

# APPOLO STUDY CENTRE

## TEST - 6

### UNIT- VII INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

#### 12<sup>TH</sup> VOL

#### UNIT -1. Rise of Nationalism in India

##### Introduction

- The political and economic centralisation of India achieved by the British for the better exploitation and control of India inevitably led to the growth of national consciousness and the birth of the national movement. The history of nationalism in India begins with the campaigns and struggles for social reforms in the nineteenth century followed by the Western-educated Indians' prayers and petitions for political liberties. With the return of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi from South Africa in 1915, and his leadership of the Indian nationalist movement in 1919 Indian nationalism entered a mass phase.
- Prior to Gandhi, prominent leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and others took the early initiative to educate the Indians about their national identity and colonial exploitation. In this chapter, while tracing the origin and growth of Indian Nationalism, we focus on the contribution of these leaders who are known as the early nationalists.

Broadly, nationalism means loyalty and devotion to a nation. It is a consciousness or tendency to exalt and place one nation above all others, emphasising promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations

## Socio-economic Background

### (a) Implications of the New Land Tenures

- The British destroyed the traditional basis of Indian land system. In the pre-British days, the land revenue was realised by sharing the actual crop with the cultivators. The British fixed the land revenue in cash without any regard to various contingencies, such as failure of crops, fall in prices and droughts or floods. Moreover, the practice of sale in settlement of debt encouraged money lenders to advance money to landholders and resorting to every kind of trickery to rob them of their property.
- There were also two other major implications of the new land settlements introduced by the East India Company. They institutionalised the commodification of land and commercialisation of agriculture in India. As mentioned earlier, there was no private property in land in pre-British era. Now, land became a commodity that could be transferred either by way of buying and selling or by way of the administration taking over land from holders, in lieu of default on payment of tax/rent. Land taken over in such cases was auctioned off to another bidder. This created a new class of absentee landlords who lived in the cities and extracted revenue from the lands without actually living on the lands. In the traditional agricultural set-up, the villagers produced largely for their consumption among themselves. After the new land settlements, agricultural produce was predominantly for the market.
- The commodification of land and commercialisation of agriculture did not improve the lives and conditions of the peasants. Instead, this created discontent among the peasantry and made them restive. These peasants later on turned against the imperialists and their collaborators.

### (b) Laissez Faire Policy and De-industrialization: Impact on Indian Artisans

- The policy of the Company in the wake of Industrial Revolution in England resulted in the de-industrialization of India. This continued until the beginning of the World War I. The British Government pursued a policy of free trade or laissez faire. Raw materials like cotton, jute and silks from India were taken to Britain. The finished products made from those raw materials were then transported back to the Indian markets. Mass

production with the help of technological advancement enabled them to flood the Indian market with their goods. It was available at a comparatively cheaper price than the Indian handloom cloth. Prior to the arrival of the British, India was known for its handloom products and handicrafts. It commanded a good world market. However, as a result of the colonial policy, gradually Indian handloom products and handicrafts lost their market, domestic as well as international. Import of English articles into India threw the weavers, the cotton dressers, the carpenters, the blacksmiths and the shoemakers out of employment. India became a procurement area for the raw material and the farmers were forced to produce industrial crops like indigo and other cash crops like cotton for use in British factories. Due to this shift, subsistence agriculture, which was the mainstay for several hundred years, suffered leading to food scarcity.

- The Indigo revolt of 1859-60 was one of the responses from the Indian farmer to the oppressive policy of the British. Indian tenants were forced to grow indigo by their planters who were mostly Europeans. Used to dye the clothes indigo was in high demand in Europe. Peasants were forced to accept meagre amounts as advance and enter into unfair contracts. Once a peasant accepted the contract, he had no option but to grow indigo on his land. The price paid by the planter was far lower than the market price. Many a times, the peasants could not even pay their land revenue dues. Hoping that the authorities would address their concerns, the peasants wrote several petitions to authorities and organised peaceful protests. As their plea for reform went in vain, they revolted by refusing to accept any further advances and enter into new contracts. Peasants, through the Indigo revolt of 1859-60, were able to force the planters to withdraw from northern-Bengal.

### **(c) Famines and Emigration of Indians to Overseas British Colonies**

#### **Famines**

- As India became increasingly de-industrialised and weavers and artisans engaged in handicrafts were thrown out of employment, there were recurrent famines due to the neglect of irrigation and oppressive taxation on land. Before the arrival of the British, Indian rulers had ameliorated the difficulties of the populace in times of famines by providing tax relief, regulating the grain prices and banning food exports from famine-hit areas. But the British extended their policy of non-intervention (*laissez*

faire) even to famines. As a result, millions of people died of starvation during the Raj. It has been estimated that between 1770 and 1900, twenty five million Indians died in famines. William Digby, the editor of Madras Times, pointed out that during 1793-1900 alone an estimated five million people had died in all the wars around the world, whereas in just ten years (1891-1900), nineteen million had died in India in famines alone.

- Sadly when people were dying of starvation millions of tonnes of wheat was exported to Britain. During the 1866 Orissa Famine, for instance, while a million and a half people starved to death, the British exported 200 million pounds of rice to Britain. The Orissa Famine prompted nationalist Dadabhai Naoroji to begin his lifelong investigations into Indian poverty. The failure of two successive monsoons caused a severe famine in the Madras Presidency during 1876-78. The viceroy Lytton adopted a hands-off approach similar to that followed in Orissa. An estimated 3.5 million people died in the Madras presidency.

### **Indentured Labour**

- The introduction of plantation crops such as coffee, tea and sugar in Empire colonies such as Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Mauritius, Fiji, Malaya, the Caribbean islands, and South Africa required enormous labour. In 1815, the Governor of Madras received a communication from the Governor of Ceylon asking for “coolies” to work on the coffee plantations. The Madras Governor forwarded this letter to the collector of Thanjavur, who reported that the people were very much attached to the soil and unless some incentive was provided it was not easy to make them move out of their native soil. But the outbreak of two famines (1833 and 1843) forced the people, without any prompting from the government, to leave for Ceylon to work as coolies in coffee and tea plantations under the indentured labour system. The abolition of slavery in British India in 1843 also facilitated the processes of emigration to Empire colonies. In 1837 the number of immigrant Tamil labourers employed in Ceylon coffee estate was estimated at 10,000. The industry developed rapidly and so did the demand for Tamil labour. In 1846 its presence was estimated at 80,000 and in 1855 at 128,000 persons. In 1877, the famine year, there were nearly 380,000 Tamil labourers in Ceylon. Besides Ceylon, many Indians opted to emigrate as indentured labour to other British colonies such as Mauritius, Straits Settlements, Caribbean islands, Trinidad, Fiji and South Africa. In 1843 it was officially reported that 30,218 male and 4,307 females had

entered Mauritius as indentured labourers. By the end of the century some 500,000 labourers had moved from India to Mauritius.

**Indentured Labour:** Under this penal contract system (indenture), labourers were hired for a period of five years and they could return to their homeland with passage paid at the end. Many impoverished peasants and weavers went hoping to earn some money. It turned out to be as worse than slave labour. The colonial state allowed agents (*kanganis*) to trick or kidnap indigent landless labourers. The labourers suffered terribly on the long sea voyages and many died on the way. The percentage of deaths of indentured labour during 1856-57, in a ship bound for Trinidad from Kolkata is as follows: 12.3% of all males, 18.5% of the females, 28% of the boys 36% of the girls and 55% of the infants perished.

### (a) Education in Pre-British India

- Education in pre-colonial India was characterised by segmentation along religious and caste lines. Among the Hindus, Brahmins had the exclusive privilege to acquire higher religious and philosophical knowledge. They monopolised the education system and occupied positions in the society, primarily as priests and teachers. They studied in special seminaries such as Vidyalayas and Chatuspathis. The medium of instruction was Sanskrit, which was considered as the sacred language. Technical knowledge – especially in relation to architecture, metallurgy, etc. – was passed hereditarily. This came in the way of innovation. Another shortcoming of this system was that it barred women, lower castes and other under-privileged people from accessing education. The emphasis on rote learning was another impediment to innovation.

### (b) Contribution of Colonial State: Macaulay System of Education

- The colonial government aided the spread of modern education in India for a different reason than educating and empowering the Indians. To administer a large colony like India, the British needed a large number of personnel to work for them. It was impossible for the British to import the educated lot, needed in such large numbers, from Britain. With this aim, the English Education Act was passed by the Council of India in 1835. T.B. Macaulay drafted this system of education introduced in India. Consequently, the colonial administration started schools, colleges and universities, imparting English and modern education, in India.

Universities were established in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta in 1857. The colonial government expected this section of educated Indians to be loyal to the British and act as the pillars of the British Raj.

T. B. Macaulay was India's first law member of the Governor General in Council from 1834 to 1838. Before Macaulay arrived in India the General Committee of Public Instruction was formed in 1823 with the responsibility to guide the East India Company on the matter of education and the medium of instruction. The Committee was split into two groups. The Orientalist group advocated education in vernacular languages. The Anglicists advocated Western education in English.

Macaulay was on the side of Anglicists and wrote his famous 'Minute on Indian Education' in 1835. In this Minute, he argued for Western education in the English language. His intention behind supporting the Anglicists was that he wanted to create a class of persons from within India who would 'be Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect'.

