MODULE V

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

MODERATES

Moderate phase (1885-1905 A.D)

- Till 1905 A.D Congress followed the methods of political mendicancy or tea party politics viz. petition, prayer and protest.
- Their basic objectives were to lay the foundation of a secular and democratic national movement, to politicize and politically educate the people, to form the headquarters of the movements, i.e. to form an all India leadership group and to develop and propagate an anti-colonial nationalist ideology.
- The Congress during these days desired all round progress and the modernization of India - social reform, modern education, industrial and economic development.
- They earnestly wished the betterment of the society and worked to lessen the harshness of the British rule.
- But it must also be said that the Congress failures were also too numerous due to inherent basic weakness.

WEAKNESSES

- The Congress lacked faith in the common people, did not work among them and failed to acquire roots among them.
- Congress politics were based on the belief that it would be able to persuade the rulers to introduce economic and political reforms but its practical achievements in this respect were meagre.
- Congress basic failure, however was that of not keeping pace with the events. It could not see that their own achievements had made their politics obsolete.
- They failed to meet the demands of the new stage of the national movements. Visible proof of this was its failure to attract the younger generation.
- Nor did it organize any all-India campaigns and when during 1905-1907 such an all India campaign did come up in the form of swadeshi and boycott movements, the Congress moderate leadership were not its leaders.
EXTREMISTS

EXTREMISTS PHASE (AFTER 1905 A.D)

- After 1905 a.d, the extremists acquired a dominant influence over Indian national movement. Several new forms of mobilization and techniques of struggle now began to emerge at popular level.
- The trends of mendicancy prayer, petition and protest were on the restraints.
- The militant nationalists put forward several fresh ideas at the theoretical, propagandistic and programmatic plane.
- Political attendance was to be achieved by converting the movement into a mass movement through the extension of boycott into a full scale movement of non-cooperation and passive resistance.
- The techniques of extended boycott include apart from boycott of foreign goods, boycott of government schools and colleges, courts, titles and government services and even the organization of strikes.
- The aim was to make the administration under present conditions impossible by an organized refusal to do anything which shall help either the British commerce in the exploitation of the country or British officialdom in the administration of it.
- This new nationalist spirit found expression in the boycott and the swadeshi movements which formed the highlight of the anti-partition agitation and opened a new chapter in the history of Indian national movement.
- This form of struggle also served as a genesis to the Gandhian form of struggle with some modifications like extreme non-violence and satyagraha form of struggles.
- This period also saw the birth of a new school viz terrorists, who were hot headed nationalists and took to the cult of bomb. They hoped to paralyze the imperialists machinery in India through a program of assassination, dacoities etc.

DIFFERENCE IN IDEOLOGY OF EXTREMISTS AND MODERATES

- Both the moderates and extremists came from the middle class, both were reacting to the British rule and both voiced Indian grievances.
- But the moderates claimed social equality and a share in the British government of India on the grounds that they were British subjects; the extremists demanded social equality and political emancipation as their birthright.
- The moderates appealed to Englishmen in England and placed their reliance on English history and English political ideas but the extremists grew sustenance from India’s heritage and appealed to Indians by invoking religious patriotism.
- The moderates emphasized the need for political apprenticeship under the providential guidance of British rule; the extremists think it only an illusion.

- The moderates believed in political mendicancy but the extremists called for self-reliance and self-apprenticeship through swadeshi boycott and passive resistance.
In contrasts to the moderates- who were modernists and enlightened in matters of social reform, the extremists were revivalists and obscurantists in matters of social reforms.

Moreover, the moderates also stressed that their constitutional agitation was practical statesmanship; the emotional idealism was 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 the British rule would result in chaos and anarchy. These were certainly not the strategy of militant nationalists.

INDIAN REVOLUTIONARIES IN INDIA AND ABROAD

IDEOLOGICAL REVOLUTIONARIES
The first decade of the 20th century saw the rise of revolutionary terrorism in Indian politics with active participation from extremists within the Congress. The revolutionaries wanted quicker results and discounted the value of persuasion. The revolutionary terrorists aimed at overthrowing British rule from India.

They were inspired by the Irish terrorists and Russian Nihilists and followed their method of assassinating corrupt and unpopular officials. They also engaged in dacoities to raise funds for the purchase of arms, etc. popularly known as Swadeshi dacoities. The revolutionary terrorists were operating in Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra, and parts of South India and even in foreign countries. Many secret societies of the terrorist youths also came into existence.

