

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA

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Constitutional Development And National Movement In India

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UNIT – I**Lesson 1.1 - Rule of the East India Company and the Revolt of 1857**

1. Rule of the East India Company and the revolt of 1857: Causes and consequences
2. India under the crown: Government of India act, 1858
3. Indian council's act 1861 and 1892

(1) Rule of East India Company and the revolt of 1857 : Causes and consequences

India's trade relations with Europe go back to the ancient days of the Greeks. During the Middle Ages trade between Europe and India and South-East Asia was carried on along several routes. The Asian part of the trade was carried on mostly by Arab merchants and sailors, while the Mediterranean and European part was the virtual monopoly of the Italians. Goods from Asia to Europe passed through many states and many hands. Yet, trade remained highly profitable.

The old trading routes between the East and the West came under Turkish control after the Ottoman conquest of Asia Minor and the capture of Constantinople in 1453. Moreover, the merchants of Venice and Genoa monopolised the trade between Europe and Asia and refused to let the new nation states of Western Europe, particularly Spain and Portugal, have any share in the trade through these old routes. The West European states and merchants therefore began to search for new and safer sea routes to India and the Spice Islands in Indonesia, then known as the East Indies. They wanted to break the Arab and Venetian trade monopolies, bypass Turkish hostility, and open direct trade relations with the East. They were well-equipped to do so, as great advances in ship-building and the science of navigation had taken place during the fifteenth century. Moreover, the Renaissance had generated a great spirit of adventure among the people of Western Europe.

The first steps were taken by Portugal and Spain whose seamen, sponsored and controlled by their governments, began a great era of geographical discoveries. In 1492, Columbus of Spain set out to reach India and discovered America instead. In 1498, Vasco da Gama of Portugal discovered a new and all-sea route from Europe to India.

He sailed round Africa via the Cape of Good Hope and reached Calicut. He returned with a cargo which sold for 60 times the cost of his voyage. These and other navigational discoveries opened a new chapter in the history of the world. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were to witness an enormous increase in world trade. The vast new continent of America was opened to Europe and relations between Europe and Asia were completely transformed.

Another major source of early capital accumulation or enrichment for European countries was their penetration of Africa in the middle of the fifteenth century. In the beginning, the gold and ivory of Africa had attracted the foreigner. Very soon, however, trade with Africa centred around the slave trade. In the sixteenth century this trade was a monopoly of Spain and Portugal. Later it was dominated by Dutch, French and British merchants. Year after year, particularly after 1650, thousands of Africans were sold as slaves in the West Indies and in North and South America. The slave ships carried manufactured goods from Europe to Africa, exchanged them on the coast of Africa for African slaves, took these slaves across the Atlantic and exchanged them for the colonial produce of plantations or mines, and finally brought back and sold this produce in Europe. It was on the immense profits of this triangular trade that the commercial supremacy of England and France was to be based. A great deal of West European and North American prosperity was based on the slave trade and the plantations worked by slave labour. Moreover, profits of slave trade and the slave-worked plantations provided some of the capital which financed the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A similar role was later played by the wealth extracted from India.

In the sixteenth century, European merchants and soldiers also began the long process of first penetrating and then subjecting Asian lands to their control. Portugal had a monopoly of the highly profitable Eastern trade for nearly a century. In India, Portugal established its trading settlements at Cochin, Goa, Diu and Daman. From the beginning, the Portuguese combined the use of force with trade. In this they were helped by the superiority of their armed ships which enabled them to dominate the seas. A handful of Portuguese soldiers and sailors could maintain their position on the seas against the much more powerful land powers of India and Asia. By threatening Mughal shipping, they also succeeded in securing many trading concessions from the Mughal Emperors.

Under the viceroyalty of Alfonso D'Albuquerque, who captured Goa in 1510, the Portuguese established their domination over the entire Asian coast from Hormuz in the Persian Gulf to Malacca in Malaya and the Spice Islands in Indonesia. They seized Indian territories on the coast and waged constant war to expand their trade and dominions and safeguard their trade monopoly from their European rivals. Nor did they shy away from piracy and plunder. They also indulged in inhuman cruelties and lawlessness. In spite of their barbaric behaviour, their possessions in India survived for a century because they enjoyed control over the high seas, their soldiers and administrators maintained strict discipline, and they did not have to face the might of the Mughal Empire as South India was outside Mughal influence.

In the latter half of the sixteenth century, England and Holland, and later France, all growing commercial and naval powers, waged a fierce struggle against the Spanish and Portuguese monopoly of world trade. In this struggle the latter had to go under. The English and the Dutch merchants were now able to use the Cape of Good Hope route to India and so join in the race for empire in the East. In the end, the Dutch gained control over Indonesia and the British over India, Sri Lanka, and Malaya.

In 1602, the Dutch East India Company was formed and the Dutch States General-the Dutch parliament-gave it a charter empowering it to make war, conclude treaties, acquire territories and build fortresses. The main interest of the Dutch lay not in India but in the Indonesian Islands of Java, Sumatra, and the Spice Islands where spices were produced. They soon turned out the Portuguese from the Malay Straits and the Indonesian Islands and, in 1623, defeated English attempts to establish themselves there. They also established trading depots at Surat, Broach, Cambay and Ahmedabad in Gujarat in west India, Cochin in Kerala, Nagapatam in Madras, Masulipatam in Andhra, Chinsura in Bengal, Patna in Bihar and Agra in Uttar Pradesh. In 1658 they also conquered Sri Lanka from the Portuguese.

The English merchants looked greedily at the Asian trade. The success of the Portuguese, the rich cargoes of spices, calicoes, silk, gold, pearls, drugs, porcelain, and ebony they carried and the high profits they made inflamed the imagination of the merchants of England and made them impatient to participate in such profitable commerce. An English association or company to trade with the East was formed in 1599 under the auspices of a group of merchants known as the Merchant Adventurers.

The company, popularly known as the East India Company, was granted a royal charter and the exclusive privilege to trade in the East by Queen Elizabeth on 31 December 1600. In 1608 it decided to open a 'factory', the name given at the time to a trading depot, at Surat on the west coast of India and sent Captain Hawkins to Jahangir's court to obtain royal favours. Consequently, the English Company was given permission by a royal farman to open factories at several places on the west coast.

In 1615 British ambassador Sir Thomas Roe reached the Mughal court.

Roe received an imperial farman to trade and establish factories in any part of the Mughal empire. In 1662 King Charles II received the island of Bombay as dowry from the Portuguese for marrying their princess. Eventually, the Portuguese lost all their possessions in India except Goa, Diu and Daman. The English East India Company fell out with the Dutch Company over the division of the spice trade of the Indonesian Islands. The intermittent war (1657-1664) in India between the two powers when the English gave up all claims to Indonesia while the Dutch agreed to leave alone the English settlements in India.

The Growth of the East India Company's Trade and Influence (1600-1714)

By 1623 the English East India company had established factories (trading posts) at Surat, Broach, Ahmedabad, Agra, and Masulipatam. From the very beginning, it combined trade and diplomacy with war and control of the territory where their factories were situated.

Conditions in the south were more favourable to the English as they did not have to face a strong Indian government there. The great Vijayanagar Kingdom had been overthrown in 1565 and its

place taken by a number of petty and weak states. The English were able to appeal and overawe them through military and economic strength. The English opened their first 'factory' in the south at Masulipatam in 1611. But soon centre of their activity was shifted to Madras, the lease of which was granted to them by the local Raja in 1639. The Raja authorised them to fortify the place, administer it, and coin money on condition of payment to him of half of the customs revenue of the port. Here the English built a small fort around their factory called Fort St. George.

The English entered India as merchants and soon emerged as masters of Indian masses. This company made Indians pay for the conquest of their own country.

The company acquired the island of Bombay from the British government in 1668 and fortified it. The English found here a large and easy-to-defend port. For that reason, and because English trade was threatened at the time by the rising Maratha power, Bombay soon superseded Surat as the headquarters of the Company on the west coast.

In Eastern India, the Company had opened its first factories in Orissa in 1633. In 1651 it received permission to trade at Hugli in Bengal. It soon opened factories at Patna in Bihar, Balasore in Orissa and Dhaka and other places in Bengal. It now desired to have an independent settlement in Bengal too. It aimed at establishing political power in India which would enable it to compel the Mughals to grant them a free hand in trade, to force Indians to sell cheap, and buy dear, to eliminate competition from rival European companies. The English wanted to pursue an independent trade policy. Political power would have also enabled it to appropriate Indian revenues and thus to conquer the country with its own men and resources. Hostilities between the English and the Mughal emperor broke out in 1686 after the former had sacked Hugli and confronted the emperor. Here the English had seriously misjudged the situation and underestimated Mughal strength. The Mughal empire under Aurangzeb was even now more than a match for the forces of petty the East India Company. The war ended disastrously for the company. They were driven out of their factories in Bengal and compelled to seek refuge in a fever-stricken island at the mouth of the Ganga. Their factories at Surat, Masulipatam, and Vishakhapatam were seized and their fort at Bombay besieged. Having realised that they were not yet strong enough to overpower the Mughals, the English once again became humble petitioners and submitted "that the ill crimes they have done may be pardoned". They expressed their willingness to carry out trade under the protection of the Indian rulers. Obviously, they had learnt their lesson. Once again they depended on flattery and humble entreaties to receive trading concessions from the Mughal emperor.

The Mughals readily pardoned the English folly as they had no means of knowing that these harmless-looking foreign traders would later pose a serious threat to the country. Instead they did recognise that trading of Indian articles in foreign lands carried on by the Company benefited Indian artisans and merchants and thereby enriched the State treasury. Moreover, the English, though weak on land, were, because of their naval supremacy, capable of completely running Indian trade and shipping to Iran, West Asia, Northern and Eastern Africa and East Asia. Aurangzeb

therefore allowed them to resume trade on payment of Rs 150,000 as compensation. In 1698, the Company acquired the zamindari of the three villages Sutanati, Kalikata, and Govindpur. It built Fort William around its factory here. These villages gradually grew into a city which came to be known as Calcutta. In 1717 the Company secured from Emperor Farrukh Siyar an imperial order confirming the privileges granted in 1691 and extending them to Gujarat and the Deccan. But during the first half of the eighteenth century Bengal was ruled by strong Nawabs such as Murshid Quli Khan and Alivardi Khan. They strictly controlled the activities of English traders and prevented them from misusing their privileges. They prevented them from strengthening their fortifications at Calcutta or to rule the city independently. The East India Company remained here a mere zamindar of the nawab.

The commercial affairs of the company flourished while its political ambitions were thwarted. Its imports from India into England increased from £500,000 in 1708 to £1,795,000 in 1740. British settlements in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta became the centres of flourishing cities. These cities attracted large number of bankers and Indian merchants. This was due partly to the new commercial opportunities available in the cities and partly to the unsettled conditions and insecurity outside them, caused by the break-up of the Mughal empire. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the population of Madras had increased to 300,000 of Calcutta to 200,000 and of Bombay to 70,000.

The Charter of 1600 granted the East India Company the exclusive right of trading east of the Cape of Good Hope for a period of 15 years. This Company was a strictly closed corporation or a monopoly. In India, a factory of the Company was generally a fortified area within which the warehouse (stores), offices and houses of the Company's employees were situated. No manufacturing activity was carried on in this 'factory'.

Servants of the company were paid very low salaries. Their real income for which they were so keen to take up service in India, came from the permission granted by the company to them to carry on private trade within the country while trade between India and Europe reserved for the Company.

The Anglo-French Struggle in South India

The English East India Company's plans of territorial conquests and political domination, which had been frustrated by Aurangzeb at the

end of the seventeenth century, were revived during 1740s because of the visible decline of Mughal power. Nadir Shah's invasion had revealed the erosion of the central authority. But there was only little scope for foreign penetration in western India where the vigorous Marathas held sway and in eastern India where Alivardi Khan dominated. In southern India, however, conditions were gradually becoming favourable for such foreign adventurers. Central authority had disappeared after Aurangzeb's death, the strong hand of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah was also withdrawn by his death in 1748. Moreover, the Maratha chiefs frequently invaded Hyderabad and the rest of the south collecting chauth. These raids resulted in politically unsettled conditions and administrative disorganisation in the region. The Carnatic also witnessed fratricidal wars of succession.

Such conditions provided the foreigners with an opportunity to expand their political influence and control over the affairs of the south Indian states. But the English were not alone in putting forward commercial and political claims in this region. While they had, by the end of the seventeenth century, eliminated their Portuguese and Dutch rivals, France had emerged as a new rival. From 1744 to 1763 the French and the English were to wage a bitter war for control over the trade, resources and territory of India.

The French East India Company was founded in 1664. It was firmly established at Chandernagore near Calcutta and Pondicherry on the east coast. The latter was completely fortified. The French Company had few other factories at several ports on the east and the west coasts. It also controlled the islands of Mauritius and Reunion in the Indian Ocean.

The French East India Company was majorly dependent on the French government which helped it by giving it treasury grants, subsidies and loans, and in various other ways. Consequently, it was controlled by the government which appointed its directors after 1723. State control of the Company proved to be a drawback. The French state of the time was autocratic, semi-feudal, unpopular and suffered from corruption, inefficiency, instability. Instead of being forward-looking it was decadent, backward, bound by tradition, and in general unsuited to the times. Control by such a state could not but be harmful to the interests of the Company.

In 1742, war started in Europe between France and England. The war in Europe between England and France soon affected situation in India where the two East India Companies clashed with each other. In 1748,

the general war between England and France ended. Though war had ended, the rivalry between the two colonial powers in trade and over the possessions in India continued and had to be decided one way or the other.

The French governor at Pondicherry, Dupleix evolved the strategy of using the well disciplined, modern French army to intervene in the mutual quarrels of the Indian princes and, by supporting one against the other, securing monetary, commercial or territorial favours from the victor. Thus, he conspired to use the resources and armies of the local rajas, nawabs, and chiefs to pursue the interests of the French Company and to expel the English from India. The only barrier to the success of this strategy could have been the refusal of Indian rulers to permit any kind of foreign intervention like this. The Indian princes were guided not by patriotism, but by personal ambition and gain. They invited the foreigners to help them settle accounts with their internal rivals.

In 1748, a situation came up in the Carnatic and Hyderabad which gave full scope to Dupleix's talents for intrigue. In the Carnatic, Chanda Sahib began to conspire against Nawab Anwaruddin. While in Hyderabad after the death of Asaf Jah, Nizam-ul-Mulk, civil war started between his son Nasir Jang and his grandson Muzaffar Jang. Dupleix took this opportunity and concluded a secret treaty with Chanda Sahib and Muzaffar Jang to help them with his well-trained French and Indian forces. The three allies defeated and killed Anwaruddin in a battle at Ambur (1749). The rest of the Carnatic passed under the dominion of Chanda Sahib who granted the French 80 villages around Pondicherry as a reward.

The French were also successful in Hyderabad. Nasir Jang was killed and Muzaffar Jang became the Nizam (Viceroy) of the Deccan. The new Nizam rewarded the French by giving it territories near Pondicherry as well as the town of Masulipatam. He rewarded the company with a sum of Rs 500,000 and another Rs 500,000 to its troops. Dupleix received Rs 2,000,000 and a jagir worth Rs 100,000 a year. He was also made honorary governor of Mughal dominions on the east coast from the river Krishna to Kanya Kumari. Dupleix posted his best officer, Bussy, at Hyderabad with a French army. While the ostensible purpose of this was to protect the Nizam from enemies, it was really aimed at maintaining French influence at his court. While Muzaffar Jang was proceeding towards his capital, he was accidentally killed. Bussy quickly raised Salabat Jang, the third son of Nizam-ul-Mulk, to the throne. In return, the new Nizam granted the French the area in Andhra known as the Northern Sarkars, consisting of

the four districts of Mustafanagar, Ellore, Rajahmundry and Chicacole. Plans of Dupleix in south india had succeeded and French power there was at its height. The French had started out by trying to win Indian states as allies; they had been destroyed by making them clients or satellites.

The English had not been silent spectators of their rival's successes. To overpower French influence and to increase their own, they had been intriguing with Nasir Jang and Muhammad Ali. They decided to throw their entire strength behind Muhammad Ali in 1750. Robert Clive, a young clerk in the Company's service, advised that French pressure on Muhammad Ali (besieged at Trichinopoly) could be released by attacking Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic. This proposal was accepted and Clive assaulted and occupied Arcot with only 200 English and 300 Indian soldiers. As planned, Chanda Sahib and the French were compelled to raise the siege of Trichinopoly. The French forces were defeated repeatedly. Chanda Sahib was soon captured and executed. The French army and its generals had proved unequal to their English counterparts. The French government in the end became weary of the heavy expense of the war in India and it feared losing its American colonies. Hence it initiated peace negotiations and agreed in 1754 to the English demand for the recall of Dupleix from India. This proved to be a big blow to the fortunes of the French Company in India. Another war between England and France broke out and the temporary peace between the two powers ended in 1756. Initially, the English managed to gain control over Bengal. After this, there was little hope for the French cause in India. The rich resources of Bengal helped further English interests. The decisive battle of this war was fought at Wandiwash on 22 January 1760 when the English general, Eyre Coot, defeated Lally. The French had lost all their possessions in India within a year. The war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris (1763). The French factories in India were restored but they could not be fortified or garrisoned with troops adequately. They could serve only as centres of trade; and the French were supposed to live in India under British protection. The English established their rule over the Indian sea. Freed of all European competitors, they could now focus on the task of conquering India.

During their tussle with the French and their Indian allies, the English learnt a few important and valuable lessons. First, in the absence of nationalism in the country, they could advance their political schemes by taking advantage of the mutual differences of the Indian rulers. Second, the trained infantry, armed with modern weapons and backed by artillery

could defeat the old-style Indian armies with ease in pitched battles. Third, it was believed that the Indian soldier trained and armed in the European manner was equal to a White soldier. And since the Indian soldier lacked a feeling of nationalism, he could be hired and employed by anyone who was willing to pay him well. The English now aimed to create a powerful army consisting of Indian soldiers, called sepoy, and officered by Englishmen. With this army and the vast resources of Indian trade and territories under its command, the English East India Company embarked on an era of wars and territorial expansion.

British Occupation of Bengal

The beginnings of British political hold over India may be traced to the battle of Plassey (1757), when the English East India Company's forces defeated Siraj-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Bengal. Bengal was the richest and most fertile province in India. Industries and commerce of Bengal were well developed. The East India Company and its servants had very profitable trading interests here. The Company had secured valuable privileges in 1717 under a royal farman by the Mughal emperor. The company was granted freedom to export and import their goods in Bengal without paying taxes and the right to issue dastaks (passes) for the movement of such goods. The Company's servants were also permitted to conduct trade but were not covered by this farman. They had to pay the same taxes as Indian merchants. This imperial order was a perpetual source of conflict between the Company and the Nawabs of Bengal. It meant loss of revenue to the Bengal government and that the power to issue dastaks for the Company's goods was misused by the Company's servants to evade taxes on their private trade. All the Nawabs of Bengal, from Murshid Quli Khan to Alivardi Khan, had objected to the English interpretation of this farman of 1717. They had compelled the English to pay lump sums to their treasury, and firmly suppressed the misuse of dastaks. The Company had been compelled to accept the authority of the Nawabs in this matter, but its servants had taken every opportunity to evade and defy this authority.