- The British created an educated Indian middle class for their own ends but sneered at it as the Babu class. That very class, however, became the progressive intelligentsia of India and played a leading role in mobilising the people for the liberation of the country.

### **(c) Role of Educated Middle Class**

- The economic and administrative transformation on the one side and the growth of Western education on the other gave the space for the growth of new social classes. From within these social classes, a modern Indian intelligentsia emerged. The "neo-social classes" created by the British Raj, which included the Indian trading and business communities, landlords, money lenders, English-educated Indians employed in imperial subordinate services, lawyers and doctors, initially adopted a positive approach towards the colonial administration. However, soon they realised that their interests would be better served only in independent India. People of the said social classes began to play a prominent role in promoting patriotism amongst the people. The consciousness of these classes found articulation in a number of associations prior to the founding of the Indian National Congress at the national level.

- Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Gopala Krishna Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji, Feroz Shah Mehta, Surendra Nath Banerjea and others who belonged to modern Indian intelligentsia led the social, religious and political movements in India. Educated Indians had exposure to ideas of nationalism, democracy, socialism, etc. articulated by John Locke, James Stuart Mill, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Rousseau, Thomas Paine, Marx and other western intellectuals. The right of a free press, the right of free speech and the right of association were the three inherent rights, which their European counterparts held dear to their heart, and the educated Indians too desired to cling to. Various forums came into existence, where people could meet and discuss the issues affecting their interests. This became possible now at the national level, due to the rapid expansion of transport network and establishment of postal, telegraph and wireless services all over India.

#### **(d) Contribution of Missionaries**

- One of the earliest initiatives to impart modern education among Indians was taken up by the Christian missionaries. Inspired by the proselytizing spirit, they attacked polytheism and caste inequalities that were prevalent among the Hindus. One of the methods adopted by the missionaries, to preach Christianity, was through modern secular education. They provided opportunities to acquire education to the underprivileged and the marginalised sections, who were denied learning opportunities in the traditional education system. However only a very small fraction converted to Christianity. But the challenge posed by Christianity led to various social and religious reform movements.

#### **Social and Religious Reforms**

- The English educated intelligentsia felt the need for reforming the society before involving the people in any political programmes. The reform movements of nineteenth century are categorised as 1. Reformist movements such as the Brahma Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Prarthana Samaj, founded by Dr Atmaram Pandurang and the Aligarh Movement, represented by Syed Ahmad Khan; 2. Revivalist movements such as the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Deoband Movement. 3. There were social movements led by Jyotiba Phule in Pune, Narayana Guru and Ayyankali in Kerala and Ramalinga Adigal, Vaikunda Swamigal and later Iyothee Thassar in Tamilnadu. All these

reformers and their contributions have been dealt with comprehensively in the XI Std. text book.

- The reformers of nineteenth century responded to the challenge posed by Western Enlightenment knowledge based on reason. Indian national consciousness emerged as a result of the rethinking triggered by these reforms. The Brahma Samaj was founded by Ram Mohan Roy in 1828. Other socio-cultural organisations like the Prarthana Samaj (1867), the Arya Samaj (1875) were founded subsequently. Roy's initiative was followed up by reformers like Keshav Chandra Sen and Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. Abolition of sati and child marriage and widow remarriage became the main concerns for these reformers. The Aligarh movement played a similar role among the Muslims. Slowly, organisations and associations of political nature came up in different parts of British India to vent the grievances of the people.

#### **(a) Memories of 1857**

- Indian national movement dates its birth from the 1857 uprising. The outrages committed by the British army after putting down the revolt remained "un-avenged". Even the court-martial law and formalities were not observed. Officers who sat on the court martial swore that they would hang their prisoners, guilty or innocent and, if any dared to raise his voice against such indiscriminate vengeance, he was silenced by his angry colleagues. Persons condemned to death after the mockery of a trial were often tortured by soldiers before their execution, while the officers looked on approvingly. It is worth recalling what Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay Presidency, wrote to Sir John Lawrence, future Viceroy of India (1864) about the British siege of Delhi during June-September, 1857: '...A wholesale vengeance is being taken without distinction of friend or foe. As regards the looting, we have indeed surpassed Nadirshah.'

#### **(b) Racial Discrimination**

- The English followed a policy of racial discrimination. The systematic exclusion of the Indians from higher official positions came to be looked upon as an anti-Indian policy measure and the resultant discontent of the Indian upper classes led the Indians to revolt against the British rule. When civil service examinations were introduced the age limit was fixed at twenty one. When Indians were making it, with a view to debarring the



Indians from entering the civil services, the age limit was reduced to nineteen. Similarly, despite requests from Indian educated middle class to hold the civil service examinations simultaneously in India, the Imperial government refused to concede the request.

### **(c) Repressive as well as Exploitative Measures against Indians**

- Repressive regulations like Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (1870), punishing attempts to excite disaffection towards the Government, and the Vernacular Press Act (1878), censoring the press, evoked protest. Abolition of custom duty on cotton manufactures imported from England and levy of excise duty on cotton fabrics manufactured in India created nationwide discontent. During the viceroyalty of Ripon the Indian judges were empowered through the Ilbert Bill to try Europeans. But in the face of resistance from the Europeans the bill was amended to suit the European interests.

### **(d) Role of Press**

- The introduction of printing press in India was an event of great significance. It helped people to spread, modern ideas of self-government, democracy, civil rights and industrialisation. The press became the critic of politics. It addressed the people on several issues affecting the country. Raja Rammohan Roy's Sambad Kaumudi (1821) in Bengali and Mirat-Ul-Akbar (1822) in Persian played a progressive role in educating the people on issues of public importance. Later on a number of nationalist and vernacular news papers came to be launched to build public opinion and they did yeomen service in fostering nationalist consciousness. Among them Amrit Bazaar Patrika, The Bombay Chronicle, The Tribune, The Indian Mirror, The Hindu and Swadesamitran were prominent.

### **(e) Invoking India's glorious Past**

- Orientalists like William Jones, Charles Wilkins and Max Muller explored and translated religious, historical and literary texts from Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic into English and made them available to all. Influenced by the richness of Indian traditions and scholarship, many of the early nationalists made a fervent plea to revive the pristine glory of India. Aurobindo Ghose would write, 'The mission of Nationalism, in our view, is to recover Indian thought, Indian character, Indian perceptions, Indian

energy, Indian greatness and to solve the problems that perplex the world in an Indian spirit and from the Indian standpoint.'

### (a) Madras Native Association

- One of the first attempts to organise and vent the grievances against the British came through the formation of the Madras Native Association (MNA) on 26 February 1852. An association of landed and business classes of the Madras Presidency, they expressed their grievances against the Company's administration in the revenue, education and judicial spheres. Gajula Lakshminarasu, who inspired the foundation of MNA, was a prominent businessman in Madras city.
- The Association presented its grievances before British Parliament when it was discussing the East India Company's rule in India before the passing of the Charter in 1853. In a petition submitted in December 1852, the MNA pointed out that the ryotwari and zamindari systems had thrown agricultural classes into deep distress. It urged the revival of the ancient village system to free the peasantry from the oppressive interference of the zamindars and the Company officials. The petition also made a complaint about the judicial system which was slow, complicated and imperfect. It pointed out that the appointment of judges without assessing their judicial knowledge and competence in the local languages affected the efficiency of the judiciary. The diversion of state funds to missionary schools, under the grants-in-aid system, was also objected to in the petition.
- The MNA petition was discussed in the Parliament in March 1853. H. D. Seymour, Chairman of the Indian Reform Society, came to Madras in October 1853. He visited places like Guntur, Cuddalore, Tiruchirappalli, Salem and Tirunelveli. However, as the Charter Act of 1853 allowed British East India Company to continue its rule in India, the MNA organised an agitation for the transfer of British territories in India to the direct control of the Crown. MNA sent its second petition to British Parliament, signed by fourteen thousand individuals, pleading the termination of Company rule in India.
- The life of MNA was short. Lakshminarasu died in 1866 and by 1881, the association ceased to exist. Though the MNA did not achieve much in terms of reforms, it was the beginning of organised effort to articulate Indian opinion. In its lifetime, the MNA operated within the boundaries of

Madras Presidency. The grievances that the MNA raised through its petitions and the agitations it launched were from the point of view of the elite, particularly the landed gentry of Madras Presidency. What was lacking was a national political organisation representing every section of the society, an organisation that would raise the grievances and agitate against the colonial power for their redress. The Indian National Congress filled this void.

### **(b) Madras Mahajana Sabha (MMS)**

- After the Madras Native Association became defunct there was no such public organisation in the Madras Presidency. As many educated Indians viewed this situation with dismay, the necessity for a political organisation was felt and in May 1884 the Madras Mahajana Sabha was organised. In the inaugural meeting held on 16 May 1884 the prominent participants were: G. Subramaniam, Viraraghavachari, Ananda Charlu, Rangiah, Balaji Rao and Salem Ramaswamy. With the launch of the Indian National Congress, after the completion of the second provincial conference of Madras Mahajana Sabha, the leaders after attending the first session of the Indian National Congress (INC) in Bombay amalgamated the MMS with the INC.