In Bengal, the beginning of revolutionary activities is traced to the Bhadralok class. Secret societies like the ANUSHILAN SAMITI came to be established by Pramotha Mitra at Calcutta and by Pulin Das at Dacca. There were other societies as SWADESHI BANDANA and SADHANA SAMAJ.

YUGANTAR, a weekly was started by B.Ghose and Bhupindra Nath Datta in 1908. The Bengal revolutionaries namely Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki threw a bomb on the carriage of Kingsford, the unpopular judge of Muzzafarpur in 1908.
In Maharashtra, the first political murder of a European was committed at Poona by the Chapekar brothers, Damodar and Balkrishna. In 1904, V.D. Savarkar organized the Mitra Mala that later merged into the secret society **ABHINAV BHARAT** formed on the lines of Mazzini’s Young Italy.

In Punjab, the revolutionary movement rose under Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. A bomb was thrown at an English official by Rash Behari Bose and Sachindranath Sanyal.

**THE GHADAR MOVEMENT**

The **Ghadar Movement** was founded in the United States by Sohan Singh Bhakna and recognized by Hardayal. Some of its prominent leaders were Rehmat Ali Shah, Bhai Paramanand, Mohammed Barkatullah, Ram Chandra and soon. It aimed at bringing an armed revolution in India and brought out a weekly called Ghadar.

Under the leadership of Lala Hardayal, the Ghadar party operated from Germany and set up an Indian Independence Committee at Berlin. The Committee planned to mobilize Indian settlers abroad to make all efforts, send volunteers to India to incite rebellion among the troops, to send explosives to Indian revolutionaries and even organize an invasion of British India to liberate the country.

In reaction to the revolutionary activities the government unleashed repressive measures against the revolutionaries. Many legislations were passed to curb the activities of the revolutionaries.

**MILITANT REVOLUTIONARIES**

Revolutionary terrorism was a byproduct of the process of the growth of militant nationalism in India. It acquired a more activist form as a fall out of the Swadeshi and boycott movement. The first revolutionary groups were organised in 1902 in Midnapore under Jnanendranath Basu and the **Anushilan Samiti** founded by Promotha Mitter and Barindra Kumar Ghosh in Calcutta.

The methods adopted by the revolutionaries were propagation of revolutionary ideas through the organization of secret societies in India and abroad, publication of pamphlets, books & journals, organisation of military conspiracies, assassination of oppressive and unpopular officials, etc. In 1908, Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose threw a bomb at a carriage supposed to be carrying Judge Kingsford in Muzaffarnagar.
In 1908, Barrah Dacoity was organised by Dacca Anushilan under Pulin Das. Rasbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal staged a spectacular bomb attack on Viceroy Hardinge in 1912.

In Maharashtra, **THE CHAPEKAR BROTHERS**, Damodar and Balkrishna murdered the plague commissioner of Poona, Rand and one Lt. Ayerst in 1897. Savarkar and his brother organised **MITRA MELA**, a secret society in 1899, which merged with Abhinav Bharat in 1904. Madan Lai Dhingra in 1909 assassinated Curzon Wyllie.

During the First World War, the Berlin Committee for Indian Independence was established in 1915 by Virendranath Chattopadhyay, Hardayal and others. Bhaga Jatin organized revolutionary activity in Bengal and died in an encounter at Balasore. Revolutionary terrorism was again revived after the sudden withdrawal of non-cooperation movement.

The revolutionaries were influenced by Russian Revolution (1917), Journals such as Atmasakti, Sarathi, Bijoli, novels and books such as Bandi Jivan by Sachin Sanyal and PatherDabi by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. In 1924, **HINDUSTAN REPUBLICAN ARMY (HRA)** was founded at Kanpur by Sachin Sanyal, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee with an aim to organize an armed revolution to overthrow the colonial government. The most important action of HRA was the **KAKORI ROBBERY** in which official railway cash was looted (9 August 1925).

The participants Bismil, Ashfaqullah, Roshan Singh and Rajendra Lahiri were hanged. In 1928, **HINDUSTAN SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION** was organised in Delhi under the leadership of Chandra Sekhar Azad. In December 1928 Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru shot dead Saunders, the police official responsible for the lathi charge on Lala Lajpat Rai in Lahore.

In 1929, Batukeshwar Dutt and Bhagat Singh were asked to throw a bomb in the Central Assembly against the passage of the Public Safety Bill and Trade Disputes Bill. Azad was killed in a police encounter in Allahabad in February 1931. Bhagat, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged on March 23, 1931. In Bengal the famous Chittagong Armouy raid (April 1930) was carried under the leadership of Surya Sen.