In 1756 the young and quick-tempered Siraj-ud-Daulah succeeded his grandfather, Alivardi Khan. He demanded that the English should trade on the same basis as in the times of Murshid Quli Khan. The English refused to comply as they felt strong after their victory over the French in south India. Instead of agreeing to pay taxes on their goods to the Siraj ud daula, they levied heavy duties on Indian goods entering Calcutta

which was under their control. All this naturally annoyed and angered the young Nawab who also suspected that the English Company was hostile to him and was favouring his rivals for the throne of Bengal. The breaking point came when, without taking the Nawab's permission, the Company began to fortify Calcutta in expectation of the struggle with the French, who were stationed at this time at Chandernagore. Siraj ud daula rightly interpreted this action as an attack upon his sovereignty. How could an independent ruler permit a private company of merchants to build forts or to carry on private wars on his land? In other words, Siraj was willing to let the Europeans stay as merchants but not as masters. He ordered both the English and the French to demolish their fortifications at Calcutta and Chandernagore and to desist from fighting with each other. While the French Company obeyed his order, the English Company refused to do so, its ambition had been whetted and its confidence enhanced by its victories in the Carnatic. It was now determined to remain in Bengal even against the wishes of the Nawab and to trade there on its own terms. It had acknowledged the British government's right to control all its activities; it had accepted restrictions on its trade and power imposed in Britain by the British government; its right to trade with the East had been extinguished by the Parliament in 1693 when its Charter was withdrawn; it had paid heavy bribes to the King, the Parliament, and the politicians of Britain (in one year alone, it had to pay £80,000 in bribes). Nevertheless the English Company demanded the absolute right to trade freely in Bengal irrespective of the Bengal Nawab's orders. This amounted to a direct challenge to the Bengal Nawab's sovereignty. No ruler could possibly accept this position. Siraj-ud-Daulah had the statesmanship to see the long-term implications of the English designs. He decided to make them obey the laws of the land.

Starting with great energy but with undue haste and inadequate preparation, Siraj-ud-Daulah seized the English factory at Kasimbazar, marched on to Calcutta, and occupied Fort William on 20 June 1756. He then retired from Calcutta to celebrate his easy victory, letting the English escape with their ships. This was a mistake for he had underestimated the strength of his enemy.

The English officials took refuge at Fulta near the sea protected by their naval superiority. Here they waited for aid from Madras and, in meantime, organised a web of intrigue and treachery with the leading men of the Nawab's court. Chief among these were Mir Jafar, the Mir Bakshi, Manick Chand, the Officer-in-Charge of Calcutta, Amichand, a rich

merchant, Jagat Seth, the biggest banker of Bengal, and Khadim Khan, who commanded a large number of the Nawab's troops. From Madras came a strong naval and military force under Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive. Clive reconquered Calcutta in the beginning of 1757 and compelled the Nawab to concede all the demands of the English.

The English, however, were not satisfied; they were aiming high. They had decided to instal a more pliant puppet in Siraj-ud-Daulah's place. Having joined a conspiracy organised by the enemies of the young Nawab to place Mir Jafar on the throne of Bengal, they presented the youthful Nawab with an impossible set of demands. Both sides realised that a war would have to be fought between them. They met for battle on the field of Plassey, about 30 km from Murshidabad, on 23 June 1757. The fateful battle of Plassey was a battle only in name. In all, the English lost 29 men while the Nawab lost nearly 500. The major part of the Nawab's army, led by the traitors Mir Jafar and Rai Durlabh, took no part in the fighting. Only a small group of the Nawab's soldiers led by Mir Madan and Mohan Lal fought bravely. The Nawab was forced to flee and was captured and put to death by Mir Jafar's son Miran.

The battle of Plassey was followed, in the words of the Bengali poet Nabin Chandra Sen, by "a night of eternal gloom for India". The English proclaimed Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Bengal and set out to gather the reward. The Company was granted undisputed right to free trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It also received the zamindari of the 24 Parganas near Calcutta. Mir Jafar paid a sum of Rs 17,700,000 as compensation for the attack on Calcutta to the Company and the traders of the city. In addition, he paid large sums as 'gifts' or bribes to the high officials of the Company. Clive, for example, received over two million rupees. Clive later estimated that the Company and its servants had collected more than 30 million Nawab. It was also understood that British merchants and officials would no longer be asked to pay any taxes on their private trade.

The battle of Plassey was of immense historical importance. It paved the way for the Company's mastery of Bengal and eventually of the whole of India. It boosted British prestige and at a single stroke raised them to the status of a major contender for the Indian empire. The rich revenues of Bengal enabled them to organise a strong army and meet the cost of the conquest of the rest of the country. Control over Bengal played a decisive role in the Anglo-French struggle. Lastly, the victory of Plassey enabled

the Company and its servants to amass wealth at the cost of the helpless people of Bengal. As British historians, Edward Thompson and G.T. Garrett, have remarked:

To engineer a revolution had been revealed as the most paying game in the world. A gold lust unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes' and Pizarro's age filled the English mind. Bengal in particular was not to know peace again until it had been bled white.

Even though Mir Jafar owed his position to the Company, he soon repented the bargain he had struck. His treasury was quickly emptied by the demands of the Company's officials for presents and bribes, the lead in the matter being given by Clive himself. As Colonel Malleon has put it, the single aim of the Company's officials was to grasp all they could; to use Mir Jafar as a golden sack into which "to grasp they could dip their hands at pleasure". The Company itself was seized with unsurpassable greed. Believing that the kamdhenu had been found and that the wealth of Bengal was inexhaustible, the directors of the Company ordered that Bengal should pay the expenses of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and purchase out of its revenue all the Company's exports from India. The English were no longer to merely trade with India, it was to use its control over the Nawab of Bengal to drain the wealth of the province.

Mir Jafar soon discovered that it was impossible to meet the demands of the Company and its officials who, on their part, began to criticise the Nawab for his incapacity in fully fulfilling their expectations. And so, in October 1760, they forced him to abdicate in favour of his son-in-law, Mir Qasim, who rewarded his benefactors by granting the Company the zamindari of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong, and giving handsome presents totalling 29 lakhs of rupees to the high English officials.

Mir Qasim, however, belied English hopes, and soon emerged as a threat to their position and plans in Bengal. He was an able, efficient, and strong ruler, determined to free himself from foreign control. He realised that a full treasury and an efficient army were essential to maintain his independence. He, therefore, tried to prevent public disorder, to increase his income by removing corruption revenue administration, and to raise a modern and disciplined army along European lines. All this was not to the liking of the English. Most of all they disliked the Nawab's attempts to check the misuse of the farman of 1717 by the Company's servants.

The English demanded that their goods whether destined for export or for internal use should be free of duties. This injured the Indian merchants as they had to pay taxes from which the foreigners got complete exemption.

Moreover, the Company's servants illegally sold the dastaks (free passes) to friendly Indian merchants who were thereby able to evade the internal customs duties. These abuses ruined the honest Indian traders through unfair competition and deprived the Nawab of a very important source of revenue. In addition to this, the Company and its servants demanded that the Indian officials and zamindars to give them presents and bribes. They compelled the Indian artisans, peasants and merchants to sell their goods cheap but buy dear from them. People who refused were often flogged or imprisoned. These years have been described by a recent British historian, Percival Spear, as "the period of open and unashamed plunder". In fact the prosperity for which Bengal was renowned was being gradually destroyed.

Mir Qasim realised that if these abuses continued he could never hope to make Bengal strong or free himself of the Company's control. He, therefore, took the step of abolishing all duties on internal trade, thus giving his own subjects a concession that the English had seized by force. But the English merchants were not willing to tolerate equality between themselves and Indians. They demanded the reimposition of duties on Indian traders. The battle was about to begin again. The truth of the matter was that there could not exist two masters in Bengal. While Mir Qasim believed that he was an independent ruler, the English demanded that he should act as a mere tool in their hands, for had they not put him in power?

Mir Qasim was defeated in a series of battles in 1763. He fled to Awadh and formed an alliance with Shuja-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Awadh, and Shah Alam II, the fugitive Mughal emperor. The three allies clashed with the Company's army at Buxar on 22 October 1764 and were thoroughly defeated. This was one of the most decisive battles of Indian history for it demonstrated the superiority of English arms over the combined army of two of the major Indian powers. It firmly established the British as masters of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and placed Awadh at their mercy.

Clive, who had returned to Bengal in 1765 as its Governor, decided to seize the chance of power in Bengal and to gradually transfer the authority of government from the Nawab to the Company. (In 1763, the British had

restored Mir Jafar as Nawab and collected huge sums for the Company and its high officials. On Mir Jafar's death, they placed his son Nizam-ud-Daulah on the throne and as a reward to themselves made him sign a new treaty on 20 February 1765. By this treaty the Nawab was to disband most of his soldiers and to administer Bengal through a Deputy Subahdar who was to be nominated by the Company and who could not be dismissed without its approval. The Company thus gained supreme control over the administration (nizamat) of Bengal. The members of the Bengal Council of the Company once again extracted nearly 15 lakhs of rupees from the new Nawab.

From Shah Alam II, who was still the titular head of the Mughal empire, the Company secured the Diwani, or the right to collect revenue of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. Thus, its control over Bengal was legalised and the revenues of this most prosperous of Indian provinces came under its command. In return, the Company gave him a subsidy of 26 lakhs of rupees and secured for him the districts of Kora and Allahabad. The emperor resided in the fort of Allahabad for six years as a virtual prisoner of the English.

The Nawab of Awadh, Shuja-ud-Daulah, was made to pay a war indemnity of five million rupees to the Company. Moreover, the two signed an alliance by which the Company promised to support the Nawab against an outside attack provided he paid for the services of the troops sent to his aid. This alliance made the Nawab a dependent of the Company.

Dual System of Administration of Bengal

The East India Company became the real master of Bengal from 1765. Its army was in sole control of the defence and the supreme political power was in its hands. The Nawab depended for his internal and external security on the British. As the Diwan, the Company directly collected its revenues, while through the right to nominate the Deputy Subahdar, it controlled the nizamat or the police and judicial powers. This arrangement is known as the 'dual' or 'double' government. It held a great advantage for the British, who had power without responsibility. The Nawab and his officials had the responsibility of administration but not the power to discharge it. The weaknesses of the government could be blamed on the Indians while its fruits were gathered by the British. The consequences for the people of Bengal were disastrous. Neither the Company nor the Nawab cared for their welfare.

The Company's servants now had the whole of Bengal to themselves and their oppression of the people increased greatly. We can quote Clive himself:

I shall only say that such a scene of anarchy, confusion, bribery, corruption, and extortion was never seen or heard of in any country but Bengal; nor such and so many fortunes acquired in so unjust and rapacious a manner. The three provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, producing a clear revenue of £3 millions sterling, have been under the absolute management of the Company's servants, ever since Mir Jafar's restoration to the subahship; and they have, both civil and military, exacted and levied contributions from every man of power and consequence, from the Nawab down to the lowest zamindar.

The Company's authorities had set out to gather the rich harvest and drain Bengal of its wealth. They stopped sending money from England to purchase Indian goods. Instead, they purchased these goods from the revenues of Bengal and sold them abroad. These were known as the Company's Investment and formed a part of its profits. On top of all this the British government wanted its share of the rich prize and, in 1767, ordered the Company to pay it £400,000 per year.

In the years 1766, 1767 and 1768 alone, nearly £5.7 million were drained from Bengal. The abuses of the 'dual' government and the drain of wealth led to the impoverishment and exhaustion of that unlucky province. In 1770, Bengal was affected by a famine which in its effects proved one of the most terrible famines known in human history. People died in lakhs and nearly one-third of Bengal's population fell victim to its ravages. Though the famine was due to failure of the rains, its effects were heightened by the Company's policies.

Wars Under Warren Hastings (1772-85) and Cornwallis (1786-93)

The East India Company had by 1772 become an important Indian power and its directors (in England) and its officials in India set out to consolidate their control over Bengal before beginning a new round of conquests. However, their habit of interfering in the internal affairs of the Indian states and their greed for territory and money soon involved them in a series of wars.

In 1766 they joined the Nizam of Hyderabad in attacking Haidar Ali of Mysore. But Haidar Ali forced the Madras Council to sign a peace-

treaty on his terms. Then, in 1775, the English clashed with the Marathas. An intense struggle for power was taking place at that time among the Marathas between the supporters of the infant Peshwa Madhav Rao II, led by Nana Phadnis, and Raghunath Rao. The British officials in Bombay decided to intervene on behalf of Raghunath Rao. They hoped thus to repeat the exploits of their countrymen in Madras and Bengal and reap the consequent monetary advantages. This involved them in a long war with the Marathas which lasted from 1775 to 1782.

This was a dark hour indeed for British power in India. All the Maratha chiefs were united behind the Peshwa and his chief minister, Nana Phadnis. The southern Indian powers had long been resenting the presence of the company among them, and Haidar Ali and the Nizam chose this moment to declare war against the British. Thus the British were faced with the powerful combination of the Marathas, Mysore and Hyderabad. Abroad, they were waging a losing war in their colonies in America where the people had rebelled in 1776. They also had to counter the determined design of the French to exploit the difficulties of their old rival.

The British in India were, however, led at this time by the energetic, and experienced Governor-General Warren Hastings. He acted with firm resolve and determination. Neither side won victory and the war came to a standstill. Peace was concluded in 1782 with the Treaty of Salbai by which the status quo was maintained. It saved the British from the combined opposition of Indian powers.

This war, known in history as the First Anglo-Maratha war, did give the British 20 years of peace with the Marathas, the strongest Indian power of the day. The British utilised this period to consolidate their rule over the Bengal Presidency, while the Maratha chiefs frittered away their energy in bitter mutual squabbles. Moreover, the Treaty of Salbai enabled the British to exert pressure on Mysore, as the Marathas promised to help them in recovering their territories from Haidar Ali. Once again, the English had succeeded in dividing the Indian powers.

In the meanwhile, war with Haidar Ali had again started in 1780. Repeating his earlier exploits, Haidar Ali inflicted successive defeats on the British armies in the Carnatic and forced them to surrender in large numbers. He soon occupied almost the whole of the Carnatic. But once again British arms and diplomacy saved them. Warren Hastings bribed the Nizam with the cession of Guntur district and gained his withdrawal from

the anti-British alliance. During 1781-82 he made peace with the Marathas and thus freed a large part of his army for use against Mysore. In July 1781 the British under Eyre Coote defeated Haidar Ali at Porto Novo and saved Madras. After Haidar Ali's death in December 1782, the war was carried on by his son, Tipu Sultan. Since neither side was capable of overpowering the other, peace was signed between them in March 1784 and both sides restored all conquests. Thus, though the British had been shown to be too weak to defeat either the Marathas or Mysore, they had certainly proved their ability to hold their own in India.

The third British encounter with Mysore was more fruitful from the British point of view. The peace of 1784 had not removed the grounds for struggle between Tipu and the British; it had merely postponed the struggle. The authorities of the East India Company were acutely hostile to Tipu. They looked upon him as their most formidable rival in the south and as the chief obstacle standing between them and complete domination over South India. Tipu, on his part, thoroughly disliked the English, saw them as the chief danger to his own independence and nursed the ambition to expel them from India. War between the two began again in 1789 and ended in Tipu's defeat in 1792. By the treaty of Seringapatam, Tipu ceded half of his territories to the English and their allies and paid rupees 330 lakhs as indemnity.

Expansion Under Lord Wellesley (1798-1805)

The next large-scale expansion of British rule in India occurred during Governor-General Lord Wellesley who came to India in 1798 at a time when the British were locked in a struggle with France all over the world.

Till then, the British had followed the policy of consolidating their gains and resources in India and making territorial gains only when this could be done safely without antagonising the major Indian powers. Lord Wellesley decided that the time was ripe for bringing more many Indian states under British control. By 1797 the two strongest Indian powers, Mysore and the Marathas, had declined in power. Political conditions in India were propitious for a policy of expansion: aggression was easy and profitable.

To achieve these political aims Wellesley relied on three methods: the system of 'Subsidiary Alliances', outright war, and the assumption of the territories of previously subordinated rulers. While the practice of helping

an Indian ruler with a paid British force was old, it was given definite shape by Wellesley who used it to subordinate the Indian states to the paramount authority of the Company. Under his Subsidiary Alliance system:

- the ruler of the allying Indian state was compelled to accept the permanent stationing of a British force within his territory
- and to pay a subsidy for its maintenance. All this was done allegedly for his protection but was, in fact, a form through which the Indian ruler paid tribute to the Company.
- Sometimes the ruler ceded part of his territory instead of paying annual subsidy.
- The 'Subsidiary Treaty' usually also provided that the Indian ruler would agree to the posting at his court of a British Resident,
- that he would not employ any European in his service without the approval of the British,
- and that he would not negotiate with any other Indian ruler without consulting the Governor-General
- In return, the British undertook to defend the ruler from his enemies. They also promised non-interference in the internal affairs of the allied state, but this was a promise they seldom kept.

In reality, by signing a Subsidiary Alliance, an Indian state virtually signed away its independence. It lost the right of self-defence, of maintaining diplomatic relations, of employing foreign experts, and of settling its disputes with its neighbours. In fact, the Indian ruler lost all of its sovereignty in external matters and became increasingly subservient to the British Resident, who interfered in the day-to-day administration of the state. In addition, the system tended to bring about the internal decay of the protected state. The cost of the subsidiary force provided by the British was very high and much beyond the paying capacity of the state. The payment of the arbitrarily-fixed and artificially-bloated subsidy invariably disrupted the economy of the state and impoverished its people. This system of Subsidiary Alliances also led to the disbandment of the armies of the protected states. Lakhs of soldiers and officers lost their livelihood, this led to misery and degradation in the country. Moreover, the rulers of the protected states tended to neglect the interests of their people and to oppress them as they no longer feared them. They had no incentive to be good rulers as they were fully protected by the British from domestic and foreign hostilities.

The Subsidiary Alliance system was, on the other hand, extremely advantageous to the British. They could now maintain a large army at the cost of the Indian states. This enabled them to fight wars far away from their own territories, since any war would occur in the territories either of the British ally or of the British enemy. They controlled the defence and foreign relations of the subsidiary ally, and had a powerful force stationed at the very heart of his lands, and could, therefore, at a time of their choosing, overthrow him and annex his territories by declaring him to be 'inefficient'. As far as the British were concerned, this system of Subsidiary Alliances was, in the words of a British writer, "a system of fattening allies as we fatten oxen, till they were worthy of being devoured".

Lord Wellesley signed his Subsidiary Treaties with the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1798 and 1800. In lieu of cash payment for the subsidiary forces, the Nizam ceded part of his territories to the Company.

The Nawab of Awadh was forced to sign a Subsidiary Treaty in 1801. In return for a larger subsidiary force, the Nawab was made to surrender to the British nearly half of his kingdom, consisting of Rohilkhand and the territory lying between the Ganga and the Jamuna. His own army was virtually disbanded and the British had the right to station their troops in any part of his state.