### **(c) Indian National Congress (INC)**

- The idea of forming a political organisation that would raise issues and grievances against the colonial rule did not emerge in a vacuum. Between 1875 and 1885 there were many agitations against British policies in India. The Indian textile industry was campaigning for imposition of cotton import duties in 1875. In 1877, demands for the Indianisation of Government services were made vociferously. There were protests against the Vernacular Press Act of 1878. In 1883, there was an agitation in favour of the Ilbert Bill.
- But these agitations and protests were sporadic and not coordinated. There was a strong realisation that these protests would not impact on the policy makers unless a national political organisation was formed. From this realisation was born the Indian National Congress. The concept of India as a nation was reflected in the name of the organisation. It also introduced the concept of nationalism.

- In December 1884, Allan Octavian Hume, a retired English ICS officer, presided over a meeting of the Theosophical Society in Madras. The formation of a political organisation that would work on an all India basis was discussed and the idea of forming the Indian National Congress emerged in this meeting. The Indian National Congress was formed on 28 December 1885 in Bombay. Apart from A.O Hume, another important founding member was W C. Bonnerjee, who was elected the first president.
- Though the activities of the INC then revolved around petitions and memoranda, from the very beginning the founders of the INC worked to bring every section of the society into its ambit. One of the main missions of the INC was to weld the Indians into a nation. They were convinced that the struggle against the colonial rule will be successful only if Indians saw themselves as the members of a nation. To achieve this, the INC acted as a common political platform for all the movements that were being organised in different parts of the country. The INC provided the space where the political workers from different parts of the country could gather and conduct their political activities under its banner. Even though the organization was small with less than a hundred members, it had an all- India character with representation from all regions of India. It was the beginning of the mobilisation of people on an all-India basis.

### **The major objectives and demands of INC were**

#### **Constitutional**

- Opportunity for participation in the government was one of the major demands of the Indian National Congress. It demanded Indian representation in the government.

#### **Economic**

- High land revenue was one of the major factors that contributed to the oppression of the peasants. It demanded reduction in the land revenue and protection of peasants against exploitation of the zamindars. The Congress also advocated the imposition of heavy tax on the imported goods for the benefit of swadeshi goods.

## Administrative

- Higher officials who had responsibility of administration in India were selected through civil services examinations conducted in Britain. This meant that educated Indians who could not afford to go to London had no opportunity to get high administrative jobs. Therefore, Indianisation of services through simultaneous Indian Civil Services Examinations in England and India was a major demand of the Congress.

## Judicial

- Because of the partial treatment against the Indian political activists by English judges it demanded the complete separation of the Executive and the Judiciary.

### (d) Contributions of Early Nationalists (1885-1915)

- The early nationalists in the INC came from the elite sections of the society. Lawyers, college and university teachers, doctors, journalists and such others represented the Congress. However, they came from different regions of the country and this made INC a truly a national political organisation. These leaders of the INC adopted the constitutional methods of presenting petitions, prayers and memorandums and thereby earned the moniker of “Moderates”. It was also the time some sort of an understanding about colonialism was evolving in India. There was no ready-made anti-colonial understanding available for reference in the late nineteenth century when the INC was formed. It was the early nationalists who helped the formulation of the idea of *we* as a nation. They were developing the indigenous anti-colonial ideology and a strategy on their own which helped future mass leaders like M. K Gandhi.
- From the late 1890s there were growing differences within the INC. Leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Lala Lajpat Rai were advocating radical approaches instead of merely writing petitions, prayers and memorandums. These advocates of radical methods came to be called the “extremists” as against those who were identified as moderates. Their objective became clear in 1897 when Tilak raised the clarion call “Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it”. Tilak and his militant followers were now requesting Swaraj instead of economic or

administrative reforms that the moderates were requesting through their petitions and prayers.

- Though they criticised each other, it would be wrong to place them in the opposing poles. Both moderates and militants, with their own methods, were significant elements of the larger Indian nationalist movement. In fact, they contributed towards the making of the swadeshi movement. The partition of Bengal in 1905, by the colonial government, which you will be studying in the next lesson, was vehemently opposed by the Indians. The swadeshi movement of 1905, directly opposed the British rule and encouraged the ideas of swadeshi enterprise, national education, self-help and use of Indian languages. The method of mass mobilisation and boycott of British goods and institutions suggested by the radicals was also accepted by the Moderates.
- Both the Moderates and the Radicals were of the same view when it came to accepting the fact that they needed to fulfil the role of educators. They tried to instil nationalist consciousness through various means including the press. When the INC was founded in 1885, one-third of the members were journalists. Most stalwarts of the early freedom movement were involved in journalism. Dadabhai Naoroji founded and edited two journals called Voice of India and RastGoftar. Surendranath Banerjea edited the newspaper called Bengalee. Bal Gangadhar Tilak edited Kesari and Mahratta. This is the means that they used to educate the common people about the colonial oppression and spread nationalist ideas. News regarding the initiatives taken by the INC were taken to the masses through these newspapers. For the first time, in the history of India, the press was used to generate public opinion against the oppressive policies and acts of the colonial government.
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak was a firm believer that the lower middle classes, peasants, artisans and workers could play a very important role in the national movement, He used his newspapers to articulate the discontent among this section of the people against the oppressive colonial rule. He called for national resistance against imperial British rule in India. On 27 July 1897, Tilak was arrested and charged under Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code. Civil liberty, particularly in the form of freedom of expression and press became the significant part of Indian freedom struggle.

## **Naoroji and his Drain Theory**

- Dadabhai Naoroji, known as the 'Grand Old Man of Indian Nationalism', was a prominent early nationalist. He was elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation and Town Council during the 1870s. Elected to the British Parliament in 1892, he founded the India Society (1865) and the East India Association (1866) in London. He was elected thrice as the President of the INC.
- His major contribution to the Indian nationalist movement was his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule of the British in India* (1901). In this book, he put forward the concept of 'drain of wealth'. He stated that in any country the tax raised would have been spent for the wellbeing of the people of that country. But in British India, taxes collected in India were spent for the welfare of England. Naoroji argued that India had exported an average of 13 million pounds worth of goods to Britain each year from 1835 to 1872 with no corresponding return. The goods were in lieu of payments for profits to Company shareholders living in Britain, guaranteed interest to investors in railways, pensions to retired officials and generals, interest for the money borrowed from England to meet war expenses for the British conquest of territories in India as well as outside India. All these, going in the name of Home Charges, Naoroji asserted, made up a loss of 30 million pounds a year.

## UNIT -2.Rise of Extremism and Swadeshi Movement

### Introduction

- By the last decade of the nineteenth century, there was conspicuous resentment against moderate politics within the Indian National Congress. This feeling of resentment eventually evolved into a new trend, referred to as the 'Extremist' trend. The extremist or what we may call radical or militant group was critical of the moderates for their cautious approach and the "mendicant policy" of appealing to the British by way of prayers and petitions. This form of militancy developed under the leadership of Bal Gangadhar Tilak in Maharashtra, Bipin Chandra Pal in Bengal and Lala Lajpat Rai in the Punjab. The primary reasons for the rise of this trend were: factionalism in the Congress, frustration with the moderate politics, anger against Lord Curzon for dividing Bengal.
- The partition of Bengal in 1905 - a prime example of the British divide and rule policy - acted as the catalyst for the growth of anti-colonial swadeshi nationalism. The partition plan was first opposed by moderates but as the movement progressed, different techniques were improvised for the Swadeshi campaign. Swadeshi constructive programme included boycott of foreign goods and government-administered educational institutions. The Swadeshi movement (1905-1911) is the most important phase of the Indian National Movement in the pre-Gandhian era, as, during the course of the movement, the character of the Indian national movement changed significantly in terms of the stated objectives, methods and in its social base.
- The mass base of the movement was expanded by exposing the problems of various social groups under the British governance and the underlying commonality in their lives - that is colonial exploitation. For the first time, in the history of Indian national movement, women, workers, peasants, and marginalised groups were exposed to modern nationalist ideas and politics. It was a period when the elite made a conscious effort to address the common people, calling upon them to join politics. The other prominent development during the Swadeshi period was the growth of the vernacular press (newspapers published in Indian languages) in various parts of India. The nationalistic tone of the vernacular press became more pronounced during this time. The role played by



Swadesamitran in Tamil Nadu, Kesari in Maharashtra, Yugantar in Bengal are a few examples.

- As the movement gained support among the people, the government passed a series of repressive Acts such as the Public Meetings Act (1907), the Explosive Substance Act (1908), the Newspaper (Incitement and Offence Act 1908) and the Indian Press Act (1910) to crush the nationalistic activities of any nature. One such measure was recording and monitoring of public meetings which were considered a matter of judicial scrutiny. (Shorthand was used by the police for the first time to record political speeches.) In this lesson, while discussing the Bengal as well as national scenarios, the Swadeshi Campaigns conducted in Tamil Nadu with particular focus on the role played by V.O. Chidambaram, V.V. Subramaniam, Subramania Siva and Subramania Bharati.