**CAUSES FOR THEIR FAILURES**
1. The revolutionaries mainly came from the urban middle class intelligentsia out of touch with the peasants and workers. It could not mobilize the masses. In fact, it had no base among the people. They believed in individual heroism. The revolutionaries failed to gain the support of the common people of India and that remained the primary cause of their failure.

2. They lacked a common plan and central leadership.

3. The British government on its part followed a ruthless and repressive policy towards them.

4. The non-violent movement led by Gandhiji was more popular and proved more successful.

The revolutionary movement failed to achieve its object of independence. With the death of Chandrasekhar Azad in a shooting encounter in a public park at Allahabad in February 1931, the revolutionary movement virtually came to an end in Punjab, U.P. and Bihar. Surya Sen’s martyrdom also marked an end to the terrorist activity in Bengal.

**POLITICAL MOVEMENTS OF GANDHI**

**NON CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT (1920-1922)**

**CAUSES**

- The last year of the second decade of the 20th century found India highly discontented.
- The Rowlatt act, the Jallianwala bagh tragedy and the martial law in Punjab had belied all the generous war-time promises of the Britishers. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms announced towards the end of the 1919 a.d with their ill-considered diarchy, satisfied few.
- Also the generous treatment of the Caliph of Turkey by the Treaty of Sevres incensed the feeling of Muslims.
- Many sections of the Indian society suffered considerable economic distress. The workers, artisans, lower middle class and the middle class were hit by high prices.
The rural poor and peasants were in addition victims of widespread drought and epidemics.

All this provided Gandhiji an impetus to start the non-movement.

**COURSE**

Its programs included boycott of government or semi-governments schools, colleges, courts etc.

- The surrender of all the titles and honorary offices, refusal to attend government functions and refusal of military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits in Mesopotamia.
- The positive programmes included establishment of national schools, colleges, establishments of panchayats, popularization of swadeshi and khadi, development of Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, emancipation and upliftment of women.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

- This movement for the first time in history acquired a real mass base with the participation of different sections of the society.
- The movement witnessed the spread of nationalism to the remotest corners of the country.
- It also transformed the Indian national congress from a mere deliberative assembly into an organization for action, as evident from the various programs of the movement.
- Further, the movement marked the height of Hindu-Muslim unity.
- Finally, the movement demonstrated to a remarkable degree the willingness and ability of the masses to endure hardships and make sacrifices in the cause of national independence.

**CIVIL-DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT (1930-1934)**

**CAUSES**

- The country was in the grip of a world-wide slump which had struck India with the violence of a tropical tornado.
- There were soaring prices, falling incomes, high taxation and lack of essential commodities.
Agricultural prices had fallen by more than 50% due to which the peasants could not pay taxes, their rents or their debts.

Among commercial and industrial classes much heat had been generated by the new rupee-exchange rate. The industrial workers too were in an explosive mood. they suffered acutely from the effects of depression.

The Lahore conspiracy case and Meerut conspiracy case had electrified the atmosphere in many parts of the country.

The demand of complete independence advocated by the congress session of 1929 a.d was also rejected by the britishers.

And finally when Gandhiji requested to introduce reforms in his 11 point ultimatum was turned down, congress decided to start the civil-disobedience movement from the famous “Dandi march of Gandhiji”.

COURSE

The first phase of the movement saw the high point of bourgeoisie participation in towns and peasants mobilization in the villages on the issues of salt, burning of foreign cloths, no revenue campaigns, picketing of liquor shops and non-payment of chaukidari tax.

The second phase of the movement was marked by clear decline in participation which finally resulted in the Gandhi-Irwin pact.

The third phase saw the brutal repression of the government and eventual withdrawal of the movement.

SIGNIFICANCE

The number of people that went to jail was three times the figure of non-cooperation movement (1920-1922).

Import of foreign cloth from Britain had fallen by half; other imports like cigarettes had suffered a similar fate. Government income from liquor, excise and land revenue had also been affected.

Elections to the legislative assembly had been successfully boycotted. Also a variety of social groups had been politicized on the side of Indian nationalism.

The support which the movement garnered from poor and illiterate, especially the women was indeed remarkable. The labour class also contributed on a significant scale.

But there was one drawback in the movement------the movement saw the lessor participation of Muslims and hence there was less Hindu-Muslim unity.
QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT (1942)

CAUSES

- The failure of the Cripps mission in April 1942 a.d made it clear that Britain was unwilling to grant full independence to India. Apart from British obduracy, popular discontent, a product of rising prices and war-time shortages was gradually mounting.
- High handed government actions such as the commandeering of the boats in Bengal and Orissa to prevent their being used by the Japanese had led to a considerable anger among the people.
- Also the people started thinking of an eminent British collapse in the war. Combined with this, was the impact of the manner of the British evacuation from Malaya and Burma.
- The nationalist leadership also started thinking that the people were becoming demoralized and that in event of a Japanese occupation might not resist at all.