Wellesley dealt with Mysore, Carnatic, Tanjore and Surat even more sternly. Tipu of Mysore would, of course, never agree to a Subsidiary Treaty. On the contrary, he was not reconciled to the loss of half of his territory in 1792. He worked incessantly to strengthen his forces for the inevitable struggle with the British. He entered into negotiations for an alliance with the Revolutionary France. He sent missions to Afghanistan, Arabia and Turkey to build an anti-British alliance.

The British army attacked and defeated Tipu in a brief but fierce war in 1799, before French help could reach him. Tipu refused to beg for peace on humiliating terms. He proudly declared that it was "better to die like a soldier, than to live a miserable dependent on the infidels, in the list of their pensioned rajas and nabobs". He met a hero's end on 4 May 1799 while defending his capital Seringapatam. His army remained loyal to him till the very end. Nearly half of Tipu's dominions were divided between the British and their ally, the Nizam. The reduced Kingdom of Mysore was restored to the descendants of the original rajas from whom Haidar Ali had seized power, the wodeyars. A special treaty of Subsidiary Alliance was

imposed on the new raja by which the Governor-General was authorised to take over the administration of the state in case of necessity. Mysore was, in fact, made a complete dependency of the Company.

In 1801, Lord Wellesley forced a new treaty upon the puppet Nawab of Carnatic compelling him to cede his kingdom to the Company in return for a pension. The Madras Presidency as it existed till 1947 was now created, by attaching the Carnatic to territories seized from Mysore, including the Malabar. Similarly, the territories of the rulers of Tanjore and Surat were taken over and their rulers pensioned off.

The Marathas were the only major Indian power left outside the sphere of the Company's control. Wellesley now turned his attention towards them and began to aggressively interfere in their internal affairs.

The Maratha empire at this time consisted of a confederacy of five big chiefs, namely, the Peshwa at Poona, the Gaekwad at Baroda, the Sindhia at Gwalior, the Holkar at Indore and the Bhonsle at Nagpur, the Peshwa being the nominal head of the confederacy. But all of them were engaged in bitter fratricidal strife, blind to the real danger from the rapidly advancing Alien power.

Wellesley had repeatedly offered a Subsidiary Alliance to the Peshwa and Sindhia. But the far-sighted Nana Phadnis had refused to fall into their trap. However, when on 25 October 1802, the day of festival of Diwali, Holkar defeated the combined armies of the Peshwa and Sindhia, the cowardly Peshwa Baji Rao II rushed into the arms of the English and on the fateful day of 1802 signed the Subsidiary Treaty at Bassein.

The victory had been a little too easy and Wellesley was wrong in one respect: the proud Maratha chiefs would not surrender their great tradition of independence without a struggle. But even in this situation of their peril they would not unite against their common enemy. When Sindhia and Bhonsle fought the British, Holkar stood on the sidelines and Gaekwad gave help to the British. When Holkar took up arms, Bhonsle and Sindhia nursed their wounds.

In the south, the British armies led by Arthur Wellesley defeated the combined armies of Sindhia and Bhonsle at Assaye (September 1803) and at Argaon (November). In the north, Lord Lake routed Sindhia's army at Laswari on the first of November and occupied Aligarh, Delhi and Agra. Once again the emperor of India became a pensioner of the Company. The

Maratha allies had to sue for peace. Both Sindhia and Bhonsle became subsidiary allies of the Company. They ceded part of their territories to the British, admitted British Residents to their courts and promised not to employ any Europeans without British approval. The British gained complete control over the Orissa coast and the territories between the Ganga and the Jamuna. The Peshwa became a puppet in their hands.

Wellesley now turned his attention towards Holkar, but Yeshwant Rao Holkar proved more than a match for the British and fought British armies to a standstill. Holkar's ally, the Raja of Bharatpur, inflicted heavy losses on Lake who unsuccessfully attempted to storm his fort. Moreover, overcoming his age-old antagonism to the Holkar family, Sindhia began to think of joining hands with Holkar. On the other hand, the shareholders of the East India Company discovered that the policy of expansion through war was proving costly and was reducing their profits. The Company's debt had increased from £17 million in 1797 to £31 million in 1806. Britain's finances were also getting exhausted as Napoleon was once again becoming a major threat in Europe. British statesmen and the directors of the Company felt that time had come to check further expansion, to put an end to ruinous expenditure, and to consolidate Britain's recent gains in India. Wellesley was, therefore, recalled from India and the Company made peace with Holkar in January 1806 by the treaty of Raighat, giving back to the Holkar the greater part of his territories.

Wellesley's expansionist policy had been checked. All the same, it had resulted in the East India Company becoming the paramount power in India. A young officer in the Company's judicial service, Henry Roberclaw, wrote (about 1805):

An Englishman in India is proud and tenacious, he feels himself a conqueror amongst a vanquished people and looks down with some degree of superiority on all below him.

Expansion Under Lord Hastings (1813-22)

The Second Anglo-Maratha War had shattered the power of the Maratha chiefs but not their spirit. Marathas made a desperate last attempt to regain their independence and old prestige in 1817. The lead in organising a united front of the Maratha chiefs was taken by the Peshwa who was plotting under the rigid control exercised by the British Resident. The Peshwa attacked the British Residency at Poona in November 1817.

Appa Sahib of Nagpur attacked the Residency at Nagpur, and Madhav Rao Holkar made preparations for war.

The Governor-General, Lord Hastings, struck back with characteristic vigour. He compelled Sindhia to accept British suzerainty, and defeated the armies of the Peshwa, Bhonsle and Holkar. The Peshwa was dethroned and pensioned off at Bithur near Kanpur. His territories were annexed and the enlarged Presidency of Bombay brought into existence. Holkar and Bhonsle accepted Subsidiary forces. To satisfy Maratha pride, the small Kingdom of Satara was founded out of the Peshwa's lands and given to the descendant of Chatrapati Shivaji who ruled it as a complete dependent of the British. Like other rulers of Indian states, the Maratha chiefs too existed from now on at the mercy of British power.

The Rajputana states had been dominated for several decades by Sindhia and Holkar. After the downfall of the Marathas, they lacked the energy to reassert their independence and readily accepted the supremacy of the British.

Thus, by 1818, the entire Indian subcontinent excepting the Punjab and Sindh had been brought under British control. Part of it was ruled directly by the British and the rest by a host of Indian rulers over whom the British exercised paramount power. These states had virtually no armed forces of their own, nor did they have any independent foreign relations. They paid heavily for the British forces stationed in their territories to control them. They were autonomous in their internal affairs, but even in this respect they acknowledged British authority wielded through a Resident.

The Consolidation of British Power (1818-57)

The British completed the task of conquering the whole of India - from 1818 to 1857. Sindh and the Punjab were conquered and Awadh, the Central Provinces and a large number of other petty states were annexed.

The Conquest of Sindh

The conquest of Sindh occurred as a result of the growing Anglo-Russian rivalry in Europe and Asia. The British were feared that Russia might attack India through Afghanistan or Persia. To counter Russia, the British government decided to increase its influence in Afghanistan and Persia. It further felt that this policy could be successfully pursued only if Sindh was brought under British control. The commercial possibilities of the river Sindh were an additional attraction.

The roads and rivers of Sindh were opened to British trade by a treaty in 1832. The chiefs of Sindh (amirs) were made to sign a Subsidiary Treaty in 1839. And finally, in spite of previous assurances that its territorial integrity would be respected, Sindh was annexed in 1843 after a brief campaign by Sir Charles Napier who had earlier written in his diary: "We have no right to seize Sind, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous, useful humane piece of rascality it will be". He received 7 lakhs of rupees as prize money for accomplishing the task.

The Conquest of the Punjab

The death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in June 1839 was followed by political instability and rapid changes of government in the Punjab. Selfish and corrupt leaders came to the front. Ultimately, power fell into the hands of the brave and patriotic but utterly indisciplined army. This led the British to look greedily across the Sutlej upon land of the five rivers, even though they had signed a treaty of perpetual friendship with Ranjit Singh in 1809.

The Punjab army let itself be provoked by the warlike actions of the British and their intrigues with the corrupt chiefs of the Punjab. In the autumn of 1845, news reached Punjab that boats designed to form bridges had been despatched from Bombay to Ferozepur on the Sutlej. Barracks for additional troops were built in the forward area and additional regiments began to be despatched to the frontier with Punjab. The Punjab army, now convinced that the British were determined to occupy the Punjab, took counter measures. When it heard in December that Lord Gough, the Commander-in-Chief, and Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General, were marching towards Ferozepur, it decided to strike. War between the two was thus declared on 13 December 1845. The danger from the foreigner immediately united the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. The Punjab army fought heroically and with exemplary courage. But some of its leaders had already turned traitors. The Prime Minister, Raja Lal Singh, and the Commander-in-Chief, Misar Tej Singh were secretly corresponding with the enemy. The Punjab army was forced to concede defeat and to sign the humiliating Treaty of Lahore on 8 March 1846. The British annexed the Jullundhar Doab and handed over Jammu and Kashmir to Raja Gulab Singh Dogra for a cash payment of five million rupees. The Punjab army was reduced to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry and a strong British force was stationed at Lahore.

Later, on 16 December 1846, another treaty was signed providing the British Resident at Lahore full authority over all matters in every department of the state. Moreover, the British were permitted to station their troops in any part of this state. From now on the British Resident became the real ruler of the Punjab which lost its independence and became a vassal state.

But the aggressively imperialist sections of British officialdom in India were still unsatisfied, for they wanted to impose direct British rule over the State. Their opportunity came in 1848 when the freedom-loving Punjabis rose up in numerous local revolts. Two of the prominent revolts were led by Mulraj at Multan and Chattar Singh Attariwala near Lahore. The Punjabis were once again decisively defeated. Lord Dalhousie seized this opportunity to annex the Punjab. Thus, the last independent state of India was absorbed in the British Empire of India.

Dalhousie and the Policy of Annexation (1848-56)

Lord Dalhousie came to India as the Governor-General in 1848. He was from the beginning determined to extend direct British rule. He had declared that "the extinction of all native states of India is just a question of time". The underlying motive of his policy was the expansion of British exports to India. Dalhousie, like other aggressive imperialists, believed that British exports to the native states of India were suffering because of the maladministration of these states by their Indian rulers. Moreover, they thought that their 'Indian allies' had already served the purpose of facilitating British conquest of India and could now be profitably eliminated. The chief instrument through which Lord Dalhousie implemented his policy of annexation was the 'Doctrine of Lapse'. Under this Doctrine, when the ruler of a protected state died without a natural heir, his state was not to pass to an adopted heir as sanctioned by the age-old tradition of the country. Instead, it was to be annexed to British India, unless the adoption had been clearly approved earlier by the British authorities. Many states, including Satara in 1848 and Nagpur and Jhansi in 1854, were annexed by applying this doctrine.

Dalhousie also refused to recognise the titles of many ex-rulers or pay them pensions. Thus, the titles of the Nawabs of Carnatic and of Surat, and the Raja of Tanjore were cancelled. Similarly, after the death of the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II, who had been made the Raja of Bithur, Dalhousie refused to extend his pay or pension to his adopted son, Nana Saheb.

Dalhousie was keen on annexing the kingdom of Awadh. But the task presented certain difficulties. The Nawabs of Awadh had been British allies since the Battle of Buxar. Moreover, they had been most obedient to the British over the years. The Nawab had many heirs and could not therefore be covered by the Doctrine of Lapse. Some other pretext had to be found for depriving him of his dominions. Finally, Lord Dalhousie hit upon the idea of alleviating the plight of the people of Awadh. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was accused of having misgoverned his state and of refusing to introduce reforms. His state was therefore annexed in 1856.

Undoubtedly, the degeneration of the administration of Awadh was a painful reality for its people. The Nawabs of Awadh, like other princes of the day, were selfish rulers absorbed in self-indulgence who cared little for good administration or for the welfare of the people. But the responsibility for this state of affairs was in part that of the British who had, at least since 1801, controlled and indirectly governed Awadh. In reality, it was the immense potential of Awadh as a market for Manchester goods which excited Dalhousie's greed and aroused his 'philanthropic' feelings. And for similar reasons, to satisfy Britain's growing demand for raw cotton, Dalhousie took away the cotton-producing province of Berar from the Nizam in 1853.

It needs to be clearly understood that the question of the maintenance or annexation of native states was of no great relevance at this time. In fact, there were no Indian states in existence at that time. The protected native states were as much a part of the British empire as the territories ruled directly by the Company. If the form of British control over some of these states was changed, it was to suit British convenience. The interests of their people had little to do with the change.

Causes of 1857 Revolt

- Racial arrogance, foreign character of new rulers.
- Defeat in first Afghan war, Punjab wars, Crimean war shattered the general belief in the invincibility of British.
- Santhal uprising, where tribesmen rose up armed with axes and bows revealed the potentialities of popular uprising.
- Annexation of Awadh by Lord Dalhousie in 1856 was widely resented in India in general and in Awadh in particular.
- Revenue demand was very high, zamindars frequently lost their zamindaris. Peasants too had no security, they were also evicted

from the land they had tilled for generations on inability to pay rent. Methods of revenue collection and revenue settlement policies were harsh. the police, petty officials and law courts were corrupt.

- Dalhousie claimed that he wanted to free Awadh from nawabs management but the masses got no relief; common man had to pay higher taxes. Several nobles and officials lost their jobs as the nawabs administration and army dissolved.
- Subsidiary alliance, doctrine of lapse created panic among rulers of native states.
- British policy of annexation and subordination was responsible for making Nana Sahib, Rani of Jhansi and Bahadur Shah their staunch enemy. The British refused to Nana Sahib the pension of Baji Rao II, and forced him to live in Kanpur. They refused to accept the adopted son of Rani Lakshmibai.
- Dalhousie had announced that the successor of Bahadur Shah Zafar would have to leave the red fort and move to another residence on the outskirts of Delhi. In 1856, Canning announced that after Bahadur Shah Zafar's death, the Mughal would lose the title of kings and would be regarded as princes.
- Missionaries made vulgar public attack on Hindus and Muslims. In 1850, government came up with a law which enabled a convert to Christianity to inherit ancestral property.
- Government maintained, by using public money, Christian priest in the army.
- Instructions in Christianity were provided in government schools and jails.
- Western education was provided to girls.
- Sepoys reacted to conditions in the countryside, sepoy was – 'Peasant in countryside'.
- The revolt of 1857 started with mutiny of company's sepoy.
- Sepoys were stopped from wearing caste and sectarian marks.
- Bhatta (foreign service allowance) was denied to the sepoy when serving in Sindh and Punjab.
- The British authorities ruthlessly crushed attempts of mutiny at Vellore and Barrackpore. In Barrackpore sepoy had refused to go to Burma by the sea route.

- Dislike and hatred of foreign rule prevailed among large number of Indians. And because of this people acted on the rumours that they heard.
- Culmination of popular discontent with British policies and Imperialistic exploitation.
- These simmering took the form of a rebellion uprising when soldiers came to know about the cartridges of Enfield rifle. It was believed that the cartridges, which had to be bitten by mouth were greased with the fat of pig and cow.

The rebellion started as a sepoy mutiny and soon became a popular rebellion. On 29 March 1857, Mangal Pandey was hanged in Barrackpore for attacking his officers. In Meerut, sepoys were dismissed from service and sentenced to ten years jail for disobeying their officers. Soldiers marched to jail in Meerut and released the imprisoned sepoys. They attacked and killed British officers, captured guns and ammunition, captured and set fire to buildings and properties of the British and declared war on the British. From Meerut sepoys marched to Delhi. There they forced their way into the Red Fort and proclaimed Bahadur Shah Zafar as their leader. The emperor was not willing to challenge the British might but the soldiers persisted and the aging emperor had to accept this demand.

Regiment after regiment mutinied. Different leaders came up like Begum Hazrat Mahal (Lucknow), Nana Saheb (Kanpur), Rani Lakshmi Bai (Jhansi), Maulvi Ahmadullah (Faizabad), Bakht Khan (Bareilly), Kunwar Singh (Bihar). There was Hindu-Muslim unity against the common enemy. For instance Nana Saheb has Azimullah, a Muslim and an expert in political propaganda, as an aide, while Rani Lakshmi Bai had solid support of Afghan rulers.

The Mughal dynasty had ruled over a very large portion of the country. Many smaller rulers and chieftains enjoyed control over different territories on behalf of the Mughal ruler. Many of them thought that if the Mughal emperor could rule again, their privileges would also be restored. Bahadur Shah Zafar's decision to bless the rebellion inspired and enthused the rebels as now they could see an alternative possibility.

The Company decided to repress the revolt with all its might. Reinforcements were brought from England, new laws passed (so that rebels could be convicted with ease), British forces moved into the storm centres of the revolt. Delhi was recaptured from the rebels (September

1857), Bahadur shah Zafar was tried in court and sentenced to life imprisonment in Rangoon (where he died). His sons were shot dead before his eyes.

Lucknow was taken in March 1858. Rani Lakshmibai was defeated and killed on the battlefield. Tantia Tope escaped into the jungles of central India and continued guerilla war with support of the tribals, he was also capture, tried and killed in April 1859.

Causes of failure- lack of unified ideology; lack of unity among leaders; lack of support from regional powers; lack of organisation and resources; military superiority of the British.

Nature of the revolt- some historians said that it was a mere sepoy mutiny; sir John Seeley said that it was a wholly unpatriotic and selfish sepoy mutiny with no native leadership and no popular support.

V.D. Savarkar called it the first war of Indian independence and planned war of national independence. Dr.S.N.Sen considered that revolt began as a fight for religion and ended as a war of independence.

Dr.R.C.Majumdar said that it was neither first nor national, nor a war of independence as large parts of the country remained unaffected.

Some Marxist historians described it as a struggle of soldier-peasant democratic combine against foreign as well as feudal bondage.

Jawaharlal Nehru called it an essentially feudal uprising. M.N.Roy felt that the revolt was a last ditch stand of feudalism against commercial capitalism. R.P.Dutt also saw the significance of revolt of the peasantry against foreign domination. L.E.R.Rees considered it to be a war of fanatic religionists against Christianity. T.R.Holmes saw it as a conflict between barbarism and civilisation.

Consequences of Revolt and India Under the Crown

- The British tried to win back the loyalty of the people, they announced rewards for loyal landholders, some were allowed to enjoy their traditional privileges.
- Those who had rebelled were told that if they submitted and if they had not killed any white people, they would remain safe and their rights and claims over land would not be denied.
- Several sepoys, nawabs, rebels and rajas were tried and hanged.

- All ruling chiefs in the country were assured that their territory would never be assured in the future. They were granted the right to pass on their kingdoms to their heirs, including adopted sons. However they were made to accept the British queen as the sovereign paramount.
- The land and property of muslims was confiscated and they were treated with suspicion and hostility.
- The british decided to respect the customary religions and social practises of the Indians.
- Policies were made to protect the landlords and zamindars and ensure security of rights over their lands.
- The revolt could not embrace the entire country, different sections were fighting for their own rights, some had selfish interests. Some rulers fearful of the British did not support the sepoys. Sepoys lacked advanced weaponry, direction (central leadership) and organisation.
- Government of India structure and policies underwent significant changes.
- Spread and intensification of industrial revolution, hence competition for colonies became intense; British began to consolidate its control over its existing empire vigorously.
- After 1850, large amount of British capital was invested in railways, loans to Government of India, tea plantations, jute mills, shipping trade and banking.