### **Partition of Bengal**

- On January 6, 1899, Lord Curzon was appointed the new Governor General and Viceroy of India. This was a time when British unpopularity was increasing due to the impact of recurring famine and the plague. Curzon did little to change the opinion of the educated Indian class. Instead of engaging with the nationalist intelligentsia, he implemented a series of repressive measures. For instance, he reduced the number of elected Indian representatives in the Calcutta Corporation (1899). The University Act of 1904 brought the Calcutta University under the direct control of the government. The Official Secrets Act (1904) was amended to curb the nationalist tone of Indian newspapers. Finally, he ordered partition of Bengal in 1905. The partition led to widespread protest all across India, starting a new phase of the Indian national movement.
- Bengal Presidency as an administrative unit was indeed of unmanageable in size; the necessity of partition was being discussed since the 1860s. The scheme of partition was revived in March 1890. In Assam, when Curzon went on a tour, he was requested by the European planters to make a maritime outlet closer to Calcutta to reduce their dependence on the Assam- Bengal railways. Following this, in December 1903, Curzon drew up a scheme in his Minutes on Territorial Redistribution of India, which was later modified and published as the Risely Papers. The report gave two reasons in support of partition: Relief of Bengal and the improvement of Assam. The report, however, concealed information on how the plan

was originally devised for the convenience of British officials and the European businessmen.

- From December 1903 and 1905 this initial idea of transferring or reshuffling some areas from Bengal was changed to a full-fledged plan of partition. The Bengal was to be divided into two provinces. The new Eastern Bengal and Assam were to include the divisions of Chittagong, Dhaka, parts of Rajshahi hills of Tippera, Assam province and Malda.

### **Aimed at Hindu Muslim Divide**

- The intention of Curzon was to suppress the political activities against the British rule in Bengal and to create a Hindu-Muslim divide. The government intentionally ignored alternative proposals presented by the civil servants, particularly the idea of dividing Bengal on linguistic basis. Curzon rejected this proposal as this would further consolidate the position of the Bengali politicians. Curzon was adamant as he wanted to create a clearly segregated Hindu and Muslim population in the divided Bengal. Curzon, like many before him, knew very well that there was a clear geographical divide along the river Bhagirathi: eastern Bengal dominated by the Muslims, and western Bengal dominated by the Hindus and in the central Bengal and the two communities balancing out each other. There was a conscious attempt on the part of British administration to woo the Muslim population in Bengal. In his speech at Dhaka, in February 1904, Curzon assured the Muslims that in the new province of East Bengal, Muslims would enjoy a unity, which they had never enjoyed since the days of old Muslim rule.
- The partition, instead of dividing the Bengali people along the religious line, united them. Perhaps the British administration had underestimated the growing feeling of Bengali identity among the people, which cut across caste, class, religion and regional barriers. By the end of the nineteenth century, a strong sense of Bengali unity had developed among large sections in the society. Bengali language had acquired literary status with Rabindranath Tagore as the central figure. The growth of regional language newspapers played a role in building the narrative of solidarity. Similarly, recurring famines, unemployment, and a slump in the economic growth generated an anti-colonial feeling.

## Anti-Partition Movement

- Both the militants and the moderates were critical of the partition of Bengal ever since it was announced in December 1903. But the anti-partition response by leaders like Surendranath Banerjee, K.K. Mitra, and Prithwishchandra Ray remained restricted to prayers and petitions. The objective was limited to influencing public opinion in England against the partition. However, despite this widespread resentment, partition of Bengal was officially declared on 19 July 1905.
- With the failure to stop the partition of Bengal and the pressure exerted by the radical leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal, Aswini Kumar Dutta, and Aurobindo Ghose, the moderate leaders were forced to rethink their strategy, and look for new techniques of protest. Boycott of British goods was one such method, which after much debate was accepted by the moderate leadership of the Indian National Congress. So, for the first time, the moderates went beyond their conventional political methods. It was decided, at a meeting in Calcutta on 17 July 1905, to extend the protest to the masses. In the same meeting, Surendranath Banerjee gave a call for the boycott of British goods and intuitions. On 7 August, at another meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall, a formal proclamation of Swadeshi Movement was made. However, the agenda of Swadeshi movement was still restricted to securing an annulment of the partition and the moderates were very much against utilizing the campaign to start a full-scale passive resistance. The militant nationalists, on the other hand, were in favour of extending the movement to other provinces too and to launch a full-fledged mass struggle.

## Spread of the Movement

- Besides the organized efforts of the leaders, there were spontaneous reactions against the partition of Bengal. Students, in particular, came out in large numbers. Reacting to the increased role of the students in the anti-partition agitation, British officials threatened to withdraw the scholarships and grants to those who participated in programmes of direct action. In response to this, a call was given to boycott official educational institutions and it was decided that efforts were to be made to open national schools. Thousands of public meetings were organized in towns and villages across Bengal. Religious festivals such as the Durga Pujas were utilized to invoke the idea of boycott. The day Bengal was officially

partitioned – 16 Oct 1905 – was declared as a day of mourning. Thousands of people took bath in the Ganga and marched on the streets of Calcutta singing Bande Mataram.

### **Boycott and Swadeshi Movements in Bengal (1905–1911)**

- Such efforts, both organized and spontaneous, laid the foundation for a sustained campaign against the British. The boycott and swadeshi were always interlinked to each other and part of a wider plan to make India self-sufficient. G. Subramaniam, a nationalist leader from Madras, succinctly explained the aim of the swadeshi movement as ‘a revolt against their state of dependence...in all branches of their national life’. In the words of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, ‘the swadeshi movement is not only for the improvement of our industry but for an allround enhancement of our national life ...’ As the movement progressed, different definitions of Swadeshi appeared. However, for the larger part, the movement of Swadeshi and Boycott was practiced as an anti-colonial political agitation and not as a viable method to achieve dignity and freedom in life, a definition which would be later infused with the entry of Mahatma Gandhi.

### **Evolution of the idea of Swadeshi**

- During the freedom struggle, the idea of Swadeshi movement was conceptualized first during 1905 by a string of Congress leaders and then later in the 1920s under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Swadeshi means ‘of one’s own country’. The origin of the idea can be traced to 1872 when Mahadev Govind Ranade, in a series of lectures in Poona, popularised the idea of Swadeshi. According to Ranade, the goods produced in one’s own country should be given preference even if the use of such goods proved to be less satisfactory.
- In the 1920s Gandhi gave a new meaning to the idea of Swadeshi by linking it to the fulfilment of a duty that all Indians owed to the land of their birth. For Gandhi, Swadeshi did not merely mean the use of what is produced in one’s own country. Gandhi defined Swadeshi in following words “Swadeshi is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of more remote. I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours

and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they may be found wanting.”

### (a) Constructive Swadeshi

- The constructive Swadeshi programmes largely stressed upon self-help. It focused on building alternative institutions of self-governance that would operate entirely free from British control. It also laid emphasis on the need for self-strengthening of the people which would help in creating a worthy citizen before the launch of political agitations.
- Rabindranath Tagore was one of the central figures who popularised such ideas through his writings. He outlined the constructive programme of atmashakti (self-help). Tagore called for economic self-development and insisted that education should be provided in swadeshi languages. He also made the call for utilising melas, or fairs, to spread the message of atmashakti. This became the creed of the whole of Bengal and swadeshi shops sprang all over the place selling textiles, handlooms, soaps, earthenware, matches and leather goods.

The idea of education in vernacular language made its appearance much before the swadeshi movement with the foundation of Dawn Society by Satish Chandra in 1902

- On 5 November 1905, at the initiative of the Dawn Society, the National Council of Education was formed. In August 1906, Bengal National College and a School were founded. A passionate appeal was made by Satish Chandra to the students to come out of ‘institutions of slavery.’ Such efforts, however, failed to attract many due to the bleak job prospects.

### (b) Samitis

- The other successful method of mass mobilization was the formation of samitis (corps of volunteers). The samitis were engaged in a range of activities such as physical and moral training of members, philanthropic work during the famines, epidemics, propagation of Swadeshi message during festivals, and organization of indigenous arbitration courts, and

schools. By its very nature boycott was passive action and its aim was to refuse to cooperate with the British administration.

- But these mass mobilization efforts failed to flourish as they could not extend their base among the Muslim peasantry and the “Depressed Classes”. Most of the samitis recruited from the educated middle class and other upper caste Hindus. Besides this, the swadeshi campaigners often applied coercive methods, both social and physical. For instance, social boycott of those purchasing foreign goods was common and taken up through caste associations and other nationalist organisations.

### **(c) Passive Resistance**

- From 1906, when the abrogation of partition was no longer in sight, the Swadeshi Movement took a different turn. For many leaders, the movement was to be utilized for propagating the idea of the political independence or Swaraj across India. The constructive programmes came under heavy criticism from Aurobindo Ghose, Bipin Chandra Pal, and other militant leaders. Under their new direction, the swadeshi agenda included boycott of foreign goods; boycott of government schools and colleges; boycott of courts; renouncing the titles and relinquishing government services; and recourse to armed struggle if British repression went beyond the limits of endurance. The programme of this nature required mass mobilization. Using religion, combined with the invocation of a glorious past, became the essential features of their programmes.

### **Militant Nationalism**

- As pointed out earlier, thanks to the campaigns conducted by Bal Gangadhar Tilak Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai, often referred to as the Lal-Bal-Pal triumvirate, Maharashtra, Bengal, Punjab, emerged as the epicentres of militant nationalism during the Swadeshi phase. Aurobindo Ghose was another influential figure in the militant leadership. The nationalism of this form was more assertive compared to the early Indian nationalism.
- Both the groups, moderate and militant, were well aware of the evils or the wrong doings of the British rule. The moderates, however, worked under the belief that the British rule in India could be reformed by convincing the rulers through representation and petitioning. The militant nationalist, on the other hand, was of the opinion that the colonial rulers

would never be amenable to reason, as they would not like to give up the advantages of an empire.