COURSE

This movement saw massive and violent action on the part of the masses in the form of hartals, strikes and clashes with the police and army.
- It also saw the formation of many parallel governments run throughout the country like at balia, midnapur and satara.
- The movement also saw the setting of underground networks like a radio-station ran by Usha Mehta.

SIGNIFICANCE

- The movement was marked by the high degree of mass participation in the national movement viz. students, workers, peasants, women etc. Even big zamindars supported the movement.
- Government officials, especially those at the lower levels of the police and administration were generous in their assistance to the movement.
- In fact the erosion of loyalty to the government of its own officers was one of the most striking features of this movement. This made the Britishers think that their days of leaving India, were not far off.
- the outbreak also provided a phillip to the activities of Indian national army.
- But the greatest significance of this historic movement lies in the fact that it placed the demand of complete independence on the immediate agenda. After “quit India” there would be no more retreat.
COMMUNALISM AND PARTITION

IDEOLOGY

Communalism or the communal ideology consists of the three basic elements or stages.

First it was the belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests, that is, common political, economic, social and cultural interests.

The second element of the communal ideology rests on the notion that in a multi-religious society like India, the secular interests, that is, the social, cultural, economic and political interests, of the followers of another religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the followers of another religion.

The third stage of communalism is reached when the interests of the followers of different religions or of different communities are to be seen to be mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile. Thus the communalists assert this stage that Hindus and Muslims cannot have common secular interests, that their secular interests are bound to be opposed to each other.

REASONS FOR THE GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM

Because of economic stagnation there was intense competition among individuals for the government jobs, in professions like law and medicine.

In an attempt to get a larger share of existing economic opportunities, middle class individuals freely used all the means at their disposal—educational qualities, personal merit as also nepotism, bribery and so on.

At the same time, to give their struggle a wider base, they also used other group identities such as caste, province and religion to enhance their capacity to compete.

Thus some individuals from the middle classes could, and did, benefit in the short run, from communalism, especially in the field of government employment. This gave a certain aura of validity to communal politics.

Gradually, the spread of education to well-off peasants and small landlords extended the boundaries of the job-seeking middle classes to the rural areas.

This newly educated rural youth could not be sustained by land whether as landlords or peasants, especially as agriculture was totally stagnant because of the colonial impact. They flocked on the towns and the cities for opening in the government jobs and professions and tried to save themselves by fighting for jobs through the system of communal reservations and nominations.

This development gradually widened the social base of communalism to cover the rural upper strata of peasants and landlords.

There was another aspect of the colonial economy that favoured communal politics.
In the absence of openings in industry, commerce, education and other social services, and cultural and entertainment fields, the government service was the main avenue of employment for the middle classes.

Much of the employment for the teachers, doctors and engineers was also under government control.

The communal politics could be used to put pressure on the government to reserve and allocate its jobs as also seats in professional colleges on communal and caste lines.

Consequently communal politics could be used to put pressure on the government to reserve and allocate its jobs as also seats in professional colleges on communal and caste lines.

The communal politics till 1937 a.d was organized around government jobs, educational concessions and the like as also political positions- seats in legislative councils, municipal bodies etc.- which enabled control over these and other economic opportunities.

It may also be noted that though the communalists spoke in the name of their communities, the reservations guarantees and other rights they demanded were virtually confined to these two aspects. They did not take up any issues which were of interest to the masses.

Communalism represented at another level, a struggle between two upper classes or strata for power, privileges and economic gains. Belonging to different religions (or caste) these classes or strata used communalism to mobilize the popular support of their co-religionists in their mutual struggles.

This was for example the case in western Punjab where the Muslim landlords opposed the Hindu moneylenders and in eastern Bengal where the Muslim jotedars (small landlords) opposed the Hindu zamindars.

**FACTORS WHICH LED TO THE PARTITION OF INDIA**

With the introduction of separate electorates for Muslims in 1909 a.d and congress acceptance of Lucknow pact in 1916 a.d, congress tried to appease Muslim league and sacrificed their seats for the sake of political unity. Same was the basis in the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movement over the issue of dismemberment of Turkey.

Mutual suspicion increased after failure of Delhi proposal, Nehru report and Jinnah’s 14 points. Muslim league ultimate failure was manifested in 1937 elections. In 1940 Pakistan resolution was brought into being and the concept of “two-nation theory” emerged.