Administrative changes

- Power to govern transferred from East India Company to Crown by an act of Parliament 1858. Secretary of state aided by council was to look after affairs of India rather than the company directors and board of control.
- Governor Generals title changed to Viceroy; he was crowns representative.
- The authority that exercised final and detailed control and directions over affairs in india came to reside in London. Indian opinion had less role to play and influence of British industrialists, merchants, bankers

- Governor general was to have an executive council, whose members will serve as head of departments.
- Indian council act 1861 enlarged governor generals' council for the purpose of making laws – in which capacity it was called the Imperial Legislative Council. Governor general could add to his executive council between 6-12 members of whom at least half had to be non-official Indians/English. It functioned merely as an advisory body, had no real functions, could not discuss budget, administration or ask questions.
- Governor General and Secretary of state enjoyed veto over bills; executive was not responsible to legislature.
- Presidencies (Bombay, Madras, Bengal) had Governor and executive council appointed by the crown. Other provinces had lieutenant Governors and chief commissioners appointed by Governor general.
- Lord Mayo promoted decentralisation of finances in 1870; Provincial Government granted fixed sums out of Central revenue. Certain services like jails, police, education, medical services were placed under them.
- Further lord Lytton, transferred certain other subjects to the provinces. Provincial government was to get a fixed share of income generated from provinces eg- stamp, excise duty.
- All sources of revenue were divided into general, provincial and those divided between the two. Such attempts did not mean provincial autonomy. in theory and in practise central government remained supreme. This was done to reduce expenditure and increase income.
- Municipality and district boards were set up.
- Local services like education, health, sanitation, water supply were transferred to local bodies who would finance them through local taxes.
- 1882 Lord Ripon – Local affairs were to be administered largely through rural and urban local bodies, a majority of whose members would be of non officials.
- Army was reorganised after 1858- steps were taken to reduce the capacity of Indian soldiers.

European branch dominated the army. The proportion of the European to Indians in the army was raised. European troops were kept in key military and geographical positions.

Crucial branches of the army were put in European hands.

The organisation of Indian section of the army was based on the policy of balance and counterpoise/ divide and rule so as to prevent its chance of uniting again.

‘Martial races’ ; soldiers from Awadh, Bihar, Central India who had taken part in revolt were declared as non martial and they were no longer recruited in large number. Punjabis, Gurkhas, Pathaans who helped them quell the revolt were recruited in large numbers. Caste, tribal, regional identities were encouraged. Efforts were made to keep the army away from the rest of population; newspaper and journals were prevented from reaching them.

- Public services – maximum age of entry into civil services was gradually reduced, this exam (held in London) needed learning of Greek and latin. Superior and highly paid posts were reserved for British citizens. In practice, civil services remained out of reach of Indians.
- Relations with princely states the loyalty of Indian princely boys to be rewarded by the British with the announcement that their right to adopt their heirs would be respected and integrity of their territories guaranteed against future annexation.
- Recognised Indian rulers could serve as allies
- Princes were made to acknowledge British as the Paramount power
- In 1876 Queen Victoria assumed the title of Empress. Princes were to rule their states nearly as agents of the Crown
- British supervised internal government of princely states through residents
- British made efforts to bring about all India Railways postal Telegraph currency system.
- The British openly said that because of their inherent social and cultural defects the Indians were unfit to rule themselves. They started turning caste against caste, Hindus against Muslims, Prince against his people (divide and rule).

- Government service was used as an attraction to divide people. Official favours were promised on communal basis. Officials became hostile to higher education and educated Indians who analysed British imperialism and stood for progress. British abandoned their previous policy of helping social reformers. The conditions of workers were miserable, Indian factory act to deal with child labour was brought out. However this was not out of humanity and consideration but because of pressure from British to check cheap labour. These acts did not apply to plantations, government gave help to foreign planters to exploit their workers. Coercion, force was used to get labour. There were restrictions on the press. Vernacular Press Act was brought out in 1878. Modern means of communication, administration and political consolidation of country impelled the Government of India to reach out to natural and geographical frontiers of India.
- British fought wars in Burma, Nepal, Afghanistan.

(2) India Under the Crown : The Government of India 1858

Government of India 1858

This act was enacted in the wake of the revolt of 1857. The act known as the act for good government of India abolished the East India Company and transferred the powers of government, territories and revenue to the British crown.

- It provided that India was to be governed by, and in the name of Her Majesty. It changed the designation of the governor general of India to that of the Viceroy of India. Viceroy was the direct representative of the British crown in India. Lord Canning became the first viceroy of India.
- It ended the system of double government by abolishing board of control and court of directors.
- A new office of Secretary of state for India was created, vested with complete authority and control over Indian administration. Secretary of State was to be a member of the British cabinet and was ultimately responsible to the parliament there.
- A 15 member council of India was established to assist the secretary of state. He was made the secretary of the council.

- It constituted the secretary of state in council as a body corporate, capable of suing and being sued in England and India.

(3) Indian Councils ACT 1861

- It marked a beginning of representative institutions by associating Indians with the law making process. Viceroy was to nominate some Indians as non official members of his expanded council. In 1862, Lord Canning, the then Viceroy, nominated 3 Indians to his legislative council- Raja of Benaras, the Maharaja of Patiala and Sir Dinkar Rao.
- Process of decentralisation was initiated by restoring powers to Bombay and Madras presidencies. Such legislative devolution resulted in the grant of almost complete autonomy to provinces in 1937.
- New legislative councils were to be created for Bengal, North Western Provinces and Punjab, which were established in 1862, 1886, 1897.
- The viceroy was given the powers to make rules and orders for the more convenient transaction of the business in the council. Portfolio system, started by Canning in 1859, was given recognition under it. Also, a member of viceroy's council was made in charge of one or more departments of the government and was authorised to issue final orders on behalf of the council on matters of his departments.
- Viceroy was given the power to issue ordinances without concurrence of the legislative council, during an emergency. Such ordinance could exist for 6 months.

Indian Councils Act 1892

- The number of additional members (non official) in Central and Provincial legislative councils was increased but official majority was maintained.
- Functions of the legislative councils were increased and they were given power of discussing budget and putting questions before the executive.
- This act provided that some non official members of the Central Legislative council would be nominated by the viceroy on the recommendation of the provincial legislative councils and the

Bengal chamber of commerce. And similarly some members of the provincial legislative councils would be nominated by the Governors on the recommendation of the district boards, municipalities, universities, trade associations, zamindars and chambers.

- Although the word 'election' was not used in this act yet limited and indirect provisions were made through this act for filling non official seats in both central and provincial legislative councils through elections.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Why did the peasants and rulers participate in the revolt of 1857?
2. Mention any two reasons for the failure of the first war of independence.
3. Highlight any two major changes that were brought by the Act for Good Government in India.
4. Who was the Viceroy?
5. Mention the strategies adopted by leaders to oppose the Company in 1857.
6. Describe the aftermath of the revolt of 1857.
7. Mention the causes of the revolt of 1857.

DDE, Pondicherry University

UNIT – II

Lesson 2.1 - The Birth of Indian National Congress (1885)

1. The birth of Indian National Congress (1885); the objectives and methods of early congress; Rise of extremists and their programme; the Swadeshi and Boycott movement; Partition of Bengal (1906)
2. The rise of Aligarh Movement; Simla Deputation and the foundation of the All India Muslim League (1906)
3. The establishment of All India Hindu mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh RSS : objectives and methods

(1) The birth of Indian National Congress (1885); the objectives and methods of early congress; Rise of extremists and their programme; the Swadeshi and Boycott movement; Partition of Bengal (1906)

- Press played an important role in spreading the ideas of the nationalist leaders and modern idea of democracy, self government, rights. The leaders through it urged people to unite.
- Historical researches carried out by European and Indian scholars nationalists to demolish colonial myths and develop self confidence and dignity. India rich heritage was emphasised to motivate people.
- Socio- religious reform movements persuaded people to eliminate social evils and brought them together.
- A new urban educated middle class arose which gave leadership to the congress in its initial stages
- Liberation movements worldwide influenced the nationalist ranks
- Reactionary policies and racial arrogance of rulers- Lytton reduced the maximum age limit for ICS exam from 21 to 19 years, organised Delhi Darbar in 1877 when the country was struck by a famine, brought vernacular press act and arms act. The Ilbert bill controversy under Ripon [bill sought to abolish judicial disqualification based on race distinction and to give Indian members of the covenanted civil service the same powers as those enjoyed by their European colleagues; bill was opposed by the Europeans and was passes after major modifications which defeated the purpose of the bill.

Political Organisations Before the Congress

- All were local and regional in character
- Bengal- BANGABHASHA PRAKASHA SABHA (by associates of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, ZAMINDARI ASSOCIATION, THE BENGAL BRITISH INDIA SOCIETY, THE EAST INDIA ASSOCIATION (By DADABHAI NAOROJI), THE INDIAN LEAGUE (by Sisir Kumar Ghosh), THE INDIAN ASSOCIATION OF CALCUTTA (By Surendranath Banerjee and Anand Mohan Bose)
- Bombay- THE POONA SARVAJANIK SABHA (by M.G. Ranade), THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY ASSOCIATION (By Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozshah Mehta, KT Telang)
- Madras- THE MADRAS MAHAJAN SABHA (by Viraraghavachari, Subramaniya Aiyer and Anandcharlu.)

Pre Congress Campaign

- For imposition of import duty on cotton
- Indianisation of government service
- Against Lytton's Afghan adventure
- Against Arms act
- Against Vernacular Press act
- For right to join Volunteer corps
- Against plantation labour
- In support of Ilbert bill
- For all India fund for Political agitation
- Against reduction in age limit for ICS exam

Efforts to start an All India organisation were supported by a retired English civil servant, A.O Hume. He also convinced Lord Dufferin not to obstruct the formation of congress. Some thought that it was like a safety valve, some thought that it was a conspiracy to abort a popular uprising. It started off as a body of middle class intellectuals. The first session was held at Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College in Bombay in December 1885. Earlier, two sessions of the Indian National conference had been held in 1883 and 1885.

The first session of the INC was attended by 72 delegates and presided over by W.C Banerjee. Congress after that met every year in December

in different part of the country. Different presidents of the congress- Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozshah Mehta, P. Anandcharlu, Anand Mohan Bose, Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Some prominent leaders- M.G Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Madan Mohan Malviya, Subramaniya Aiyar, D. Wacha Congress was committed to give women of India their due status in national life. In 1890, kadambini Ganguly addressed CONGRESS session.

Aims of Congress

- A democratic nationalistic movement
- Mobilise and disseminate political education to the masses
- Establish headquarters for the movement
- Promote friendly relations among the nationalist workers and leaders
- Propagate anti colonial nationalist ideology
- Begin a common economic and political programme
- Promote solidarity and nurture Indian nationhood

Era of Moderates

Moderates dominated the congress policies during the early period (1885- 1905). They believed in liberalism and moderate politics. Some of the moderate leaders were- Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozshah Mehta, W.E Wacha, W.C Bonnerjea.

Moderate approach emphasised on constitutional agitation within confines of law and slow but orderly progress. They believed that the British wanted to be just to the Indians but we're not aware of their conditions. Moderates felt that public opinion needed to be created in the country and public demands had to be presented to the government through petitions, meeting and resolutions. They worked to create a strong public opinion and arouse consciousness and national spirit and then educate and unite people on common political questions. Further they tried to persuade the British government and British public opinion to introduce reforms for India on the line proposed by the nationalists.

They began with prayer and petitions and if that failed they resorted to constitutional agitation. The moderates held that political connections with Britain were in India's interests. They thought that time was not ripe

for direct challenge to British rule. They wanted to transform colonial rule as close to national rule as possible.

Contributions of Moderate Nationalists

- Economic critique of British Imperialism- Dadabhai Naoroji, RC Dutt, Dishaw Wacha analysed the political economy of the foreign rule. They described this exploitation as 'drain of wealth'. They argued that a self sufficient Indian economy was being transformed into a supplier of raw materials and importer of finished goods. Moderates created an all India public opinion that British rule here was the main cause of India's poverty and economic backwardness. These nationalists demanded that independent economy for India should be developed through Indian capital and that there should be severance of economic subservience to the colonial power.
- In reality, the imperial legislative council was an impotent body designed to disguise official measures as having been passed by a representative body. Indian members were few in number, most of them being wealthy, landed and with loyalist interests. only a handful of political figures and independent intellectuals such as Syed Ahmed Khan, Kritodas Pal, KL Nulkar and Rashbehari Ghosh were among those nominated.

The nationalist demands were centred around the following aspects from 1885 to 1892.

- They demanded expansion of councils, greater participation of Indians in councils.
- Reform the councils- more powers to councils greater control over finances.
- The early nationalists aimed for democratic self government in the long term. Their demands for constitutional reforms were meant to have been conceded in 1892 in the form of Indian councils act. These reforms were severely criticised at congress sessions. Then they started demanding – majority of elected Indians – control over budget i.e. the power to
- Dadbhainaoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Lokmanya tilak demanded self government on the lines of self governing colonies of Canada and Australia. Leaders like Pherozshah Mehta and Gokhale put Government policies and proposals to severe criticism.

- They demanded indianisation of government services; this would have ended discrimination against Indians, prevented drain of Indian resources and given Indians experience in administration.
- Separation of judicial from executive functions.
- They criticised an oppressive and tyrannical bureaucracy and an expensive and time consuming judicial system.
- They criticised an aggressive foreign policy which had resulted in annexation of Burma, attack on Afghanistan and suppression of tribals in North-West -all costing heavily on Indian treasury.
- They asked for increasing expenditure on welfare, education – elementary and technical- irrigation works and improvement of agriculture, agricultural banks for cultivators etc.
- Demand for better treatment for Indian labour abroad in other British colonies, where oppression and racial discrimination were common.
- Protection of Civil Rights- included right to speech, thought, association and a free press. Nationalists worked for spread of democratic ideals.

Evaluation of the early nationalists:-

They represented the most progressive forces of the time. They were able to create wide national awakening about common nationhood. They trained people in political work. They exposed the exploitative character of British rule. Further they were able to establish the political truth that India should be ruled in the interests of Indians and create a solid base for a vigorous mass based national movement in the years that followed.

British had intended to use the councils to incorporate the more vocal among Indian leaders so as to allow them to let off their political steam while the impotent councils could afford to remain deaf to any criticism. The moderates were able to transform these councils into forums for ventilating popular grievances, exposing defects of an indifferent bureaucracy and for criticising government policies and proposals. These early nationalists were able to enhance their political stature and build a national movement while generating anti- imperialist sentiments among the public.

Role of masses

This phase of the national movement had a narrow social base and masses played a passive role. The early nationalists did not have political faith in the masses because they believed that they were divided, ignorant and conservative. They failed to realise that during a freedom struggle and with political participation such diverse elements could come together.

Government's response

The government was hostile towards the congress despite the latter methods. The official attitude became harsher as the government had failed to persuade the congress to confine itself to social issues when the organisation was becoming increasingly critical of the colonial rule.

The government condemned the congress by calling them seditious brahmins, disloyal babus. Dufferin called it 'a factory of sedition'. Later the government adopted an attitude of divide and rule towards the organisation under which they started to encourage reactionary elements like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and Raja Shiv Prasad of Benaras to organise the United Indian Patriotic Association to counter Congress propaganda. The government tried to create divisions on the basis of ideology and religion also.

Militant Nationalism

A radical trend started emerging in 1890 and it took a concrete shape by 1905.

Reasons

- Recognition of true nature of British rule- this government had ignored all the demands of the masses. Those politically conscious became disillusioned and started looking for a more effective mode of political action. The economic miseries, severe famines further exposed the exploitative character of colonialism. People realised that rights were taken away from the people. British were suppressing the spread of education, particularly mass and technical
- 1892- the nationalists criticised Indian councils act as it failed to satisfy them.
- 1897- the natu brothers were deported without trial; Tilak and others were imprisoned on charges of sedition

- 1898- Repressive laws under IPC section 12A and IPC section 156A.
- 1899- number of members to be part of Calcutta council were reduced.
- 1904- Press freedom was curbed by official secrets act
- 1904- Indian universities act ensured greater government control over universities.
- Growth of self respect and confidence
 - Belief in self effort; Tilak, Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal urged nationalists to rely on their capacities and character. Emphasis on sacrifice and participation of masses
- spread of education- people became aware; brought attention to unemployment and poverty of Indian masses
- some international events and influences shattered the myth of white supremacy- eg. Emergence of Japan as an industrial power, Abyssinia's victory over Italy, British had faced reverses in the Boer war, Japan's victory over Russia and coming up of nationalists movements worldwide.
- Reaction to growing westernisation – nationalist leaders observed dilution of Indian national identity due to colonial penetration. Intellectuals like Swami Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Swami Dayanand Saraswati inspired the Indian youth and promoted India's glorious past, they tried to explode the myth of western superiority by bringing forth the richness of Indian civilisation. Dayanand's political message was- India for the Indians.
- Dissatisfactions with the activities and achievements of the moderates. The new leadership described prayer, petition and constitutional agitation as political mendicancy.
- Reaction to Curzon's policies- he insulted Indian nationalists and intelligentsia, he spoke derogatorily about the Indian character in general. Administrative measures adopted by him were against interests of Indians- the official secrets act, Indian universities act, Calcutta corporation act and partition of Bengal.
- Existence of militant thought- Raj Narain Bose, Aurobindo Ghosh, Ashwini Kumar Dutta, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bal Gangadhar Tilak advocated a more militant approach to political work. There was hatred for foreign rule and they believed that

Indians had to work for their own salvation, they promoted direct political action and swaraj

- The radical leadership provided proper channelisation of immense potential for political struggle which masses had.

The Swadeshi and Boycott Movement

The government's decision to divide Bengal (made public in December 1903) was actually made to curb nationalist activities there and divide the people. The proposal was to have provinces: Bengal comprising western Bengal as well as provinces of Bihar and Orissa and Eastern Bengal and Assam. Bengal was to have Calcutta as its capital and Dacca was made Eastern Bengal's capital. The official reason that was put forth was that with a large population it was becoming difficult for the government to administer the province, it was also claimed that Assam would develop better and faster under direct jurisdiction of the government. In reality, the region was divided on the basis of language and religion

Anti Partition campaign under Moderates (1903-1905)

During this phase leadership was provided by men like Surendranath Banerjea, K.K. Mitra, Prithwishchandra Ray. Petitions, public meetings, propaganda through pamphlets and newspapers such as Hitabadi, Sanjibani and Bengalee were resorted to with the objective to create pressure on the government and educate public opinion.