- Sometime around 1905, Aurobindo Ghose was asked by a man as to how to become a patriot. In response Aurobindo pointed to a wall map of India, and said “Do you see this map? It is not a map but the portrait of Bharat Mata: its cities and mountains rivers and jungles form her physical body. All her children are her nerves, large and small... Concentrate on Bharat as a living mother, worship her with nine-fold bhakti.”
- Militant nationalism also changed the nature of political pressure from the earlier force of public opinion of educated Indians to the protesting masses. Despite these changes, the militant nationalism phase retained a continuity from the moderate phase. This continuity was evident in the inability to transcend the peaceful method of struggle and for the most parts militant nationalism remained tied to the idea of non-violence. However, they appealed to the patriotic sentiments of the people using the religious symbols.

### **Swaraj or Political Independence**

- One of the common goals of the militant leaders was to achieve Swaraj or Self Rule. However, the leaders differed on the meaning of Swaraj. For Tilak, Swaraj was restricted to the Indian control over the administration or rule by the natives, but not total severance of relation with Britain. In Bipin Chandra Pal’s view, Swaraj was the attainment of complete freedom from any foreign rule.
- The other point of departure of the militants from the moderates was over the rising extremism in Bengal, Punjab, and Maharashtra. Unlike the moderates, who were critical of the reckless revolutionaries, militant nationalists were sympathetic towards them. However, the political murders and individual acts of terrorism were not approved of by the militant leaders and they were cautious of associating themselves with the cause of revolutionaries.
- The patriotism glued with the assertion of Hindu beliefs was not acceptable to the Muslims. Also much like their predecessors the leaders of the swadeshi movement failed to penetrate the larger section of the society. By

1908 militant nationalism was on the decline. The Surat split of 1907 was another contributing factor to this decline.

## Surat Split

- The tension between the militants and the moderates became more pronounced with the appointment of Lord Minto as the new Secretary of State to India in 1906. As the tension was rising between the two groups, a split was avoided, in the 1906 Calcutta session, by accepting demands of moderate leaders and electing Dadabhai Naoroji as president. Most of the moderates, led by Pherozeshah Mehta, were defeated in the election. The militants managed to pass four resolutions on Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education, and Self-Government.
- The next session of Congress was originally planned to be held in Poona, considered to be a stronghold of the militants. Fearing a repeat of the Calcutta session, the moderates shifted the venue to Surat. The militants proposed Lala Lajpat Rai's name for the next Congress presidency opposing the moderate's candidate Rash Behari Ghosh. Lala Lajpat Rai, however, turned down the offer to avoid the split. The matter finally boiled down to the question of retaining the four resolutions that were passed in the Calcutta session in 1906. The Pherozeshah Mehta group sought removal of those items from the agenda. In order to counter Mehta's manoeuvring, the militants decided to oppose the election of Rash Behari Gosh as president. The session ended in chaos.
- The Indian National Congress, born in December 1885, was now split into two groups - militant and moderate. The Congress which emerged after the Surat split was more loyal to the British than they were before. The new Congress, minus the militants, came to be known as Mehta Congress and the 1908 session of the Congress was attended only by the moderates who reiterated their loyalty to the Raj. The politics of militants, on the other hand, could not crystallize into a new political organization. The primary reason was the repressive measures of the government by putting all the prominent leaders in jail.

## Revolutionary Extremism

- Around 1908, the decline of the militant nationalists and the rise of revolutionary activities marked an important shift from non-violent



methods to violent action. It also meant a shift from mass-based action to elite response to the British rule. In Bengal, revolutionary terrorism had developed even earlier; around the 1870s, when the akharas or gymnasiums were setup in various places to develop what Swami Vivekananda had described as strong muscles and nerves of steel. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel, *Anandmath* also had a significant impact. *Anandmath* was widely read by the revolutionaries in Bengal. The Bande Mataram song, which is part of the novel, became the anthem of the swadeshi movement.

- During the Swadeshi movement three factors contributed to the upsurge in the individual acts of violence:
- The apolitical constructive programmes had little acceptance among the youth who was growing impatient under the repressive foreign rule.
- The failure of the militant nationalists to lead the young people into a long-term mass movement also contributed to the growth of individual action.
- The revolutionary action was part of an effort towards the symbolic recovery of Indian manhood, which the revolutionaries believed was often challenged and looked down upon by the British.
- Such actions, however, did not lead to any organised revolutionary movement as was the case in Russia. The revolutionary actions were mostly attempts to assassinate specific oppressive British officers.

#### **(a) Alipore Bomb Case**

- In Bengal, the story of revolutionary terrorism begins in 1902 with the formation of many secret societies. Most notable among them all was the Anushilan Samity of Calcutta, founded by Jatindernath Banerjee and Barindarkumar Ghose, brother of Aurobindo Ghose. Similarly, the Dhaka Anushilan Samity was born in 1906 through the initiative of Pulin Behari Das. This was followed by the launch of the revolutionary weekly *Yugantar*. The Calcutta Anushilan Samity soon started its activities and the first swadeshi dacoity, to raise funds, was organised in Rangpur in August 1906.

- In the same year, Hemchandra Kanungo went abroad to get military training in Paris. After his return to India in 1908, he established a bomb factory along with a religious school at a garden house in Maniktala. In the same garden house, young inmates underwent various forms of physical training, reading classic Hindu text, and reading literature on revolutionary movement across the world
- A conspiracy was hatched there to kill Douglas Kingsford, notorious for his cruel ways of dealing with the swadeshi agitators. Two young revolutionaries - 18-year-old Khudiram Bose and 19-year-old Prafulla Chaki - were entrusted with the task of carrying out the killing. On 30 April 1908, they mistakenly threw a bomb on a carriage, that, instead of killing Kingsford, killed two English women. Prafulla Chaki committed suicide and Khudiram Bose was arrested and hanged for the murder.
- Aurobindo Ghose, along with his brother Barinder Kumar Ghose and thirty-five other comrades, were arrested. Chittaranjan Das took up the case. It came to be known as the Alipore Bomb case.
- The judgement observed that there was no evidence to show that Aurobindo Ghose was involved in any conspiracy against the British rule. Ghose was acquitted of all the charges. Barindra Ghose and Ullaskar Dutt were given the death penalty (later commuted to the transportation of life), with the rest being condemned to transportation for life. The year-long hearing of Alipore Bomb case made a great impact and portrayed the nationalist revolutionaries as heroes to the general public.

### **Trial and the Aftermath**

- After his acquittal, Aurobindo Ghose took to a spiritual path and shifted his base to Pondicherry, where he stayed until his death in 1950. The idea of bringing an armed revolution, envisaged by Aurobindo Ghose, never materialized. The reason for the gradual decline in the revolutionary activities in Bengal was a combination of government repression and alienation from the people. Beside this, revolutionary terrorism suffered from certain social limitations too as most of the revolutionaries were drawn from the three upper castes - Brahmin, Kayastha, and Vaishya.

## **(b) British Repression**

- In December 1908 the Morley-Minto constitutional reforms were announced. The moderates welcomed the reforms. However, they soon realised that there was hardly any shift of power. In fact, measures taken by Minto were highly divisive as it institutionalised communal electorates creating Hindu-Muslim divide. Beside this, the colonial government also introduced certain repressive laws such as:
- The Newspapers (Incitement to Offence) Act, 1908. This act empowered the magistrate to confiscate press property which published objectionable material making it difficult to publish anything critical of British rule.
- Indian Press Act 1910 made it mandatory for publishers and the printers to deposit a security that could be seized in case they printed 'obnoxious material'.
- The Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act allowed summary trials and also imposed the prohibition of 'association dangerous to the public peace'.
- Even with the widespread repression, the charm of revolutionary action never disappeared from the Indian national movement. The centre of activities moved from Bengal to Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

## **Swadeshi Campaign in Tamil Nadu**

- Swadeshi movement in Tamil Nadu, notably in Tirunelveli district, generated a lot of attention and support. While the Swadeshi movement in Tamil Nadu had an all India flavour, with collective anger against the British rule remaining the common thread, it was also underpinned by Tamil - pride and consciousness. There was a deep divide in the Tamil Nadu congress between the moderates and the extremists.

## **(a) Development of Vernacular Oratory**

- Initially, the movement was more of a reaction to the partition of Bengal and regular meetings were held to protest the partition. The speakers, in such meetings, spoke mostly in the vernacular language to an audience that included students, lawyers, and laborers at that time. The shift from

English oratory to vernacular oratory was a significant development of this time, which had a huge impact on the mass politics in Tamil Nadu.

- Swadeshi meetings at the Marina beach in Madras were a regular sight. The Moore Market complex in Madras was another venue utilised for such gatherings. During the period (1905- 1907) there are police reports calling students dangerous and their activities as seditious. Europeans in public places were greeted by the students with shouts of Vande Mataram. In 1907, Bipin Chandra Pal came to Madras and his speeches on the Madras Beach electrified the audience and won new converts to the nationalist cause. The visit had a profound impact all over Tamil Nadu. The public speeches in the Tamil language created an audience which was absent during the formative years of the political activities in Tamil Nadu.

