context, Punniah rightly observed. However eloquent might be, when time for voting came the silent official phalanx stepped in and decided the matter against them.

In the seventh place, the non-official majority in the Provincial Legislatures was also farce. All of them were not elected, some of them were nominated. They were bound to do nothing but support their benefactors. Again the elected European members were as good as officials. The representatives of the landlords and the Muslims were bent upon improving the future of their own class and community by proving, in a better degree their loyalty to the Government. Thus, the non-official majority in the Provincial Legislatures were no better useless.

Last though not the least the Act did not provide any autonomy to the Provinces. Central Government's hold over Provinces remained intact, Provinces had nominal financial powers and their executive power were also negligible.

Broadly speaking writes P.N. Masaldan "The Central Government controlled provincial legislation by the requirement of Governor-General's subsequent assent for the local bills and its administration by requiring information and issuing instruction and by exercising full control over public servants employed in Provinces. Thus ultimate supremacy of the Central Government was retained."

Pointing out the drawbacks of the Reforms, the Montague-Chelmsford Report read: "The Reform 1909 afforded no answer and could afford no answer to the Indian political problem. Narrow franchise and indirect elections failed to encourage its members as sense of responsibility to the people generally, and made it possible except in special constituencies for those who had votes to use them with perception and effect. Moreover, the responsibility for administration remained undivided with the result that while Government found themselves more exposed to questions and criticism were than hitherto, questions and criticism were uniformed by a real sense of responsibility, such as come from

the prospect of having to assume office in turn. The conception of responsible executive wholly or partially amenable to the elected Councils were left with no other functions but criticism. It followed that there was no reason to lose the bonds of official authority which subjected Local Governments to the Government of India, and later to the Secretary of State and Parliament.”

1.6.10. Summary

In view of the above shortcomings, it is no wonder that the Reforms of 1909 failed to satisfy public opinion in India. In this regard the Montagu-Chelmsford Report noted that the Reforms had spent their utility by 1911 and were no longer acceptable to Indian opinion. It would be correct to conclude in the words of RC. Majumdar that "the Act of 1909 was a mere moonshine, never acceptable and was really a still born child".

1.6.11 Self - Check Exercise

- Indian Council's Act was passed on.....
- Arundel Committee submitted its report to the Viceroy in.....

Write short notes on the following:

1. Lord Minto
2. Arundel Committee
3. Bal Pal Lal
4. Qualifications of voters under Indian Councils Act 1909.

Long Questions:-

1. Examine circumstances of the passing of the Indian Councils Act 1909.
2. What were the main Provisions of the Minto-Morley reforms of 1909.
3. Evaluate merits and demerits of the Minto-Morley reforms.
4. How far the reforms of 1909 satisfy the Indian people.

Key Words:

Act, Reforms, Muslims, Legislative Councils, Provincial, Demerits

1.6.12 Suggested Readings

- A.C. Bannerjee, *The Constitutional History of India, Vol. I-III*, Macmillan, Delhi, 1978.
- William John Check, *The Indian National Congress and the Minto- Morley Refrms, 1909*, Stetson University, 1963.
- M.N. Das, *India Under Morley and Minto; Politics Behind Revolution, Repression and Reforms*, Routledge, 2017.

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