Ignoring the large public opinion against the partition proposal, the government went ahead with it. Protest meetings were held in towns all over Bengal. On August 7, 1905 boycott resolution was passed and proclamation of Swadeshi movement was made. On October 16, 1905 the partition came into force formally. There was mourning, people fasted, bathed in Ganga, carried out processions and sang Bande mataram. Huge crowds also sang Amar Sonar Bangla (composed by Rabindranath Tagore). Surendranath Banerjea and Anand Mohan Bose addressed huge gatherings. The movement spread to other parts of the country as well under leaders like Tilka (Maharashtra), Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh (Punjab), Syed Haider Raza (Delhi), Chidambaram Pillai (Madras).

The congress position- Partition of Bengal and reactionary policies of Curzon were condemned and anti partition and swadeshi movement encouraged by the party at a session in 1905 under the presidency of Gokhale.

Radical nationalists led by Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh wanted the movement to be taken outside Bengal. They asked for expanding the aims of the struggle by moving beyond boycott of foreign goods and organising a mass struggle for attaining swaraj.

The moderates dominating the congress at that time did not support these demands. Attainment of self government or swaraj like in United Kingdom or colonies of Australia and Canada was declared as the goal at the congress session held in Calcutta(1906) under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji.

The movement under extremist leadership

- Extremists acquired a dominant influence over the swadeshi movement in Bengal after 1905. Moderate methods had failed to yield results. The governments of both the Bengals were adopting divisive tactics against the nationalists. Also the government resorted to suppressive methods against the protesters including corporal punishment.
- Extremist programme- passive resistance; swadeshi; boycott of government schools, colleges, government services, legislative councils, courts, titles ; demand for swaraj;

To make administration under present conditions impossible by organised refusal to do anything which will help either british commerce in the exploitation of the country or the british officialdom in the administration of it; self sacrifice; mass struggle.

New forms of struggle and impact:-

- Boycott of foreign goods
- Public meetings and processions
- Volunteer corps or samitis- to provide moral and physical training and increase political consciousness and do social work during famines and epidemics. eg- swadeshbandhab samiti of Ashwini kumardutta; Swadesh sangam by Chidambaram Pillai and Subramaniam Siva
- Use of popular traditions and festivals as national symbols- these served as means of reaching the masses and for nationalist propaganda ; Tilak used Ganpati and Shivaji festivals for this. In Bengal, traditional folk theatre was also used.

- Emphasis on self reliance- atma shakti, assertion of national identity, honour and confidence. Nationalists promoted social reform against caste oppression, dowry, child marriage etc.
- Programme of swadeshi or national education- Bengal national college was set up by Aurobindo ghosh ; National council of education was also set up to organise a system of education on national line; a Bengal institute of Technology came up, funds were raised to send students abroad for studies.
- Swadeshi or indigenous enterprises were established and developed- swadeshi textile mills, soap and match factories, tanneries, banks, insurance companies. Swadeshi steam navigation company was started by Chidambaram Pillai at Tuticorin to venture into national ship building.
- Impact in the cultural sphere- Rabindranath tagore, Rajnikant Sen, Dwijendralal Ray, Mukunda Das, Syed Abu and others served as inspiration. Subramania Bharati in Tamil nadu wrote Sudesha Geetham. Abanindranath Tagore broke the domination of Victorian nationalism over Indian art scene and took inspiration from Ajanta, Mughal, Rajput paintings. Nandalal Bose was the first recipient of scholarship offered by Indian society of Oriental Art founded in 1907. Jagdish Chandra Bose and Prafullachandra Roy and others pioneered original research.

Extent of mass participation- social base of the movement grew, attempts were made to give political expression to economic grievances.

Movements in support of united Bengal and swadeshi and boycott agitation were organised in many parts of the country.

Students -schools and colleges whose students participated in the agitation were penalised, these were either disaffiliated or grants withdrawn; students who were found guilty of participation were disqualified from government jobs and scholarships. Disciplinary action was taken against them.

Women- active in processions and picketing

Some muslims participated like Abdul Rasul, Liaqat Hussain, Maulana Azad; many upper and middle class muslims stayed away. Nawab Salimullah and his followers supported partition on the idea that it would give them a muslim majority East Bengal. All India muslim league came up in 1905 as an anti congress front.

Labour unrests and trade unions- initially there were strikes against rising prices, racial insult, and foreign owned companies. Bengali clerks of Burn company moved in protest against derogatory work regulations. Workers of East Indian Railway also organised a strike. Subramaniasiva and Chidambaram Pillai led strikes in Tirunelveli and Tuticorin against foreign owned cotton mills. Lala Lajpat rai and Ajit Singh led a strike of arsenal and railway workers in Rawalpindi. Strict action was taken against these labour unrest.

Annulment of partition- in order to curb the menace of revolutionary terrorism, it was decided to annul the partition in 1911. This came as a rude shock to the muslim political elite. It was also decided to shift the capital to delhi as it was associated with Mughal glory but this did not please the muslims. Bihar and orissa were taken out of Bengal and assam was made a separate province.

Evaluation of swadeshi movement- there was severe government repression, internal squabbles amongst leaders had started to come to the surface. At a time the movement was rendered leaderless as most of the leaders were arrested or deported by 1908. Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal had also retired from active politics. It was difficult to sustain mass based movement at a high pitch for a long time.

Many sections of the population, earlier indifferent to political struggle, also participated. The richness of the movement expanded beyond political sphere, to include art, literature, science and industry. Swadeshi undermined hegemony of british products and institutions.

Tilak opposed age of consent bill (which would have increased the age of marriage for girls from 10 to 12 years. Although his objection mainly was that such reforms must come from people governing themselves and not from alien rulers yet this and his organising of Ganapati and Shivaji festivals portrayed him as inclining towards a specific community. Similarly, B.C Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh spoke of hindu nation and hindu interests. Such instances alienated the muslims.

Surat split (1907)

The extremists wanted the 1907 session to be organised in Nagpur (Central Provinces) with Tilak or Lala Lajpat Rai as the President. The moderates wanted the session at Surat in order to keep Tilak away from Presidency, as a leaders from the host province could not be session

president (Surat being in Tilak's home Province of Bombay). Moderates wanted Rashbehari Ghosh as the President. Other issues between the two groups included spread of boycott beyond Bengal, choice of method of struggle, conflict of ideologies. Split came in the congress at the surat session of 1907. The moderate leaders having captured the machinery of the congress excluded militant elements from it.

(2) Rise of Aligarh Movement, Simla Deputation, Foundation of All India Muslim League

The hatred between hindus and muslims was exploited by the british to perpetuate their rule. Divide and rule has been a political device of british administration in india. They used their mutual differences as an excuse for holding the transfer of power to Indian hands. They adopted the practise of giving preferential treatment to one and indifference towards the other community in order to sow discord between the two.

British government nursed a grudge against the Muslims, who it knew we're largely responsible for the outbreak of 1857. The Muslims were suppressed and debarred from occupying key posts in both civil administration and military. They were also deprived of their titles and position. Large tracts of their lands were confiscated. This instilled a bitter resentment for British in the hearts of Muslims

Then we see Syed Ahmed khan taking initiative. Earlier strong nationalism grew amongst Hindus and Muslims, the two communities were united against British.

The British reorganised the army which hitherto used to have all the communities mixed up in its ranks and regiments and battalions were created on the basis of caste and religious distinctions.

The government also began to patronize the Muslims in order that they may cease to join hands with the congress. The British tried to terrify the Muslims by telling them that they would be worse under the domination of Hindus. They encouraged the Muslims to demand separate electorates and a separate Muslim majority state.

They got Bengal partitioned and after its annulment, demand for Pakistan was raised to smash territorial and national integrity.

Wahabi Movement

It started in Saudi Arabia for revitalization of Islam, fanned the flame of communalism in India. It was led in India by S.Ahmedbrelvi. His aim was glorification of islam, eradication of all evils and impurities that had crept. His followers became fanatic and intolerant and declared a holy war against Sikhs and non wahabis.

Aligarh Movement

Muslims were kept out of government jobs. British government interpreted the mutiny as an attempt by the Muslims to revive mughal rule. They deliberately adopted policies which had for their aim the economic ruin of Muslim and general degeneration.

Another factor which contributed to backwardness of Muslims was their religious hatred for English education. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan encouraged the Muslims to rise above their prejudices and welcome western education for material prosperity. In pursuance of his aim, he founded Mohammeden Anglo oriental college in Aligarh.

He was used by British to create nationalist divisions. He was of nationalist views in the beginning but his tolerant views changed into communal hatred. He became an arch enemy of both congress and nationalism. He started propagating anglo- Muslim alliance.

Mr.Beck, principal of Mohammeden Anglo oriental college had a strong influence on his views. He through his articles and speeches tried to convince the rulers that Indian Muslims had reconciled to foreign rule.

He laid the foundation of annual Muslim educational conference in 1886. He founded along with Raja Shiv Prasad of benaras- Patriotic Association. He also founded Mohammeden Anglo oriental defence association in 1893.

Muslim League

The government demarcated east Bengal as predominantly a Muslim area and poisoned the minds of Muslims against Hindus.

Lord Morley (secretary of state) advised lord Minto to appease the people by bringing about constitutional reforms.

Mr. Smith (private secretary of the viceroy) wrote to Mr. Archbold (principal of the college) telling that the Viceroy would be glad to meet a deputation of Muslims and try to meet the demands of the Muslim community.

Mohsin Ul Mulk (secretary of college) organised a representative body of Muslims headed by Sir Agha Khan to wait on to the Viceroy. (deputation - 1st October 1906)

Demands- separate electorate constituency for mohammedans.

- Representatives of Muslims in legislative bodies according to their political importance
- Reservation of seats in state services for Muslims
- More state aid for setting up of new Muslim universities.
- Preference to be given to Muslims in regard to nominations in Governor general council.

Communal electorates were introduced through Indian councils act of 1909.

The success of this deputation that waited upon the Viceroy at Simla enthused the Muslims to start a separate political organisation. The British were also interested in it so as to counter balance the congress. On 30th December 1906 Muslim League was formed in Dacca.

Muslim league provided a political and communal platform to Muslim community. It was from its birth an unpatriotic and anti national organisation.

First conference- Amritsar – Syed Ali Imam (president); the demands included more weightage to Muslims in legislative councils and civil services, equality of representation with majority community in Governor general's executive council.

Muslim league failed to get the support of the entire Muslim intelligentsia. Jinnah also opposed the league for many years. In Allahabad session he moved a resolution condemning communal representations. This resolution was seconded by maulana mazharul Haq. Syed Mohammed, Mohammed shibli Naumani, maulana Mohammed Ali and maulana azad refused to deal with the league. Maulana Mohammed Ali started 2 papers- Comrade (English), Hamdard (urdu) to Propagate anti league views. Maulana Azad started AL Hilal. Others who opposed this included- Syed

Wazir, Hassan Imam and Hakim Ajmal Khan. Under such opposition from Muslim leaders, the congress was compelled to modify its policy. Maulana Mohammed I'm Hassan founded Jamat Ul Ulema I Hind as league's rival in their field.

Changes in policy-

- promotion of goodwill between the two communities
- Attainment of swarajya under the patronage of the British crown.

Russia gave its support to the countries struggling against Turkey for their independence.

Indian Muslims began to distrust britishers as it was friendly with Russia.

Turkey had joined hands with Germany and fought against the British in the First world war.

Turkey had the khalifa so Indian Muslims started to see British as their enemies. Both congress and league held their annual sessions at Lucknow. Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, pandit Malviya attended the league's sessions in 1916. Both organisations met cordially here.

British dethroned the khalifa of Turkey. Indian Muslims participated in anti British agitation against this. Then Khilafat committee was formed.

In 1920- non cooperation movement was launched by Gandhiji to register nations protest against the British brutalities in Punjab and intolerant wrongs.

The communal accord which had started with the Lucknow pact ended in 1922 with the end of non cooperation and khilafat movement.

Arya samaj, hindu Maha sabha intensified its activities to safeguard the Hindus. Mopla Muslims and malabari Hindus started onslaught on communal hatred.

League exploited this situation for strengthening its hold over the community. M.A. Jinnah, shaukat Ali and Mohammed Ali had withdrawn from the congress. Congress boycotted all English Simon commission. In the league two sections emerged on the question of attitude towards this commission.

Earlier the league had demanded modifications in the Nehru report. They presented it through the Delhi proposals: joint electorates in place of separate electorates with reserved seats for Muslims; one third representation to Muslims in Central Legislative assembly; representation to Muslims in proportion their population in Bengal and Punjab; formation of three new Muslim majority provinces – Sindh, Baluchistan and North western frontier province. Hindu Mahasabha vehemently opposed these proposals. An attempt at compromise was made between the two.

Jinnah also presented fourteen points. Few Of these were – Federal constitution with residual powers with the provinces, provincial autonomy, one third Muslim representation in Central legislature, sepeation of Sindh and Bombay, separate electorates etc.

Muslim league passed a resolution calling for “a grouping of geographically contiguous areas where Muslims are in majority into independent states in which constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign and adequate safeguards to Muslims where they are in minority.”(March 1940)

Muslim league criticised the idea of single union given by the Cripps mission.

Muslim league opposed the quit India movement. It promoted violence in the country to pressurise it's demand for Pakistan through direct action day. It even tried to create deadlocks in the constituent assembly.

(3) Establishment of all India Hindu Mahasabha, Rashtriya Suwyam Sevak Sangha

Hindu Mahasabha was established in 1915. Previously known as sarvadeshak hindu sabha. Over the years several small hindu sabhas were formed in Bihar, Punjab, United Provinces and Bombay Presidency. In April 1925 the All India Hindu Mahasabha was formally established and all local branches brought under it. It also took the name Akhil Bharat hindu Mahasabha. Although it was not supportive of the British rule yet Mahasabha did not offer its full support to the nationalist movement. It abstained from participating in Civil Disobedience movement of 1930 and Quit India movement of 1942.

Under V.D.Savarkar, the Mahasabha was opposed to Gandhi's overtones.

The involvement of the Mahasabha in Gandhi's murder led to severe backlash against Savarkar, Godse and members of the outfit. The Mahasabha celebrates 30 January, the day Gandhi was assassinated as Shaurya Diwas. It has a Kendriya Mahasamiti, yuvaksabha and a yuvamorcha, mahila sabha, chatrasabha, sant Mahasabha.

RSS

Rashtriya Swayamsevak sangh was founded in 1925 by Keshav Balram Hedgewar. He was inspired by the writings of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.

This was to be a disciplined cadre consisting of mostly upper caste brahmins who were dedicated to independence and protection of Hindu political, cultural and religious interests. Later leadership was assumed by M.S Golwalkar. The RSS presents itself as a cultural not a political organisation that advocated hindu nationalist agenda under the banner of Hindutva. There is a national leader and regional leaders. Paramilitary training and daily exercise and drills are part of this discipline. The RSS reveres Hanuman. The RSS has historically played a major role in hindu nationalist movement.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Write about the moderate ideology.
2. Describe the achievements of the Congress party.
3. Write a short note on the agitation against partition of Bengal.
4. Write about the genesis of the Congress party.
5. Compare the ideology and strategies adopted by moderates and extremists.
6. Describe the influence of communal factions in politics in the early 1900s.
7. Write about the role of Nationalists in Swadeshi- Boycott movement.

DDE, Pondicherry University

UNIT – III**Lesson 3.1 - Morley- Minto Reforms**

- Morley- Minto Reforms
- Congress-League Joint Scheme for Constitutional Reforms (1916)
- The Montagu Declaration (1917) Montagu- Chelmsford Reforms (1919)

The period of Curzon's viceroyalty was one of discontent and agitation. The government took harsh measures to put down the nationalist movement in the country. The government attempted to win the moderates by bringing the Indian councils act in 1909.

Provisions of the act

- The act increased the size of the legislative councils. The additional members of the Governor general's council were increased upto 60. Those of Madras, Bengal, UP, Bombay, Bihar and Orissa to maximum of 50 and in Punjab, Burma and Assam it was increased to 30.
- Lord Morley insisted that a substantial official majority in the Imperial Legislative Council should be maintained and consequently it was provided that the Imperial Legislative Council shall consist of 37 officials and 28 non- officials. Out of the 37 officials, 28 were to be nominated by the Governor-General and the rest were to be ex-officio. The ex-officio members were to be the Governor-General, 6 ordinary members of the Council, and two extra- ordinary members. Out of the 32 non-official members, 5 were to be nominated by the Governor-General and the rest were to be elected.
- This Act did not provide for any official majority in the Provincial Legislative Councils. The majority of the members had to be non-officials. However, this does not mean that there were to be non-official elected majorities in the Provincial Councils. Some of the non-officials were to be nominated by the Governor and the Government could always depend upon the unflinching loyalty of the nominated members. The Government could manage to have a working majority in the Provincial Legislative Councils with the

help of the officials and the nominated non-officials. To take one example, the Madras Legislative Council consisted of 21 officials and 25 non-officials. The ex-officio members were the Governor, 3 members of the Executive Council and the Advocate-General. The remaining 16 officials were nominated by the Governor. Out of the 26 non-officials, 5 were nominated and only 21 were elected. It is clear that there were 26 nominated 21 elected members. Evidently, there was a nominated majority. The same applied to other Provinces.

- According to the Government of India, territorial representation was not suited to the people of India. "Representation by classes and interests is the only practicable method of embodying the elective principle in the constitution of the Indian Legislative Councils." The Act provided for separate or special electorates for the due representation of the different communities, classes and interests in the country. The remaining seats were allotted to the district boards and Municipalities which were called "general electorates."
- Madras had 21 elected members of the Legislative Council. Out of these, two were elected by the Mohammedans, 2 by Zamindars and 3 by landlords other than the Zamindars, one by the Corporation of Madras, one by the Madras Chamber of Commerce, one by the Madras Traders Association and one by the planting community. The rest of the 9 members had to be elected by the Municipal Councils, and District and Taluka Board. In the case of Imperial Legislative Council, the total number of the elected seats was 27. Out of these, 6 were allotted to the landlords, 5 to the Mohammedans and one to the Mohammedan landlords and one each to the Bengal and Bombay Chambers of Commerce. The remaining 13 seats were filled by the non-official members of the Provincial Legislative Councils.
- The functions of the Legislative Councils had also increased. Elaborate rules had been made for the discussion of the budget in the Imperial Legislative Council. Every member had been given the right to move any resolution relating to any alteration in taxation, any new loan or any additional grant to local Governments proposed or mentioned in the financial statement or explanatory memorandum. This Council was not permitted to discuss expenditure on interest on debt, ecclesiastical expenditure and State Railways, etc. It is to be noted that the financial statement had to be first referred

to a Committee of the Council with the Finance Member as its Chairman. Half of its members had to be nominated by the head of the Government and the other half had to be elected by the non-official members of the Council.