Further, Cripps mission added fuel by making provision for freedom to any province to remain outside Indian union that is tantamount to secession.

Both the communities, Hindus and Muslims were provided equal proportion of seats by Wavell plan. Also Wavell had formally handed over the veto power to Jinnah as the latter did not agree on the appointment of those Muslims who did not belong to Muslim league.
The climax was reached when Shimla conference practically ensured the creation of Pakistan. Also, the rejection of Desai-Liaqat Pact, Rajagopalachari formula by league and the failure of Gandhi-Jinnah talks added to the cause.

**HOW AND WHY DID CONGRESS ACCEPT PARTITION**

- Partition is projected as the logical culmination of the long standing British policy of divide and rule and the Muslim league’s ideology of communalism and separateness.
- It is forgotten that congress leadership was only accepting what had become inevitable because of the long term failure of the congress to draw Muslim masses into the national movement.
- Each concession which the congress gave to the communal frenzy league, consolidated the latter’s cause and drew more Muslims towards Jinnah. Similarly Hindu communalists also got a chance to grow by vaunting itself as the true protector of Hindu interests. The virtual collapse of the interim government also made Pakistan appear to be an unavoidable reality.
- Another additional consideration in accepting immediate transfer of power to two dominions was that the prospect of balkanization was ruled out as the provinces and the princes were not given the option of independence.
- Another unreal assumption was that once the British left India, the differences would be patched up.
- But this was not to be, so the congress leader finally had to accept partition because they could not stop the communal riots.

**HOW TO SOLVE COMMUNAL PROBLEM**

- The real answer lay in an all-out opposition to communalism in all arenas- ideological, cultural, social and political.
- Based on the scientific understanding of its ideology, its social and ideological sources and roots, its social base and the reasons for its growth in the face of the nationalists work in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity, an intense political-ideological struggle had to be waged against communalism and communal political forces.
- Moreover, it was necessary to take up the peasants’ cause where their class struggle was being distorted into communal channels.
- All this was not done, despite deep commitment to secularism of the bulk of the nationalist leadership from Dadabhai Naoroji to Gandhi and Nehru.
- The need was to direct the debate with the communalists into hard rational, analytical channels so that the latter were forced to fight on the terrain of reason and science and not of emotion and bias.
- Gandhiji and congress did make Hindu-Muslim unity one of the three basic items of the nationalists political platform. They also at crucial moments, refused to appease the Hindu communalists. Gandhi ji several times staked his life for thr secular cause. but he and congress provided no deeper analysis of the communal problem.
THE INDIA INDEPENDENCE ACT 1947

- This act was passed so as to give legal effect to the plan of lord Mountbatton.

LORD MOUNTBATTON PLAN

- The partition of India was inevitable.
- The representatives of the Muslim majority districts and those representing the rest of the province in the legislative assemblies of both Bengal and Punjab would meet separately and decide by a simple majority vote whether their respective provinces were to be divided or not.
- If either part decided in favour of partition it would be done.
- It was left to the sole discretion of the constituent assembly of that province to join India or some other country.
- The plan was accepted by the Muslim league and the congress.
- Accordingly Punjab and Bengal was partitioned and Sindh and North West Frontier Province (n.w.f.p) decided to join Pakistan.

PROVISIONS OF INDIAN INDEPENDENCE ACT

- The act provided for the partition of India and the creation of India and Pakistan.
- The British government has to relinquish control over the affairs of the dominions.
- The territory of the two dominions was defined. They could also add or subtract the territory on their own.
- Until the new constitution was framed the legislative assemblies of the two dominions were to act as their legislatures.
- Pending the formation of the new constitution the dominions would be governed by the government of India, 1935 a.d.
- Each dominion could have a separate governor-general. But a single person could also be the Governor General for the two provinces.
- All laws in force in the two dominions on august 15.1947 would remain so until amended by the respective legislatures.

CATCH

- The act provided for the termination of the suzerainty of the crown over the Indian states. All treaties, agreements and functions exercisable by his majesty with regard to the states and their rulers were to lapse from august 15, 1947.
- It was also stated that the existing arrangements between the government of India and the Indian states were to continue pending detailed negotiations between the Indian states and the new dominion.
The office of the secretary of state for India was abolished and his place was to be taken by the secretary of state for common wealth.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACT**

- The independence of India was the natural and inevitable outcome of the process of creating natural consciousness and common purpose, accompanied by raj, unconsciously and by the congress consciously, over a period of time.
- The passing of this act marked the end of the British raj and the partition of India into two sovereign nations—India and Pakistan.