#### **(b) V.O.C. and Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company (SSNC)**

- The Swadeshi movement in Tamil Nadu came to national attention in 1906 when V.O. Chidambaram mooted the idea of launching a swadeshi shipping venture in opposition to the monopoly of the British in navigation through the coast.
- In 1906, V.O.C. registered a joint stock company called The Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company (SSNC) with a capital of Rs 10 Lakh, divided into 40,000 shares of Rs. 25 each. Shares were open only to Indians, Ceylonese and other Asian nationals. V.O.C. purchased two steamships, S.S. Gallia and S.S. Lawoe. When in the other parts of India, the response to Swadeshi was limited to symbolic gestures of making candles and bangles, the idea of forging a Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company was really spectacular. V.O.C invoked the rich history of the region and the maritime glory of India's past and used it as a reference point to galvanize the public opinion in favour of a Swadeshi venture in the sea.
- The initiative of V.O.C. was lauded by the national leaders. Lokmanya Tilak wrote about the success of the Swadeshi Navigation Company in his papers Kesari and Mahratta. Aurobindo Ghose also lauded the Swadeshi efforts and helped to promote the sale of shares of the company. The major shareholders included Pandithurai Thevar and Haji Fakir Mohamed.
- The initial response of the British administration was to ignore the Swadeshi company. As patronage for Swadeshi Company increased, the

European officials exhibited blatant bias and racial partiality against the Swadeshi steamship.

### (c) The Coral Mill Strike

- After attending the session of the Indian National Congress at Surat, V.O.C. on his return decided to work on building a political organisation. While looking for an able orator, he came across Subramania Siva, a swadeshi preacher. From February to March 1907, both the leaders addressed meetings almost on a daily basis at the beach in Tuticorin, educating the people about swadeshi and the boycott campaign. The meetings were attended by thousands of people. These public gatherings were closely monitored by the administration.
- In 1908, the abject working and living conditions of the Coral Mill workers attracted the attention of V.O.C and Siva. In the next few days, both the leaders addressed the mill workers. In March 1908, the workers of the Coral Cotton Mills, inspired by the address went on strike. It was one of the earliest organised labour agitations in India.
- The strike of the mill workers was fully backed by the nationalist newspapers. The mill owners, however, did not budge and was supported by the government which had decided to suppress the strike. To further increase the pressure on the workers, the leaders were prohibited from holding any meetings in Tuticorin. Finally, the mill owners decided to negotiate with the workers and concede their demands
- This victory of the workers generated excitement among the militants in Bengal and it was hailed by the newspapers in Bengal. For instance, Aurobindo Ghosh's *Bande Matram* hailed the strike as "forging a bond between educated class and the masses, which is the first great step towards swaraj.... Every victory of Indian labour is a victory for the nation...."

### (d) Subramania Bharati: Poet and Nationalist

- The growth of newspapers, both in English and Tamil language, aided the swadeshi movement in Tamil Nadu. G. Subramaniam was one of the first among the leaders to use newspapers to spread the nationalist message across a larger audience. Subramaniam, along with five others, founded

*The Hindu* (in English) and *Swadesamitran* (which was the first ever Tamil daily). In 1906 a book was published by Subramaniam to condemn the British actions during the Congress Conference in Barsal. *Swadesamitran* extensively reported nationalist activities, particularly the news regarding V.O.C. and his speeches in Tuticorin.

- Subramania Bharati became the sub-editor of *Swadesamitran* around the time (1904) when Indian nationalism was looking for a fresh direction. Bharati was also editing *Chakravartini*, a Tamil monthly devoted to the cause of Indian women.
- Two events had a significant impact on Subramania Bharati. A meeting in 1905 with Sister Nivedita, an Irish woman and a disciple of Vivekananda, whom he referred to as Gurumani (teacher), greatly inspired his nationalist ideals. The churning within the Congress on the nature of engagement with the British rule was also a contributory factor.
- As discussed earlier in this lesson, the militants ridiculed the mendicancy of the moderates who wanted to follow the constitutional methods. Bharati had little doubt, in his mind, that the British rule had to be challenged with a fresh approach and methods applied by the militant nationalists appealed to him more. For instance, his fascination with Tilak grew after the Surat session of the Congress in 1907. He translated into Tamil Tilak's *Tenets of the New Party* and a booklet on the Madras militants' trip to the Surat Congress in 1907. Bharati edited a Tamil weekly *India*, which became the voice of the radicals.

#### **(e) Arrest and imprisonment of V.O.C. and Subramania Siva**

- On March 9, 1907, Bipin Chandra Pal was released from prison after serving a six-month jail sentence. The swadeshi leaders in Tamil Nadu planned to celebrate the day of his release as 'Swarajya Day' in Tirunelveli. The local administration refused permission. V.O.C., Subramania Siva and Padmanabha Iyengar defied the ban and went ahead. They were arrested on March 12, 1908, on charges of sedition.
- The local public, angered over the arrest of the prominent swadeshi leaders, reacted violently. Shops were closed in a general show of defiance. The municipality building and the police station in Tirunelveli were set on fire. More importantly, the mill workers came out in large numbers to

protest the arrest of swadeshi leaders. After a few incidents of confrontation with the protesting crowd, the police open fired, and four people were killed.

- On 7 July 1908, V.O.C. and Subramania Siva were found guilty and imprisoned on charges of sedition. Siva was awarded a sentence of 10 years of transportation for his seditious speech whereas V.O.C. got a life term (20 years) for abetting him. V.O.C. was given another life sentence for his own seditious speech. This draconian sentence reveals how seriously the Tirunelveli agitation was viewed by the government.
- In the aftermath of this incident, the repression of the British administration was not limited to the arrest of a few leaders. In fact, people who had actively participated in the protest were also punished and a punitive tax was imposed on the people of Tirunelveli and Tuticorin.

Excerpts from the Judgment in the case of King Emperor versus V.O.C. and Subramania Siva (4 November 1908). "It seems to me that sedition at any time is a most serious offense. It is true that the case is the first of its kind in the Presidency, but the present condition of other Presidencies where the crime seems to have secured a foothold would seem to indicate that light sentences of imprisonment of a few months or maybe a year or two are instances of misplaced leniency. ...The first object of a sentence is that it shall be deterrent not to the criminal alone but to others who feel any inclination to follow his example. Here we have to deal with a campaign of sedition which nearly ended in revolt. The accused are morally responsible for all the lives lost in quelling the riots that ensued on their arrest".

#### **(f) Ashe Murder**

- Repression of the Swadeshi efforts in Tuticorin and the subsequent arrest and humiliation of the swadeshi leaders generated anger among the youth. A plan was hatched to avenge the Tirunelveli event. A sustained campaign in the newspapers about the repressive measures of the British administration also played a decisive role in building people's anger against the administration.
- In June 1911, the collector of Tirunelveli, Robert Ashe, was shot dead at Maniyachi Railway station by Vanchinathan. Born in the Travancore state

in 1880, he was employed as a forest guard at Punalur in the then Travancore state. He was one of the members of a radical group called Bharata Mata Association. The aim of the association was to kill the European officers and inspire Indians to revolt, which they believed would eventually lead to Swaraj. Vanchinathan was trained in the use of a revolver, as part of the mission, by V.V. Subramanianar in Pondicherry.

- After shooting Ashe at the Maniyachi Junction, Vanchinathan shot himself with the same pistol. A letter was found in his pocket which helps to understand the strands of inspiration for the revolutionaries like Vanchinathan.

### **The aftermath of the Assassination**

- During the course of the trial, the British government was able to establish that V.V.S and other political exiles in Pondicherry were in close and active association with the accused in the Ashe murder conspiracy. The colonial administration grew more suspicious with the Pondicherry groups and their activities. Such an atmosphere further scuttled the possibility of nationalistic propaganda and their activities in Tamil Nadu. As a fall-out of the repressive measure taken by the colonial government, the nationalist movement in Tamil Nadu entered a period of lull and some sort of revival happened only with the Home Rule Movement in 1916.



### 3. Impact of World War I on Indian Freedom Movement

#### Introduction

- Several events that preceded the First World War had a bearing on Indian nationalist politics. In 1905 Japan had defeated Russia. In 1908 the Young Turks and in 1911 the Chinese nationalists, using Western methods and ideas, had overthrown their governments. Along with the First World War these events provide the background to Indian nationalism during 1916 and 1920.
- Europe was the main theatre of the War, though fighting took place in others parts of the world as well. The British recruited a vast contingent of Indians to serve in Europe, Africa and West Asia. After the War, the soldiers came back with new ideas which had an impact on the Indian society. India had to cough up around £ 367 million, of which £ 229 million as direct cash and the rest through loans to offset the war expenses. India also sent war materials to the value £ 250 million. This caused enormous economic distress, triggering discontent amongst Indians.
- The nationalist politics was in low key, since the Indian National Congress had split into moderates and extremists, while the Muslim league supported British interests in war. In 1916 “the extremists” led by Tilak had gained control of Congress. This led to the rise of Home Rule Movement in India under the leadership of Dr Annie Besant in South India and Tilak in Western India. The Congress was reunited during the war. The strength of Indian nationalism was increased by the agreement signed between Hindus and Muslims, known as the Lucknow Pact, in 1916.
- During the War, western revolutionary ideas were influencing the radical nationalists and so the British tried to suppress the national movement by passing repressive acts. Of all the repressive acts, the most draconic was the Rowlatt Act. This act was strongly criticized by the Indian leaders and they organised meetings to protest against the act. The international events too had its impact on India, such as the revolution in Russia. The defeat of Turkey

- In World War I and the severe terms of the Treaty of Sevres signed thereafter undermined the position of Sultan of Turkey as Khalifa. Out of the resentment was born the Khilafat Movement.
- India and Indians had taken an active part in the War believing that Britain would reward India's loyalty. But only disappointment was in store. Thus the War had multiple effects on Indian society, economy and polity. In this lesson we discuss the role played by Home Rule League, factors leading to the signing of Lucknow Pact and its provisions, the repressive measures of the British culminating in Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, the Khilafat Movement and the rise of an organized labour movement.