- The members had been given the right of asking questions and supplementary questions for the purpose of further elucidating any point. But the Member in charge of department might refuse to answer such supplementary questions off-hand. He might demand time for the same.
- The members had been given the power to move resolutions in the Councils. These resolutions were to be in the form of a definite recommendations to the Government. They had to be clearly and precisely expressed and must raise definite issues. The resolutions could not contain arguments, inferences, ironical expressions, etc. The President may disallow any resolution or part of a resolution without giving any reason for the same.
- Rules had been also framed under the Act for the discussion of matters of general public interest in the Legislative Councils. No discussion was permitted on any subject not within the legislative competence of the particular Legislature, any matter affecting the relations of the Government of India with a foreign Power or a native state, and any matter under adjudication by a court of law.
- The Act also raised the number of the members of the Executive Council in Bombay, Bengal and Madras to 4. It also empowered the Government to constitute an Executive Council for a Lieutenant-Governor's province also.
- In the provinces, the University Senates, landlords, District Boards and Municipalities and Chambers of Commerce had to elect members. Muslims were given separate representation. Muslim members of the Legislatures had elected by the Muslims, themselves.
- Disqualifications had to be imposed on political offenders. They could not offer themselves for election. However, the heads of the Governments were given the power to remove those disqualifications.

Criticism of the Act.

- (1) The reforms of 1909 did not match the expectations of the Indians.

- (2) The reforms led to a lot of confusion. While parliamentary reforms were introduced, no responsibility was given. The result was thoughtless and irresponsible criticism of the Government. Indian leaders made legislatures the platforms for denunciation of the Government.
- (3) The reforms introduced a system of elections. But the proportion of voters was very small. In some cases, the number of voters in a constituency did not exceed 9 or 10. Since the number was small, all the votes could be bought. Women remained excluded.
- (4) The system of elections was indirect. The people elected members of local bodies. The latter elected members of an electoral college. The electoral college elected members of the provincial legislature and the members of the provincial legislature elected members of the Imperial Legislature. The product was that there was no connection between the people and the members sitting in the legislature.
- (5) This act introduced separate electorates for Muslims. The evil did not end here. In 1919, the Sikhs got separate electorates. The Act of 1935 gave separate representation to Indian Christians, Anglo- Indians, Europeans and the Harijans.
It cannot be denied that one of the effects of communal representation was the establishment of Pakistan in 1947.
- (6) The Act gave importance to the vested interests by giving special representation to landholders, Chambers of Commerce etc.
- (7) The Indians resented maintenance of an official majority in the Imperial Council.
- (8) Although non official majority was given in the provincial councils, the practical result was nothing. This non-official majority was nullified by the fact that it included nominated members. There was no real majority of those who represented the people.
- (9) The Indians wanted the Government of England to make a clear indication as to what their goal was going to be in India. Was it to be the establishment of a responsible Government in India? If so, within how much time, and by what means? This Act gave no answer to all these important questions.

- (10) The reforms were in the nature of a half-way House which could scarcely satisfy the expectations of the Indians who wanted the transfer of power. The responsibility still lay with the government.
- (11) The principle of responsible government was not allowed to germinate in the system. Parliamentary government was absent.

Circumstances leading to Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms (1919):-

The reforms of 1909 failed to satisfy the people of India. Even moderates like Gokhale got convinced of the hollowness of the reforms. The reforms did not give any answer to the Indian demand that the British Government should declare as to what their goal in India was and what the British Government intended to do to achieve the same. The recommendations of the Decentralisation Commission of 1909 were utterly inadequate and disappointing. Lord Crewe, who became the Secretary of State after Lord Morley, appointed a Public Service Commission in 1912. This Commission spent two years in taking evidences but its report was not published until 1917. The way in which the machinery of the Government moved infuriated the Indians.

A critical study of the reforms of 1909 will show that the main object of the authors of the reforms of 1909 was to win over the Moderates. But that object was not realised as is evident from the contemporary utterances of the Moderate leaders. The discontentment of the masses resulted in revolutionary activities. The cult of the bomb became popular. The number of outrages committed by the terrorists was on the increase. Even a person like Lord Hardinge was not spared.

- The Muslims were also getting restive. They had come to realise the importance of their position from their experience of separate electorates. Muslims had found that the Government of India was only too glad to please them. This made them conscious of their position. The annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1911 did not satisfy the Hindus because they had got the thing done after a lot of suffering. This act of the Government annoyed the Muslims. The latter did not like the reincorporation of the Muslim population of Eastern Bengal into the Hindu province of Bengal. The Muslims interpreted this action of the Government as a concession to the

Hindus who had agitated and intimidated the Government. They emphasized “the connection between bombs and boons.”

- In addition to this, the pre-war foreign policy of the British Government was a source of uneasiness to the Muslim population of India. The Muslim territories were being absorbed by the Christian Powers of Europe in the Balkans. The Muslims were agitated over the acts of omission and commission of the British Government in the case of Morocco, Persia and Tripoli. The Balkan Wars were considered as a part of a general attack on Islam. It is clear that the Muslims were as much annoyed as the Hindus, although for different reasons. The treatment of the Indians abroad was creating a lot of discontentment in India. Their cruel treatment in Natal and Transvaal especially aroused the Indians against the British Government and the latter was accused of neglect of the Indian interests. Mr. Gokhale went to South Africa to negotiate on behalf of the Government of India. However, nothing substantial was done to redress the grievances of the Indians. A Commission of Enquiry and Indian Relief Act was considered inadequate.
- The Sikhs who had settled in Australia and Canada were badly treated. In the Western Coast of Canada, the position was complicated by the activities of a few Indian revolutionaries who had settled in U.S.A., and were responsible for the murder of anti-revolutionaries and of Mr. Hopkins who was working on behalf of the Government of India and the Dominion Governments. The dispute culminated in the dispatch of the Komagata Maru, a Japanese boat requisitioned to make a direct journey from India to Vancouver with the object of defeating the immigration restrictions. The Sikhs on board this ship were not allowed to land. After the commencement of the Great War in 1914 and after great sufferings, they formed the nucleus of a revolutionary movement in the Punjab.

Impact of World War I in India-

- It was in an atmosphere of discontentment that the Great War started in 1914. But in spite of all this, there was a generous response from the Indians. Mahatma Gandhi advised the Indians to render all possible help to the British Government. Here the Indian political parties made a sort of a truce, and allowed the Government to concentrate their attention on war effort. This attitude of the

Indians facilitated the recruitment of some 8,00,000 combatants and 4,00,000 non-combatants on a voluntary basis. The Government of India contributed almost annually a sum ranging between £20 and 30 million. A free gift of £1,00,000,000 also was given to England.

- The Government of India looked after the normal charges of the Indian troops not employed in India or within her boundaries. Further responsibilities were taken in April 1918, although the war ended before these amounted to more than £12,000,000. Large contributions were given to the Red Cross Societies and a War Loan was started in India. The general goodwill was so great that the British Government was able to withdraw from the Indian soil a major part of their British troops. At one time the British troops in India were not more than 15,000.
- However, by 1916, the things had changed. All hopes of a speedy and conclusive victory had disappeared and disillusionment had begun. The methods employed by the British Government in the matter of recruitment and collection of funds for the Red Cross, added insult to injury; Prices went up and added to the distress of the masses. The Indians had been made to work under the august authority and supervision of some European officers. An idea began to gain ground that the people of India had nothing to do with the War. The Indian patriots were emboldened by the Irish rebellion and apparent collapse of Western civilization.
- The commercial classes of India were at logger-heads with the Government on account of the war-time restrictions. They demanded a policy of protection. The Moderates had been weakened by the death of Gokhale. Lord Sinha who had led the congress to support the war efforts of the government lost all his influence in the organisation. Mr. Asquith's declaration that "henceforth Indian questions would have to be approached from a different angle of vision," was not translated into action for full two years.

In 1915, Lord Sinha, the Congress President of the Bombay Session, advised the British Government to make a declaration of their goal in India with a view to pacifying the Indian youth who were "intoxicated with ideas of freedom, nationality and self-government."

Lord Chelmsford, who succeeded Lord Hardinge in 1915, at once came to the conclusion that the creation of British India "as an integral part of

the British Empire with self-government was the goal of British rule.” But it was difficult to define precisely the steps by which the Government hoped to realise that ideal. Sir Austen Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India, was not prepared to be more explicit and precise in the matter of a formula “than to avow an intention to foster a gradual development of free institutions with a view to self-government.” However, he had to resign on the Mesopotamian issue and was succeeded by Edwin S. Montagu.

August Declaration-

Mr. Montagu was a friend of India. He had sympathised with the aspirations of the people of India and as such can be compared with persons like Lord Pethick Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps. He brought a new outlook to his office. When the fortunes of the Allies were at their lowest ebb, he made the following declaration in August 1917: “The policy of His Majesty’s Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-government institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps in this direction should be taken as soon as possible, and that it is of the highest importance as a preliminary to considering what these steps should be that there should be at free and informal exchange of opinion between those in authority at Home and in India. His Majesty’s Government have accordingly decided, with His Majesty’s approval, that I should accept the Viceroy’s invitation to proceed to India to discuss these matters with the Viceroy and the Government of India to consider with the Viceroy the views of local Governments, and to receive with him the suggestion of representative bodies and others.”

“I would add that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of Indian people, must be judges of the time and measure of each advance and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will be conferred and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in the sense of responsibility.”

The importance of the declaration lies in the fact that it started in categorical terms as to what exactly was going to be the goal of the British Government in India. It can be put on the same footing as the Queen’s

Proclamation of 1858. While the authors of the Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms regarded it as “the most momentous utterance ever made in India’s chequered history” which marked “the end of one epoch and the beginning of a new one.” Pradhan declared that it was a “revolutionary pronouncement.” To quote him again, “With the announcement of August 20, 1917, modern India has entered on a new era, in her history.”

According to G.N. Singh, the August Declaration “created once again a division in the ranks of Indian Nationalists. The Moderates welcomed the declaration as the ‘Magna Charta of India’. The Extremists, on the other hand, regarded the announcement as unsatisfactory both in language and substance and decided to continue agitation both for the release of the internees and for the better recognition of Indian claims and aspirations.”

Proposals for Reforms-

In 1916, the Government of India sent their Despatch to Chamberlain, Secretary of State for India, in which they made their suggestions regarding the concessions to be given to the Indians. The Despatch was never published but we have in Lord Zetland’s biography of Curzon the nature and contents of the proposals. This is what Zetland said: “In their representations to the Secretary of State, the Government of India had been careful not to commit themselves to any specific form of self-government. The special circumstances of India, they pointed out, differed so widely from those of any other part of the Empire that they could scarcely expect an Indian Constitution to model itself on those of the British Dominions. All that they contemplated was a gradual progress towards a large measure of control by her own people which would ultimately result in a form of self-government, differing in many ways enjoyed by other parts of the Empire but evolved on lines which had taken into account India’s past history and the special circumstances and traditions of her component people. Their proposals for assisting her towards this goal were, briefly, to confer greater powers and a more representative character upon existing local self-governing units such as District (rural) Boards and Municipal Councils; to increase the proportion of Indians in the higher administrative posts, and to have the way for an enlargement of the constitutional powers of the Provincial Legislatures by broadening the electorate and increasing the number of elected members.”

The Secretary of State for India, Mr. Chamberlain, did not approve of the recommendations as they would merely “result in an embarrassing

multiplication of irresponsible critics without effecting any real advance in the direction of self-government.” He was in favour of appointing a small Commission to consider the ways and means by which some measure of authority and responsibility could be given to the Legislatures. “As to a formula for the purpose of making known the policy of the Government, he did not think it possible to be more precise than to avow on intention to foster the gradual development of free institutions with a view to self-government.”

Memorandum of the Nineteen (1916)-

When the Imperial Legislature met at Simla in September 1916, its members resented the submission of the draft proposals by the Government of India to the Secretary of State without consulting them. The result was that the nineteen elected members of the Council including Jinnah, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Srinivasa Shastri, etc., submitted a Memorandum in which they put down their own views regarding the nature of the reforms that could satisfy the aspirations of the Indians.

The signatories of the Memorandum stated how the Indians felt bitterly about the treatment that was being meted out to them in the various parts of the British Empire. The Reforms of 1909 were utterly inadequate, for they transferred no real control into the hands of the Indians. They hoped that the Indian problem would be looked from “a new angle of vision” after the war. What Indians expected was not any reward for services rendered, but a change in their status in the British Empire where they should be recognised as equal partners. To quote, “What is wanted is not merely good government or efficient administration, but government that is acceptable to the people, because it is responsible to them.”

As regards the changes to be brought, the Memorandum recommended that:

- Half members of the Executive Councils had to be Indians. The European half should be recruited from the ranks of men trained and educated in the public life of England so that “India may have the benefit of a wider outlook and larger experience outside the world.”
- It had been stated that a sufficient number of highly qualified Indians was available for employment to these posts. It was further recommended that the statutory provision which required three

members of the Imperial Executive Council to belong to the public service in India, be deleted.

- The elected members of the legislature were to have an effective control over the selection of the Indian Executive Councillors.
- All the Legislative Councils in India had to have substantial majority of elected members. Franchise should be broadened and extended directly to the people. Provision had to be made for an adequate representation of minorities, whether Hindu or Muslim.
- The total membership of the Imperial Legislative Council had to be increased. It was to be not less than 150. The number might be 100 for major provinces and between 60 and 75 for minor ones.
- The budget had to be passed in the form of money bills and fiscal autonomy be granted to India.
- The Imperial and Provincial Legislatures were to have jurisdiction in matters concerning central and provincial spheres respectively. But the departments of Foreign Affairs and Military Affairs and the declaration of war or making of peace or treaty be reserved with the Government of India.
- Besides, the Governor-General-in-Council and the Governors-in-Council had to have the right to veto but this power had to be exercised subject to certain conditions and limitations.
- The Council of the Secretary of State had to be abolished and the status of the Secretary of State for India be the same as that of the Minister-in-Charge of Colonies. His salary had to be made a charge on the British revenues.
- In case an Imperial Federation had been established, India had to be placed on a footing of equality with other self-governing dominions.
- Provincial Governments had to be granted the largest measure of autonomy. The United Provinces and other major provinces had to have Governors recruited directly from England. They had to have Executive Councils also.
- Full independence in the matter of local self-government had to be granted immediately. Indians had to be given arms on conditions analogous to those of the Europeans, and they be also allowed to offer themselves as volunteers in the army.

- Last but not least, it had been prayed that Indians should be given commissions in the army on conditions similar to those of Europeans.

About the Memorandum, Pradhan writes. "The memorandum is an able and reasoned document and constitutes an important statement of the demands of the Indian people at the time."

Congress-League Scheme (1916)-

Another significant development to take place at Lucknow, after the readmission of extremists in congress in the Lucknow session of 1916, was the coming together of Muslim league and congress. This happened at a time when Muslim league, now dominated by younger militant nationalists, was coming closer to congress and turning increasingly anti imperialist.

There were many reasons for the shift in the League's position:

- (i) Britain's refusal to help Turkey (ruled by the Khalifa who claimed religio-political leadership of all Muslims) in its wars in the Balkans (1912-13) and with Italy (during 1911) had angered the Muslims.
- (ii) Annulment of partition of Bengal in 1911 had annoyed those sections of the Muslims who had supported the partition.
- (in) The refusal of the British government in India to set up a university at Aligarh with powers to affiliate colleges all over India also alienated some Muslims.
- (iv) The younger League members were turning to bolder nationalist politics and were trying to outgrow the limited political outlook of the Aligarh school. The Calcutta session of the Muslim League (1912) had committed the League to "working with other groups for a system of self- government suited to India, provided it did not come in conflict with its basic objective of protection of interests of the Indian Muslims". Thus, the goal of self-government similar to that of the Congress brought both sides closer.
- (x) Younger Muslims were infuriated by the government repression during the First World War. Maulana Azad's Al Hilal and Mohammad Ali's Comrade faced suppression while the leaders such as Ali brothers, Maulana Azad and Hasrat Mohani faced internment. This generated anti-imperialist sentiments among the 'Young Party'.

The Nature of the Pact

The Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League could be considered an important event in the course of the nationalistic struggle for freedom.

While the League agreed to present joint constitutional demands with the Congress to the government, the Congress accepted the Muslim League's position on separate electorates which would continue till any one community demanded joint electorates. The Muslims were also granted a fixed proportion of seats in the legislatures at all-India and provincial levels. The joint demands were-

- Government should declare that it would confer self-government on Indians at an early date.
- The representative assemblies at the central as well as provincial level should be further expanded with an elected majority and more powers given to them.
- The term of the legislative council should be five years.
- The salaries of the Secretary of State for India should be paid by the British treasury and not drawn from Indian funds.
- Half the members of the viceroy's and provincial governors' executive councils should be Indians.

Critical Comments

Though half the executive was to be elected by the legislature, the executive as a whole was not to be responsible to the legislature. The legislature could not remove the elected half of the executive, but since important matters like the budget were dependent upon the approval of the legislature, a constitutional deadlock was most likely. While the effort of the Congress and the Muslim League to put up a united front was a far-sighted one, the acceptance of the principle of separate electorates by the Congress implied that the Congress and the League came together as separate political entities. This was a major landmark in the evolution of the two-nation theory by the Muslim League. Secondly, while the leaders of the two groups came together, efforts to bring together the masses from the two communities were not considered. However the controversial decision to accept the principle of separate electorates represented a serious desire on the part of the Congress to allay minority fears of majority domination

Moreover, there was a large amount of enthusiasm generated among the people by this reunion. Even the government decided to placate the nationalists by declaring its intention to grant self-government to Indians in times to come, as contained in Montagu's August 1917 declaration.

If the Memorandum was published in October 1916, the famous Congress-League Scheme was given to the world in December of the same year. The scheme was approved by the Congress on 29th December and the Muslim League on 31st December 1916. It resembled in many respects the Memorandum of October 1916 and it is remarkable to note that some of its recommendations were embodied in the Government of India Act, 1919.

The introductory portion of the Resolution states that the existing system of Government did not "satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the people" and consequently His Majesty the King Emperor should issue a proclamation announcing "that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date."

- As regards the Scheme itself, the strength of the Provincial Legislature had to be not less than 125 members in the major provinces and from 50 to 75 in the minor ones. Of these, four-fifths had to be elected and one-fifth nominated. The members had to be elected directly by the people for five years with as broad a franchise as possible. Muslims had to be represented through special electorates in the proportion given in the scheme. It had laid down that no resolution or bill would be introduced by a non-official member if that affected a particular community and four-fifths of the members of that community in the provincial legislature opposed it.
- The Provincial head was not to preside over the Provincial Legislature. Its president had to be elected by the members of the Legislature. The right of asking supplementary questions had to be given to all and not only to the member who put the question.
- The divided heads of revenue had to be abolished and provinces were to make contributions to the Central Exchequer. Extensive powers of control had to be given to Provincial Legislatures including the right to raise loans, impose and alter taxation, and vote on the Budget. The right of moving resolutions on all matters within the purview of the provincial administration had to be allowed.

- Ordinarily, a resolution passed by the Legislature had to be binding on the Government. But the Governor might veto the resolution. In case the resolution was passed once again within a year, it had to be carried out.
- The right of moving a motion for adjournment to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance had been granted in case not less than one-eighth of the members present asked for it. The consent of the Governor was not to be required for introducing a bill in the Provincial Legislature. Both the Governor and the Governor-General had been given the power to veto the bills passed by a provincial legislature.
- Governor had to be the head of every province and “ordinarily” he was not to belong to the Indian Civil Service. In every province, there had to be an Executive Council, half of whose members had to be Indians elected by the elected members of the Provincial Legislatures. The recruitment of executive councillors from the I.C.S. had to be avoided as far as possible.
- As regards the imperial Legislative Council, its membership had to be raised to 150. It resembled the provincial legislature in the matter of proportion of elected and nominated members and power of asking questions and supplementary questions, introducing bills, passing resolutions and adjournment motions. One-third of the Indian elected members had to be Muslims. The elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council had to be elected by the elected members of the Provincial Legislature. The Budget had to be submitted for the vote of the legislature. Members had to hold office for five years. Military affairs and foreign and political relations of India including the right of declaration of war, making of peace and treaties, had to be excluded from the scope of the Imperial Legislature.
- Half the members of the Executive Council of the Governor-General had to be those Indians who had been elected by the elected members of the Imperial Legislature. Ordinarily, the members of the Indian Civil Service were not to be appointed to these posts. The right of making all appointments to the Imperial Civil Services had to be vested in the Government of India. Provinces should be given a large measure of autonomy in their own sphere and the Central Government should have the right of general supervision and superintendence over them. The Government of India was to

be independent of the control of Secretary of State in legislative and administrative matters. A system of independent audit of account of the Government was to be established.

- The India Council of the Secretary of State had to be abolished and he be assisted by two permanent Under-Secretaries out of whom one should be an Indian. The salary of Secretary of State had to be a charge on British revenues. His status had to be the same as that of Secretary of State for Colonies. India had to be given adequate and equal representation in any body that might be constituted to control Imperial affairs. "Indians should be placed on a footing of equality in respect of status and right of citizenship with other subjects of His Majesty the King throughout the empire." The military and naval services had to be thrown open to Indians and adequate provision had to be made for their selection, training and instruction in India. Indians had to be allowed to enlist as volunteers. Judicial powers had to be taken away from the Executive officers and the Judiciary be made independent.

The authors of the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms regarded the Congress-League scheme as "the latest, most complete and most authoritative presentation of the claims of the leading Indian political organisations." But the scheme was full of defects.

It demanded that European members of the Executive Councils of the Governors and the Governor-General were not to be taken from the Indian Civil Service. But the difficulty was that the public men in England were not prepared to cut short their careers by accepting a post for five years, particularly when there was no pension attached to the post. Moreover, the system of election of Indian councillors did not commend itself. The necessity of having an executive which was sympathetic towards the people, could not be denied. But in the present case, the legislatures had not been representative of the people because no electorates worth the name existed.

"Election would deprive the Governors of all discretion in making recommendations as to his, colleagues; and it would make it impossible to take steps to give all communities an opportunity for obtaining these appointments. Election is perhaps the best, though it is not the only method of securing representation; but when ability in administration ought, generally speaking to be the test, nomination by those who are in

the best position to judge must be more satisfactory than elections, success in which largely depends on other qualities.” There was also the possibility of a deadlock between the two halves and in the event of divergence of views, there was no easy way to secure unity of action.

The scheme perpetuated the system of communal representation. It is interesting to note that the Muslims were to have separate representation even in those provinces where they were in majority. They were at the same time given weightage over and above their numerical strength in those provinces where they were in minority.

The scheme started with the untenable proposition that provinces enjoy complete autonomy and consequently must have the power of raising loans, etc. Such a scheme is “compatible with parliamentary government but fundamentally incompatible with an executive which retains responsibility towards the Secretary of State and Parliament.”

The proposal regarding the transfer of powers to the newly constituted legislatures without vesting them with responsibility, was bound to do more harm than good.

The scheme provided no connecting rod between the executive and legislative wheels of the machine which would enable them to work in collaboration with each other. This was bound to result in friction. “Parliamentary government avoids deadlocks by making the executive responsible to the legislature. Presidential government limits deadlocks, because all the organs of state must ultimately submit to a superior tribunal, the electorate of the nation. But a legislature elected by the people, coupled with a Governor appointed by distant power, is a contrivance for fomenting dissensions and making them perpetual.”

The provision that the resolutions of the legislature should be binding on the executive, puts the latter in the awkward position of carrying out what it did not approve of. But the only other alternative was that the executive should remain in power so long as it enjoyed the confidence of the House. That implied the establishment of responsible government to which the British Government had not committed itself.

Gokhale's Political Testament.

Before his death in 1915, Gokhale had prepared on the request of Lord Willingdon, a scheme of reforms to be given to India after the war. This

so-called "Gokhale's Political Testament" was published in August 1917. Gokhale's main recommendation was the grant of provincial autonomy and the lessening of the control of the Government of India in the provincial sphere. He wanted the Executive Council or Cabinet of the Governor to consist of 6 members, three of whom were to be Indians. The Legislative Council was to consist of 75 to 100 members, of whom not less than four-fifths were to be elected. The relations between the Legislature and Executive were to be the same as those between the Reichstag and the Executive in Germany before 1918. The Provincial Government was to work under the control of the Provincial Legislative Council, but otherwise, it was to have "complete charge of the internal administration of the Province." The Provinces were to have greater fiscal autonomy. They were to make contributions to the central revenues.

Since the provinces were to become "practically autonomous," the Executive Council was to consist of one instead of four existing members. His name was to be the Member of the Interior. Later on, he proposed the creation of five more members. The Legislative Council of the Viceroy was to be known as the Legislative Assembly of India. It was to consist of about 100 members, the majority of whom were to be nominated members or officials. It was to have "increased opportunities of influencing the policy of Government by discussion, questions connected with the Army and Navy (to be now created) being placed on level with other questions."

The Government of India was to be made free in fiscal affairs from the control of the Secretary of State whose powers were to be curtailed in other matters also. His council was to be abolished and he himself put on the same footing as the Secretary of State for Colonies.

The Indians were to be admitted to the ranks of commissioned officers both in the army and navy and proper facilities were to be provided for their instruction.

If German East Africa was conquered from the Germans, it was to be handed over to the Government of India after the war and reserved for Indian colonisation.

The Round Table Group-

The Round Table Group was started by Lionel Curtis and his friends in South Africa after 1906 and it played a very significant part in bringing the various elements in the Union together. Encouraged by its results,

the members thought of extending the scope of their studies and in that connection visited New Zealand, Australia and Canada. Not only were the centres of the groups started in the University towns of those countries, those were also opened at Oxford, Cambridge, London, etc. By means of discussion and criticism, the groups contributed to the study of the means by which the various parts of the British Empire could be brought together and the problems arising out of this huge combination of the states could be tackled satisfactorily. It is to be noted that the movement was not meant for propaganda, but for studying the problems which faced the Empire.

In the summer of 1915, the members of the Round Table Group, while preparing Vol. II of the Commonwealth of Nations, were faced with the problem of writing the chapters relating to India and the Dependencies. Curtis requested that a member of the group, who had expert knowledge about India, should present before the group his own views on the position of India in the British Commonwealth. Sir William Duke who had been the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, took up the task and placed before the group his famous Memorandum. His Scheme was printed and distributed among the members of the gathering who met at Oxford for three days to discuss its pros and cons. The draft was completely recast in the light of the discussions.

The Scheme as formulated in the Duke Memorandum was intended for circulation among the Round Table groups in the various parts of the British Empire for study and criticism. The results would have been used in the treatment of the Imperial problem on its Indian side. But certain circumstances did not allow that procedure to be followed.

Lord Chelmsford, who became the Governor-General of India in 1916, was formerly the Governor of New South Wales and had some knowledge of the Round Table group at Sydney. Before his departure for India, he was busy in discussing with experts, the Indian problem. When he came to know that the Round Table group in London was discussing the question of India, he requested them to show him their results. Thus he was shown the Duke Memorandum.

Recommendations of 1918- The joint report of Montagu and Chelmsford analysed the meaning of the word "responsible government" and suggested that initial steps for the development of responsible Government should be taken in the provinces. The Government of India was to remain responsible through the Secretary of State to the British Parliament.

Full provincial autonomy was considered to be premature. However, the Governor was to have an Executive Council of two members of which one was to be an Indian. The Governor-in-Council was to deal with reserved subjects. The other subjects were to be transferred into the hands of the Indian ministers who were to be responsible to the Provincial Legislature. In his relations with the ministers, the Governor was not always to occupy the position of a constitution ruler. It was suggested that Local Self-Government, Education, Health and Sanitation, Agriculture, Public Works (except irrigation works), and Excise might be transferred to the ministers. The number of the non-official members was to be increased and direct elections were to be ordered wherever possible.

However, no substantial change was to be made in the Central Government. But the Council of the Governor-General was to have an Indian member. The control of the Secretary of State was to remain substantially the same as before.

The Report was published in July, 1918 and met with universal condemnation. Unfortunately, the whole atmosphere was poisoned by the publication of the Rowlatt Committee Report during the summer. The recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee were incorporated into two bills. According to them, judges were to have the power to try political cases without juries in the notified areas and Provincial Governments were given the powers of internment. The people forgot the recommendations of Montague and were furious at the reward given by the British Government in the form of Rowlatt Bill. Both Mahatma Gandhi and B.G. Tilak condemned the action of the Government in strongest possible terms.

At that time, there occurred the famous Jallianwala Bagh tragedy in 1919. Disturbances also took place in many other places in March and April, e.g., Delhi, Kasur, Lahore, etc. Martial law was imposed in certain parts of Punjab. The arrests of leaders also added fuel to the fire.

It was in this atmosphere of storm and stress that a Bill, embodying the recommendations made in the Report of 1918, was introduced in Parliament on June 2, 1919.

At the outset Mr. Montagu tried to explain the origin of the Reforms. He stated that much work had already been done when he became the Secretary of State. After the August announcement, he appointed a committee which sat at the India Office and this was presided over by Sir William Duke, the famous author of the Duke Memorandum. He

also referred to other preliminaries before the introduction of the Bill in the House of Commons. Thus it was clear that the Bill was the outcome of mature thinking and thorough consideration and not merely pushed through hastily.

He attributed the necessity of the Bill to legitimate impatience of the Indians for reforms. He said that the August announcement had promised the grant of reforms as soon as possible. He did not want to be accused that since the war was over, the British were reluctant to fulfil the promise they had so solemnly made in 1917. Moreover, unreasonable delay was bound to be fatal to the object in view, i.e., the conciliation of the Indians.

He emphasised the fundamentally transitional character of the Reforms. They were not intended to endure for long. They were merely “a bridge between government by the agents of Parliament and government by representatives of the people of India.” It is for this reason that he avoided making the Constitution a rigid one. That also explains why in a large number of cases, details were left to be filled in by means of rules. However, he assured the House that those Rules would be placed before it before the final passage of the Bill.

He said that the mere maintenance of law and order and peace and tranquillity was meaningless, unless something substantial was conceded to the Indians. The grant of local self-government could not satisfy their aspirations, for that was already promised by Ripon.

He referred to three difficulties, viz., lack of education, caste system and religious differences, which stood in the way of the establishment of responsible government in India. But he believed that those could be overcome by the introduction of representative institutions. He confessed that the complete devolution of powers at once was not compatible with the maintenance of peace and order and hence undesirable. ‘But there were certain matters that could be transferred into the hands of the Indians without suffering any irretrievable loss or injury. Other departments could still be kept in the reserve to be handed over on some later occasion. The ministers were to be given liberty in their departments and held responsible for them. Montagu definitely stated that he was not in favour of the establishment of two governments, “completely separate in the same area, with separate funds, separate finances, separate legislatures and separate executive staff.” He advocated the creation of dyarchical form of Government in which the two parts had opportunities of “influence and consultation.”

He stated that the time had not come for the grant of any concession at the centre. Only the legislature was to be made more representative.

He examined the Congress-League Scheme, the Scheme put forward by the heads of the majority of provinces, the Indo-British Association Scheme, and still another one which proposed that in every province, one or two districts should be put completely under the control of the Indian officials and if successful, the process was to be continued in the division and ultimately in the whole province. His own conclusion was that the dyarchical system was the best as it left the scope for gradual progress in the future. He concluded his great peroration by an appeal to the members of the Commons to pass the Bill without delay.

On the motion of Mr. Montagu, it was decided to refer the Bill to a Joint Select Committee of the House of Lords and Commons. Lord Selborne was appointed its president. The committee included Montagu, Spoor, Lord Sinha, Lord Sydenham and others. It examined the reports of the Functions and Franchise Committees, Lord Crewe's Committee, and the Montford Report. It examined a large number of witnesses, Indian and English, and submitted a masterly Report to the House of Commons.

The Report of the Joint Select Committee contained recommendations regarding the changes that were necessary to be introduced in the Government of India Bill. The Committee proposed that a Standing Joint Committee of both the Houses should be set up for the purpose of keeping Parliament in closer contact with the Indian affairs. But the Committee was to have a purely consultative and advisory status.

The Committee proposed the inclusion of the whole of the announcement of August 20, 1917 in the Preamble to the Bill rather than only a part of it. It altered the Lists of the Central, Provincial and Transferred subjects included in the Functions Committee's Report. It disapproved of the separate purse for the Reserved Departments and recommended that the Governor should allocate a definite proportion of revenues for the reserved and transferred departments. If he wanted help in this work of division, he could refer the question to an authority appointed by the Governor-General.

The relations between the two halves of the provincial executive should be of such mutual sympathy that each helps and influences the work of the other. But one part was not to exercise control over the other. The ministers in charge of the transferred subjects were to be those elected members of

the Legislative Council who enjoyed its confidence, and were capable of leading it. The ministers were to be expected from the very beginning to act together. Their status was to be similar to that of the members of the Executive Council, but their salaries were to be determined by the Legislative Council. The Committee recommended that the habit of joint deliberations between the ministers and the councillors under the presidentship of the Governor should be encouraged. The Governor was directed to allow ministers to have their way and fix responsibility upon them, even if he had to use his veto power to negative any piece of legislation. The Committee recommended that the Governor should not preside over the meetings of the Provincial Legislative Council. Although for the first four years, the President was to be nominated by the Governor, subsequently he was to be elected by the Council. The Vice President was to be elected by the Council from the very beginning. The Committee specifically laid down that they attached the "greatest importance to this question of the Presidency of the Legislative Council." It was proposed that the provincial budget should be submitted to the vote of the Legislative Council, subject to a few exemptions to be specified in the Bill. The Committee rejected the idea of instituting Grand Committees in the Provincial Legislatures.

The Committee made detailed recommendations regarding franchise. It proposed to increase the share of representation of the rural population and also the urban wage earning classes. An effort was to be made to remove the disparity in the size of electorates in the different provinces. The Committee considered representation for the depressed classes to be inadequate. The non-Brahmins of the Madras Presidency and the Marathas of the Bombay Presidency were to be given separate representation by the reservation of seats. The question of representation of women was to be left to the option of the newly elected legislative councils which were empowered to allow that by means of resolutions. All graduates of over seven years' standing were to be given the right to vote for the University. The recommendations of the Franchise Committee in respect of the proportionate representation of Mohammedans, based on the Lucknow Pact, might be accepted. It was definitely laid down that no alterations were to be made in the franchise for the first ten years.

The Committee did not approve of the idea of keeping the Council of State as an organ for government legislation. It was to be constituted as a true second chamber from the very beginning. It was to consist of 60 members of whom not more than 20 were to be officials.

The Committee did not agree to accept the system of indirect election for the Legislative Assembly on a permanent basis. That may be allowed as a transitional measure for three years, but the Government of India was to devise means to remedy this defect at an early date. The Governor-General was to nominate the President of the Legislative Assembly for the first four years.

Although the Indian Budget was to be submitted to the vote of the Assembly, the Committee recommended the exemption of certain charges of a special or recurring nature from the voting. It was made clear that the Governor-General's power of certification was a real one and was "meant to be used if and when necessary."

The Committee recommended that the existing limitation on the number of the members of the Governor-General's Executive Council should be removed. Three of the Executive Councillors were to be public or ex-public servants who had been in the service of the Crown in India for 10 years. Not less than three members of the Council were to be Indians. One member should have definite legal qualifications.

The Committee recommended that all charges of the India Office, excluding "agency" charges, should be paid out of the British revenues. But it did not approve of the abolition of the Council of India which was to be reconstituted by the inclusion of more Indians into it.

In matters of fiscal policy, the Committee recommended that the Secretary of State for India should, so far as possible, avoid interference when the Government of India and its legislature were in agreement. Interference was to be limited to the safeguarding of the international obligations of the Empire or any fiscal arrangements within the Empire to which His Majesty's Government was a party.

The Committee recommended that every precaution should be taken to protect the interests of the public servants. If there occurred any friction between a minister and a public servant, it was to be one of the "most important duties" of the Governor to bring about a reconciliation, If that was not possible, the officer was to be provided with an equivalent career elsewhere or allowed to retire on a reasonable pension.

The committee wanted it to be specifically laid down that the Statutory Commission was not to be appointed before ten years and no substantial change was to be made in the constitution during that interval.

After the Joint Select Committee had presented its Report, the Bill was introduced *on* December 5, 1919 in the House of Commons for the third reading. On behalf of the Labour Party, Adamson supported the Bill and declared it to be a definite move in the right direction. But his complaint was that the Bill did not go far enough. He maintained that by not giving any control at the centre, the Government had lost the sympathetic co-operation of some of the best elements of the population of India. He thought it absurd to give the right of vote to only 5 millions out of 250 millions. Similarly he regretted the exclusion of industrial workers and women from franchise. Maclean, Spoor and Ormsby-Gore also participated in the discussion. While winding up the debate in the Third Reading, Montagu expressed the hope that the future Parliament will take India on the road to responsible Government. He regarded the passage of the Bill as the ending of an era. He appealed to the feelings of mutual goodwill. He concluded with the remark. "Let us forget the past and start afresh."

When the Bill came up for discussion before the House of Lords on December 11, 1919, Lord Sinha, Under Secretary of State for India, dealt at length with the history of the Reforms. Since the question of reforms had been hanging fire since 1915, it could not be maintained with any amount of justice that the Bill before the House was a hasty measure. It was "the natural and inevitable sequel to the long chapter of previous legislation for the better Government of India." It was imperative to give reforms to India because not only her status in the British Empire had been raised during the war as a result of her participation in many imperial affairs on equal footing, but nationalism also had made great advance in the country. The aspirations of the natives had been pitched high, but the existing administrative machinery in India was purely an official one. India might not be fully equipped for complete self-government, but she had to be given "some measure of control" at once if it was intended that she should fit herself for better things in the future.

Lord Sinha discussed at length the various alternative schemes that were put forward to suggest the line of advance to be followed in India. While criticising them all, he defended the Bill on many grounds. He also discussed the position of the Secretary of State, India Council, Civil Services in India, and the proposed Commissioners of Inquiry. He tried to emphasise the fact that the old system of Government which had worked in India in the nineteenth century could not be continued in the twentieth

century. The Indians had reached the age of adolescence and if the British were to act as good guardians, it was their imperative duty to give Indians as much of liberty as was necessary for self-expression in their age of adolescence. Lord Sinha appealed to the members to discuss the Bill with earnestness, impartiality and fairness. He concluded by saying that "what is being given to India is like the grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field, which now is the least of all seeds, but when it was grown it was the greatest amongst the herbs and became tree so that the birds of the air came and lodged in the branches thereof."