### **All India Home Rule League**

- We may recall that many foreigners such as A.O. Hume had played a pivotal role in our freedom movement in the early stages. Dr Annie Besant played a similar role in the early part of the twentieth century. Besant was Irish by birth and had been active in the Irish home rule, fabian socialist and birth control movements while in Britain. She joined the Theosophical Society, and came to India in 1893. She founded the Central Hindu College in Benaras (later upgraded as Benaras Hindu University by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in 1916). With the death of H. S. Olcott in 1907, Besant succeeded him as the international president of the Theosophical Society. She was actively spreading the theosophical ideas from its headquarters, Adyar in Chennai, and gained the support of a number of educated followers such as Jannadas Dwarkadas, George Arundale, Shankerlal Banker, Indulal Yagnik, C.P. Ramaswamy and B.P. Wadia.
- In 1914 was when Britain announced its entry in First World War, it was claimed that it fighting for freedom and democracy. Indian leaders believed and supported the British war efforts. Soon they were disillusioned as there was no change in the British attitude towards India. Moreover, split into moderate and extremist wings, the Indian National Congress was not strong enough to press for further political reforms towards self-rule. The Muslim League was looked upon suspiciously by the British once the Sultan of Turkey entered the War supporting the Central powers.

- It was in this backdrop that Besant entered into Indian Politics. She started a weekly The Commonweal in 1914. The weekly focussed on religious liberty, national education, social and political reforms. She published a book How India Wrought for Freedom in 1915. In this book she asserted that the beginnings of national consciousness are deeply embedded in its ancient past.
- She gave the call, 'The moment of England's difficulty is the moment of India's opportunity' and wanted Indian leaders to press for reforms. She toured England and made many speeches in the cause of India's freedom. She also tried to form an Indian party in the Parliament but was unsuccessful. Her visit, however, aroused sympathy for India. On her return, she started a daily newspaper New India on July 14, 1915. She revealed her concept of self-rule in a speech at Bombay: "I mean by self-government that the country shall have a government by councils, elected by the people, and responsible to the House". She organized public meetings and conferences to spread the idea and demanded that India be granted self-government on the lines of the White colonies after the War.
- On September 28, 1915, Besant made a formal declaration that she would start the Home Rule League Movement for India with objectives on the lines of the Irish Home Rule League. The moderates did not like the idea of establishing another separate organisation. She too realised that the sanction of the Congress party was necessary for her movement to be successful.
- In December 1915 due to the efforts of Tilak and Besant, the Bombay session of Congress suitably altered the constitution of the Congress party to admit the members from the extremist section. In the session she insisted on the Congress taking up the Home Rule League programme before September 1916, failing which she would organize the Home Rule League on her own.
- In 1916, two Home Rule Movements were launched in the country: one under Tilak and the other under Besant with their spheres of activity well demarcated. The twin objectives of the Home Rule League were the establishment of Home Rule for India in British Empire and arousing in the Indian masses a sense of pride for the Motherland.

### (a) Tilak Home Rule League

- Tilak Home Rule League was set up at the Bombay Provincial conference held at Belgaum in April 1916. It League was to work in Maharashtra (including Bombay city), Karnataka, the Central Provinces and Berar. Tilak's League was organised into six branches and Annie Besant's League was given the rest of India.
- Tilak popularised the demand for Home Rule through his lectures. The popularity of his League was confined to Maharashtra and Karnataka but claimed a membership of 14,000 in April 1917 and 32,000 by early 1918. On 23 July 1916 on his 60th birthday Tilak was arrested for propagating the idea of Home Rule.

- Home Rule: It refers to a self-government granted by a central or regional government to its dependent political units on condition that their people should remain politically loyal to it. This was a common feature in the ancient Roman Empire and the modern British Empire. In Ireland the Home Rule Movement gathered force in the 1880s and a system of Home Rule was established by the Government of Ireland Act (1920) in six counties of Northern Ireland and later by the Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921) in the remaining 26 counties in the south.

### (b) Besant's Home Rule League

- Finding no signs from the Congress, Besant herself inaugurated the Home Rule League at Madras in September 1916. Its branches were established at Kanpur, Allahabad, Benaras, Mathura, Calicut and Ahmednagar. She made an extensive tour and spread the idea of Home Rule. She declared that "the price of India's loyalty is India's Freedom". Moderate congressmen who were dissatisfied with the inactivity of the Congress joined the Home Rule League. The popularity of the League can be gauged from the fact that Jawaharlal Nehru, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, B. Chakravarti and Jitendralal Banerji, Satyamurti and Khaliquzzaman were taking up the membership of the League.
- As Besant's Home Rule Movement became very popular in Madras, the Government of Madras decided to suppress it. Students were barred from attending its meetings. In June 1917 Besant and her associates, B.P. Wadia

and George Arundale were interred in Ootacamund. The government's repression strengthened the supporters, and with renewed determination they began to resist. To support Besant, Sir S. Subramaniam renounced his knighthood. Many leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Surendranath Banerjea who had earlier stayed away from the movement enlisted themselves. At the AICC meeting convened on 28 July 1917 Tilak advocated the use of civil disobedience if they were not released. Jamnadas Dwarkadas and Shankerlal Banker, on the orders of Gandhi, collected one thousand signatures willing to defy the interment orders and march to Besant's place of detention. Due to the growing resistance the interned nationalists were released.

- On 20 August 1917 the new Secretary of State Montagu announced that 'self-governing institutions and responsible government' was the goal of the British rule in India. Almost overnight this statement converted Besant into a near-loyalist. In September 1917, when she was released, she was elected the President of Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in 1917.

### **(c) Importance of the Home Rule Movement**

- The Home Rule Leagues prepared the ground for mass mobilization paving the way for the launch of Gandhi's satyagraha movements. Many of the early Gandhian satyagrahis had been members of the Home Rule Leagues. They used the organisational networks created by the Leagues to spread the Gandhian method of agitation. Home Rule League was the first Indian political movement to cut across sectarian lines and have members from the Congress, League, Theosophist and the Laborites.

### **(d) Decline of Home Rule Movement**

- Home Rule Movement declined after Besant accepted the proposed Montagu- Chelmsford Reforms and Tilak went to Britain in September 1918 to pursue the libel case that he had filed against Valentine Chirol, the author of Indian Unrest.

The Indian Home Rule League was renamed the Commonwealth of India League and used to lobby British MPs in support of self-government for India within the empire, or dominion status along the lines of Canada and Australia. It was transformed by V.K. Krishna Menon into the India League in 1929.

## Impact of the War

- During the years prior to First World War the political condition of the India was in disarray. In order to win over the “Moderates” and the Muslim League with a view to isolating the “Extremists” the British passed the Minto- Morley Reforms in 1909. The Moderates observed a policy of wait and watch. The Muslim League welcomed the separate electorate accorded to them. In 1913 a new group of leaders joined the League. The most prominent among them was Muhammad Ali Jinnah who was already a member of the Congress and demanded more reforms for the Muslims.
- The First World War provided the objective conditions for the revolutionary activity in India. The revolutionaries wanted to make use of Britain's difficulty during the War to their advantage. The Ghadar Movement was one of its outcomes.
- The First World War had a major impact on the freedom movement. Initially, the British didn't care for Indian support. Once the war theatre moved to West Asia and Africa the British were forced to look for Indian support. In this context Indian leaders decided to put pressure on the British Government for reforms. The Congress and Muslim League had their annual session at Bombay in 1915 and spoke on similar tones. In October 1916, the Hindu and Muslim elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council addressed a memorandum to the Viceroy on the post-War reforms. The British Government was unmoved. The Congress and the League met at Calcutta in November 1916 and deliberated on the memorandum. It also agreed on the composition of the legislatures and the number of representation to be allowed to the two communities in the post-War reforms.
- Parallel to this, Tilak and Besant were advocating Home Rule. Due to their efforts the Bombay session accepted to take back the extremist section and,

consequently, the constitution of the Congress was altered. 1916 was therefore a historic year since the Congress, Muslim League and the Home Rule League held their annual sessions at Lucknow. Ambika Charan Mazumdar, Congress president welcomed the extremists: "... after ten years of painful separation ... Indian National Party have come to realize the fact that united they stand, but divided they fall, and brothers have at last met brothers..." The Congress got its old vigour with extremists back into it.

- Besant and Tilak also played an important role in bringing the Congress and the Muslim League together under what is popularly known as the Congress–League Pact or the Lucknow Pact. Jinnah played a pivotal role during the Pact. The agreements accepted at Calcutta in November 1916 were confirmed by the annual sessions of the Congress and the League in December 1916.

Lala Hardayal, who settled in San Francisco, founded Pacific Coast Hindustan Association in 1913, with Sohan Singh Bhakna as its president. This organization was popularly called Ghadar Party. ('Ghadar' means rebellion in Urdu.) The members of this party were largely immigrant Sikhs of US and Canada. The party published a journal called Ghadar. It began publication from San Francisco on November 1, 1913. Later it was published in Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and other languages.

The Ghadar Movement was an important episode in India's freedom struggle. A ship named Komagatamaru, filled with Indian immigrants was turned back from Canada. As the ship returned to India several of its passengers were killed or arrested in a clash with the British police. This incident left a deep mark on the Indian nationalist movement.

### **Provisions of the Lucknow Pact**

1. Provinces should be freed as much as possible from Central control in administration and finance.
2. Four-fifths of the Central and Provincial Legislative Councils should be elected, and one-fifth nominated.
3. Four-fifths of the provincial and central legislatures were to be elected on as broad a franchise as possible.

4. Half the executive council members, including those of the central executive council were to be Indians elected by the councils themselves.
  5. The Congress also agreed to separate electorates for Muslims in provincial council elections and for preferences in their favour (beyond the proportions indicated by population) in all provinces except the Punjab and Bengal, where some ground was given to the Hindu and Sikh minorities. This pact paved the way for Hindu-Muslim cooperation in the Khilafat Movement and Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement.
  6. The Governments, Central and Provincial, should be bound to act in accordance with resolutions passed by their Legislative Councils unless they were vetoed by the Governor-General or Governors-in-Council and, in that event, if the resolution was passed again after an interval of not less than one year, it should be put into effect;
  7. The relations of the Secretary of State with the Government of India should be similar to those of the Colonial Secretary with the Governments of the Dominions, and India should have an equal status with that of the Dominions in any body concerned with imperial affairs.
- The Lucknow Pact paved the way for Hindu Muslim Unity. Sarojini Ammaiyar called Jinnah, the chief architect of the Lucknow Pact, "the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity".
  - The Lucknow Pact proved that the educated class both from the Congress and the League could work together with a common goal. This unity reached its climax during the Khilafat and the Non-Cooperation Movements.

### **Repressive Measures of the Colonial State**

- Parallel to the Congress there emerged revolutionary groups who attempted to overthrow away the British government through violence methods. The revolutionary movements constituted an important landmark in India's freedom struggle. It began in the end of the nineteenth century and gained its momentum from the time of the partition of Bengal. The revolutionaries were the first to demand complete freedom. Maharashtra, Bengal, Punjab were the major centers of revolutionary



activity. For a brief while Madras presidency was also an active ground of the revolutionary activity.

- In order to crush the growing nationalist movement, the government adopted many measures. Lord Curzon created the Criminal Intelligence Department (CID) in 1903 to secretly collect information on the activities of nationalists. The Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act (1908) and the Explosives Substances Act (1908), and shortly thereafter the Indian Press Act (1910), and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act (1911) were passed. The British suspected that some Indian nationalists were in contact with revolutionaries abroad. So the Foreigners Ordinance was promulgated in 1914 which restricted the entry of foreigners. A majority of these legislations were passed in order to break the base of the revolutionary movements. The colonial state also resorted to banning meetings, printing and circulation of seditious materials for propaganda, and by detaining the suspects.

### **The Defence of India Act, 1915**

- Also referred to as the Defence of India Regulations Act, it was an emergency criminal law enacted with the intention of curtailing the nationalist and revolutionary activities during the First World War. The Act allowed suspects to be tried by special tribunals each consisting of three Commissioners appointed by the Local Government. The act empowered the tribunal to inflict sentences of death, transportation for life, and imprisonment of up to ten years for the violation of rules or orders framed under the act. The trial was to be in camera and the decisions were not subject to appeal. The act was later applied during the First Lahore Conspiracy trial. This Act, after the end of First World War, formed the basis of the Rowlatt Act.

### **Khilafat Movement**

- In the First World War the Sultan of Turkey sided with the Triple Alliance against the allied powers and attacked Russia. The Sultan was also the Caliph and was the custodian of the Islamic sacred places. After the war, Britain decided to weaken the position of Turkey and the Treaty of Sevres was signed. The eastern part of the Turkish Empire such as Syria and Lebanon were mandated to France, while Palestine and Jordan became British protectorates. Thus the allied powers decided to end the caliphate.

- The dismemberment of the Caliphate was seen as a blow to Islam. Muslims around the world, sympathetic to the cause of the Caliph, decided to oppose the move. Muslims in India also organised themselves under the leadership of the Ali brothers – Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali started a movement known as Khalifat Movement. The aim was to support the Ottoman Empire and protest against the British rule in India. Numerous Muslim leaders such as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, M.A. Ansari, Sheikh Shaukat Ali Siddiqui and Syed Ataulah Shah Bukhari joined the movement.
- The demands of the Khilafat Movement were presented by Mohammad Ali to the diplomats in Paris in March 1920. They were:
  1. The Sultan of Turkey's position of Caliph should not be disturbed.
  2. The Muslim sacred places must be handed over to the Sultan and should be controlled by him.
  3. The Sultan must be left with sufficient territory to enable him to defend the Islamic faith and
  4. The Jazirat-ul-Arab (Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Palestine) must remain under his sovereignty.

Gandhi had been honoured with Kaisari- Hind gold medal for his humanitarian work in South Africa. He had also received the Zulu War silver medal for his services as an officer of the Indian volunteer ambulance corps in 1906 and Boer War silver medal for his services as assistant superintendent of the Indian volunteer stretcher-bearer corps during Boer War of 1899-1900. When Gandhi launched the scheme of non-cooperation in connection with Khilafat Movement, he returned all the medals saying, '...events that have happened during the past one month have confirmed in me the opinion that the Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, criminal and unjust manner and have been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend their immorality. I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a government.'

- The demands of the movement had nothing do to with India but the question of Caliph was used as a symbol by the Khilafat leaders to unite

the Indian Muslim community who were divided along regional, linguistic, class and sectarian lines. In Gail Minault's words: "A pan-Islamic symbol opened the way to pan- Indian Islamic political mobilization." It was anti-British, which inspired Gandhi to support this cause in a bid to bring the Muslims into the mainstream of Indian nationalism. Gandhi also saw this as an opportunity to strengthen Hindu-Muslim unity.

- The Khilafat issue was interpreted differently by different sections. Lower-class Muslims in U.P. interpreted the Urdu word khilaf (against) and used it as a symbol of general revolt against authority, while the Mappillais of Malabar converted it into a banner of anti-landlord revolt.

### **Rise of Labour Movement**

- Introduction of machinery, new methods of production, concentration of factories in certain big cities gave birth to a new class of wage earners called factory workers. In India, the factory workers, mostly drawn from villages, initially remained submissive and unorganised. Many leaders like Sorabjee Shapoorji and N.M. Lokhanday of Bombay and Sasipada Banerjee of Bengal raised their voice for protecting the interests of the industrial labourers.
- In the aftermath of Swadeshi Movement (1905) Indian industries began to thrive. During the War the British encouraged Indian industries which manufactured war time goods. As the war progressed they wanted more goods so more workers were recruited. Once the war ended workers were laid off and production cut down. Further prices increased dramatically in the post-War situation. India was also in the grip of a world-wide epidemic of influenza. In response labourers began to organize to fight and trade unions were formed to protect the interests of the workers. The success of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 also had its effect on Indian labour.
- A wave of ideas of class consciousness and enlightenment swept the world of Indian labours. The Indian soldiers who had fought in Europe brought the news of good labour conditions. The industrial unrest that grew up as a result of grave economic difficulties created by War, and the widening gulf between the employers and the employees, and the establishment of

International Labour Organisation of the League of Nations brought mass awakening among the labours.

- Madras played a pivotal role in the history of labour movement of India. The first trade union in the modern sense, the Madras Labour Union, was formed in 1918 by B.P. Wadia. The union was formed mainly due to the ill-treatment of Indian worker in the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills, Perambur. The working conditions was poor. Short interval for mid-day meal, frequent assaults on workers by the European assistants and inadequate wages led to the formation of this union. This union adopted collective bargaining and used trade unionism as a weapon for class struggle.
- This wave spread to other parts of India and many unions were formed at this time such as the Indian Seamen's Union both at Calcutta and Bombay, the Punjab Press Employers Association, the G.I.P. Railway Workers Union Bombay, M.S.M. Railwaymen's Union, Union of the Postmen and Port Trust Employees Union at Bombay and Calcutta, the Jamshedpur Labour Association the Indian Colliery Employees Association of Jharia and the Unions of employees of various railways. To suppress the labour movement the Government, with the help of the capitalists, tried by all means to subdue the labourers. They imprisoned strikers, burnt their houses, and fined the unions, but the labourers were determined in their demands.
- Nationalist leaders and intellectuals were moved by the plight of the workers, and many of them worked towards organizing them into unions. Their involvement also led to the politicization of the working class, and added to the strength of the freedom movement as most of the mills were owned by Europeans who were supported by the government.
- On 30 October 1920, representatives of 64 trade unions, with a membership of 140,854, met in Bombay and established the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) under the Chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Rai. It was supported by national leaders like Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru, C.R. Das, Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose and others from the Indian National Congress.
- The trade unions slowly involved themselves in the national movement. In April 1919 after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and Gandhi's arrest, the

working class in Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat resorted to strikes, agitations and demonstrations. Trade unions were not recognised by the capitalists or the government in the beginning. But the unity of the workers and the strength of their movement forced the both to recognise them. From 1919-20 the number of registered trade unions increased from 107 to 1833 in 1946-47.