Lord Carmichael said that he was happy that the Reforms would strengthen the hands of the Moderates in India. He did not share the view that the Indian ministers would not like the Civil Servants. On the other hand, the real danger was that they being new to the job, might not completely depend upon them. Of course, the position of the Governor would be a very difficult one.

Lord Crewe maintained that there was nothing "novel" in the Reforms and they could not be called "a leap in the dark." Their necessity- arose because under the system set up in 1909, criticism was reaching dangerous limits. Moreover, Indians had given an unmistakable proof of their capacity by their splendid part in the war. While he approved of the creation of a High Commissioner for India, he was opposed to the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee of two Houses on the ground that that would lead to too much of interference into the affairs of India. He warned the Indians that it was not in their interest to start any agitation during the first few years of the inauguration of the Reforms.

Lord Sydenham, a great die-hard and an opponent of India's freedom, maintained that the Bill was "the most dangerous" piece of legislation. It did not arise out of "any desire on the part of the people of India." It was merely a concession to a small body of English-speaking Indians so that they may keep quiet. While he praised the services rendered by the Indian princes and the fighting classes of India, he criticised the Indian nationalists for having started the agitation when the Government was in trouble. Not only did they condemn the Government in the strongest terms by holding it responsible for all the miseries of India, they also stirred up class-hatred. He complained that the people who came to give evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee did not represent India. The real Indians were the masses who did not know English and consequently their case was lost by default. The result was that the Bill was

going to establish an oligarchy in India. Lord Sydenham referred to the new danger to India arising from the spread of Bolshevism in the country and emphasised the imperative necessity of a strong government to meet the situation. But, unfortunately, the new Reforms were going to weaken the executive at the most critical juncture. He ridiculed the idea that the political institutions that had worked successfully in the West, would work similarly in the East. He criticised the hurry with which the Bill was being pushed through.

Lord Meston who had been deputed by the Government of India to present their point of view before Parliament, maintained that he could give first hand information on the Indian affairs. He emphasised the fact that the Bill before Parliament was not the outcome of agitation or the noisy demands of the Indian politicians. It was the inevitable result of the work of the British in India. It is the British themselves who had created a national awakening in the country. He informed the House that revolution was out of the question in India and hence the Bill should not be held up on that score. He concluded by saying that the Bill was introduced at the request of Government officials who were engaged in carrying on the work of administration.

Lord Curzon, the leader of the House of Lords, supported the Bill in a reserved tone. He referred to the great work accomplished by the Joint Parliamentary Committee. He also touched upon the fiscal policy of India and the India Council. He emphasised the need of mutual co-operation between the Government of India and the Home Government on the one hand, and the Indian Nationalist Press on the other.

Lord Amptill condemned the Bill in the strongest possible terms. He held that the Bill was a "calamitous measure." While the situation in India was becoming critical everyday, the Bill was going to weaken the executive and impair its impartiality. He maintained that the Indian soil was not favourable for the growth of democratic institutions. The caste-system of the Hindus in itself was anti-democratic. The only effect of the Bill was going to be the establishment of the domination of the Brahmins in the country, and that was not at all welcome to the non-Brahmins. He accused the British statesmen for their mental bankruptcy and predicted that the whole of the future of India was going to be jeopardised by the passage of the Bill.

In spite of the stout opposition at the hands of men like Sydenham and Amptill, the Bill was passed by the House of Lords on December 18, 1919 and it received the Royal Assent on December 23.

On the same day, a Royal Proclamation was issued by King George V to the Indian Princes and the people of India. It was hoped that the new Act “will take its place among the great historic measures passed by the Parliament of this Realm for the better government of India and for the greater contentment of her people.” He declared that he was happy to watch the progress of democratic institutions in the country. He appealed to the leaders of the Indians and the ministers of the future to face responsibility, endure misrepresentation and make sacrifices for the common interests of the country. He hoped that the public servants would trust their new officers and work with them in harmony so that orderly advance towards free institutions by the Indians might become possible.

He expressed his earnest desire to remove all bitterness between the Indians and British officers. With that object in view, he directed the Viceroy to exercise on his behalf clemency to political offenders in the fullest measure which was consistent with public safety.

On the same occasion, he sent the happy news to the Princes of India that he had agreed to the establishment of a Chamber of Princes. He also assured them that their privileges, rights and dignity would be maintained in the future.

He announced his intention to send the Prince of Wales to India to inaugurate the New Chamber of Princes and the new Constitution in British India. He hoped that when the Prince of Wales visited the country mutual good-will and confidence would prevail among the Indians. He concluded with a prayer to “Almighty God that His Wisdom and under His guidance India may be led to greater prosperity and contentment and may grow to the fullness of political freedom.”

Preamble of the Act of 1919.

The Preamble to the Government of:

“Whereas it is the declared policy of the Parliament to provide for the increasing association of Indians in every branch of Indian administration, and for gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in British India as an integral part of the Empire;

“And whereas, progress, in giving effect to this policy can only be achieved by successive stages and it is expedient that substantial steps in this direction should now be taken;

“And whereas the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples;

“And whereas, the action of Parliament in such matters should be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility;

“And whereas, concurrently with the development of self-governing institutions in the province of India, it is expedient to give to those provinces in provincial matters the highest measure of independence of the Government of India, which is compatible with the due discharge by the latter of its own responsibilities;

“Be it therefore enacted....as follows”:

The following is an analysis of the Preamble as given by the late Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru:-

- (1) British India is to remain an integral part of the British Empire.
- (2) Responsible Government in British India is the objective of the declared policy of Parliament.
- (3) Responsible government is capable of progressive realisation only.
- (4) In order to achieve responsible Government, it is necessary to provide for two things: the increasing association of the Indians in every branch of administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions.

Main provisions of the Act of 1919.

- (1) The Government of India Act, 1919, made many changes in the administration of India. Formerly, the Secretary of State for India used to be paid out of the Indian revenues. The new Act provided that in future he had to be paid out of the British revenues. However, some of the functions of the Secretary of State for India had been taken away from him and given to a High Commissioner for India who had to be appointed by the Government of India

and paid by the Government of India. He acted as the agent of the Governor-General-in-Council. He had to be in charge of the Stores Department, the Indian Student Department, etc. The control of the Secretary of State had to be reduced in the provincial sphere in so far as the transferred departments were concerned. But in the case of the Central Government of India, it remained as complete as before. The Secretary of State possessed and exercised the power of superintendence, direction and control over the affairs of India. It had to be the duty of the Governor-General to carry out the orders of the Secretary of State.

- (2) The Act of 1919 set up a bicameral legislature of the Centre in place of the Imperial Council consisting of one House. The names of the two Houses had to be the Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of State. The Council of State consisted of 60 members out of which 33 had to be elected and 27 had to be nominated by the Governor General. The Central Legislative Assembly consisted of 145 members out of which 103 had to be elected and the rest nominated. Out of the nominated members, 25 had to be officials and the rest non-officials. Out of the 103 elected members, 51 had to be elected by the general constituencies, 32 by communal constituencies (30 by Muslims and 2 by Sikhs), and 20 by special constituencies (7 by land-holders, 9 by Europeans and 4 by Indian Commerce).
- (3) The life of the Central Legislative Assembly had to be 3 years and the Council of State 5 years but the same could be extended by the Governor-General. It is to be noted that the last Assembly sat for 11 years. The first Speaker of the Assembly had been nominated by the Government, but the subsequent Speakers had been elected by the members of the Assembly.
- (4) The Franchise Committee had recommended a system of indirect elections to the Central Assembly on the ground that direct elections though preferable were impracticable on account of the unwieldy character of the constituencies. Ultimately, the Government of India decided in favour of direct elections for both Houses of the Central Legislature.
- (5) As regards the franchise for both Houses of the Central Legislature, it had been very much restricted. In the case of the Council of State, voters had been assessed either to income-tax on an annual income of not less than Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000 or to land-revenue

of Rs. 750 to Rs. 5,000. In addition, those who had previous experience in public work or who had been recognised as men of high scholarship or academic worth were entitled to have their names enrolled on the election roll of general constituencies for the Council of State. As regards the qualifications of the voter for the Central Assembly, these had been either the payment of municipal taxes amounting to not less than Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 per annum, or occupation or ownership of a house of the annual rental of Rs. 180 or assessment to income-tax on an annual income of not less than Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 5,000 or assessment to land revenue for Rs. 50 to Rs. 150 per annum, varying from province to province. It is to be noted that the total number of voters for the Council of State was about 17,364 and for the Central Assembly was about 909,874 in 1920.

- (6) The Governor-General had been given the power to summon, prorogue and dissolve the chambers. He was also to have the right of addressing the members of the two Houses.
- (7) The Central Legislature had been given very wide powers. It could make laws for the whole of British India, for the subjects of His Majesty and Services of the Crown in other parts of India, for the Indian subjects of His Majesty wherever they may happen to be and for all persons employed in His Majesty's defence forces. It could also repeal or amend laws for the time being in force in British India or applicable to the persons mentioned in the preceding sentence. However, the previous sanction of the Secretary of State-in-Council was required to pass any legislation abolishing any High Court. The Indian Legislature had no power to amend or repeal any Parliamentary statute relating to British India or do anything affecting the authority of Parliament or the unwritten laws or constitution of the United Kingdom.

The previous sanction of the Governor-General was required to introduce bills concerning the following subjects:-

- (i) The public debt or public revenues of India.
- (ii) Religion or religious rites and usages of the British subjects in India.
- (iii) Discipline or maintenance of His Majesty's military, naval or air forces.

- (iv) Relations of the Government of India with foreign States or Indian States.
- (v) Any measure which repeals or amends any Act of a legislature or any ordinance made by the Governor-General, etc.

In addition to the above, the Governor General had been given the power of preventing the consideration, at any stage, of a bill or a part of a bill in either chamber of the Central Legislature if in his opinion it "affects the safety or tranquillity of British India, or any part thereof." The Governor-General had been empowered to enact laws which he considered essential for the safety, tranquillity of interests of British India or any part thereof if either chamber refused or failed to pass them. Every Act so passed required the assent of His Majesty. The Governor-General possessed the power of making and promulgating ordinances for the peace and quiet Government of British India in cases of emergency. An ordinance issued by the Governor-General had the same force of law as a law passed by the Indian Legislature. It lasted for 6 months. The Governor-General had the power of returning any measure passed by the two Houses of the Central Legislature for re-consideration before signifying his assent or dissent. The assent of the Governor-General had been made essential for the enactment of a law by the Legislature. He had the power to give his assent or reserve the Bill for the signification of His Majesty's pleasure on the same. The Crown had the power of disallowing any Act made by the Indian Legislature or the Governor-General. The vetoing power of the Governor-General was real and was actually exercised on many occasions.

Members of both Houses of the Central Legislature had been given the right of putting interpellations and supplementary questions, of moving resolutions and making motions of adjournment, and of introducing projects of legislation according to the rules. The members had been given the right of freedom of speech in the two chambers.

- (8) As regards the Central Budget, the Government submitted proposals for the appropriation, in the form of demands for grant, to the vote of the Indian Legislative Assembly. However, certain items had been made non-votable in the Budget. These items were not open to discussion in either chamber, "unless the Governor-General otherwise directs." All other items of expenditure had to be submitted to the vote of Assembly which "may assent or refuse its assent to any demand or may reduce the amount referred to in

any demand by a reduction of the whole grant.” If the Governor-General was satisfied that any demand which had been refused by the Assembly was essential for the discharge of his responsibilities, he could restore the grant even if it had been rejected by the Assembly. In cases of emergency, he had been empowered “to authorise such expenditure as may in his opinion, be necessary for the safety or tranquillity of British India or any part thereof.”

It is evident that the Central Legislature had been made helpless before the Central Executive. The Executive was not only independent of the Legislature, but also had the power of over-riding the Legislature in almost all respects.

- (9) It has been rightly pointed out that the Act of 1919 introduced responsive and not responsible Government at the Centre. The members of the Executive Council of the Governor-General were nominated members. The people had neither any hand in their appointment nor in their removal. No vote of no-confidence by the legislature could turn them out. But it cannot be denied that the members of the Executive Council did respond to the wishes of the members of the Central Legislature and through them to the people of the country. Some of the members of the Legislature had been the of the Standing Committee such as Finance Committee and the Committee on Public Accounts. As such they got an opportunity to influence the Government. The members could not ex- pose the Government by putting them questions, supplementary questions and moving motions of adjournment. They could also reject the Budget and move and pass resolutions against the Government. It is these factors which made the Government respond to the wishes of the members of the Legislature. Even the most irresponsible Executive Councillors could not afford to ignore the wishes of the members of the Legislature. Thus it was that although the Executive was independent of the Legislature, the latter could influence its decisions. The large majority given to the elected members of the Central Assembly made things hot for the Government and the only way to improve the state of affairs was to carry on the administration according to the wishes of the people.
- (10) The new Act provided for two lists of subjects: Central List and Provincial List. The principle underlying this division was that matters in regard to which uniformity in legislation was necessary

or desirable for the whole of India or in more than one province should be regarded as central, while others in which only a particular province was interested, should be treated as provincial.

- The central subjects had been: Defence, Foreign and Political Relation, Public Debt, Tariffs and Customs, Posts and Telegraphs, Patents and Copyright, Currency and Coinage, Communications, Commerce and Shipping Civil and Criminal Law and Procedure, Major Ports, etc.
- The provincial subjects had been: Local Self-Government, Public Health and Sanitation and Medical Administration, Education, Public Works, Water Supplies and Irrigation, Land Revenue Administration, Famine Relief, Agriculture, Forests, Co-operative Societies, Law and Order, etc.
- As regards the residuary subjects, they had been divided between the centre and the provinces on the same principle on which the Lists were drawn up. It is to be noted that the division was not clear-cut or definite. There was a lot of overlapping. Critics point out that while subjects like commerce and law regarding property were placed in the Central List, important subjects like Excise and laws regarding Land Tenure had been given to the provinces. Although all subjects in the Provincial List were provincial for purposes of administration, that was not the case for purposes of legislation. Certain parts of them in regard to which uniformity in legislation was considered desirable, were made “subject to legislation by the Indian Legislature.” These were borrowing and taxing powers of local self-governing bodies, infectious and contagious diseases of men, animals and plants, water supplies and irrigation, industrial matters including factories, electricity, settlement of labour disputes, control of newspapers, printing presses, etc.

- (11) The size of the Provincial Legislative Council had been considerably enlarged. While about 70 per cent of the members of the Provincial Legislature had been elected, about 30 per cent had to be nominated by the Governor. Some of these nominated members had to be officials and the others non-officials. The Legislative Council sat ordinarily for 3 years, but it could not be dissolved earlier by the Governor. The latter could also extend its life. The members had been given the right of asking questions

and supplementary questions. They could reject the budget, although the Governor could restore it, if necessary.

- (12) The Act of 1919 introduced dyarchy in the provinces. Under this subjects further were divided into two parts: Transferred and Reserved subjects. The subjects to be dealt with by the Provincial Governments Reserved subjects had to be administered by the Governor with the help of the Executive Council and the Transferred subjects had to be dealt with by the Governor with the help of his ministers. While the members of the Executive Council had to be nominated by the Governor, the ministers had been chosen by the Governor from the members of the legislature.
- The following had been the Reserved subjects: Administration of Justice, Police, Irrigation and Canals, Drainage and Embankments, Water Storage and Water Power. Land Revenue Administration, Land Improvement and Agricultural Loans, Famine Relief, Control of Newspapers, Books and Printing Presses, Prisons and Reformatories, Borrowing money on credit of the Province. Forests except in Bombay and Burma, Factory inspection, Settlement of labour Disputes, Industrial Insurance and Housing.
 - The following had been the Transferred subjects: Local Self-Government including matters relating to Municipal Corporations and District Boards; Public Health, Sanitation and Medical Administration, including Hospitals and Asylums and provision for Medical Education; Education of Indians with some exceptions; Public Works, including Roads, Bridges and Municipal Tram- ways, but excluding Irrigation. Agriculture and Fisheries; Co-operative Societies; Excise; Forests in Bombay and Burma only, Development of Industries, including Industrial Research and Technical Education. The provincial Governor was not a constitutional head. He was given many special responsibilities. He was authorised to over-rule his ministers and the members of the Executive Council if that was considered necessary for the discharge of his responsibilities. The Governor was expected to encourage joint deliberation between the ministers and the members of the Executive Council. Provision was made for the temporary administration of Transferred subjects in the case of an emergency. If no minister was in charge of a Transferred

subject, the Governor himself assumed temporary charge of it till a minister was appointed. The Governor-General-in-Council with the previous sanction of the Secretary of State-in-Council could revoke or suspend the transfer of all or any subjects in the province and in that case they would relapse into the position of Reserved subjects and be administered by the Governor-in-Council.

Working of Dyarchy. The system of Dyarchy worked in the Provinces from 1921 to 1937, but experience shows that the system did not work satisfactorily. Many factors were responsible for the failure of the system.

- (1) The very principle of dyarchy was faulty. The division of administration into two parts, each independent of the other, is opposed to political theory and the practice of Governments. The State is like an organism and the two parts cannot be separated completely. However, the actual division of subjects under the Act of 1919 was haphazard. There could not be a worse division than the one attempted in the Act of 1919.

Sir K.V. Reddi, a minister of Madras, says: "I was a minister for Development without the forests. I was the minister for Agriculture minus Irrigation. As minister of Agriculture, I had nothing to do with the administration of the Madras Agriculturists' Loans Act or the Madras Land Improvement Loans Act, Famine Relief, of course, could not be touched by the minister for Agriculture. Efficacy and efficiency of a minister for Agriculture without having anything to do with Irrigation, agricultural loans, land improvement loans, and famine relief is better imagined than described. Then again, I was a minister for Industries without factories, boilers, electricity and water power, mines or labour, all of which were reserved subjects." While the Education was a Transferred subject, the education of the Europeans and the Anglo-Indians was a Reserved subject.

Shri C.Y. Chintamani, a minister of U.P., has given us some examples of the way in which dyarchy worked. In 1921, an inquiry was started in the Department of Agriculture on the question of the fragmentation of lands. When the report was submitted in 1922, it was felt that the question should have been dealt with by the Revenue Department and the case was transferred to that Department. In 1924, it was decided that the case should be

sent to the Co-operative Department to which it related. Similar examples can be multiplied.

- (2) The ministers were the representatives of the people. The members of the Executive Council belonged to the bureaucracy. They usually never pulled together. There was constant friction. Sometimes the ministers and the Executive Councillors condemned each other in the public. As a result of this, the work of administration suffered. As a rule, the Governor backed the members of the Executive Council because he himself belonged to the same service to which they belonged.
- (3) The position of the ministers was very weak. They had to serve two masters. Those were the Governor and the Legislative Council. A minister could be appointed by the Governor and dismissed at his will. He was responsible to the Legislature for the administration of his Department. He could be turned out by the Legislature by a vote of no-confidence. From the point of view of practical politics, the ministers cared more for the Governor than the Legislature. There had been strong parties in the provincial legislature. The result was that no minister had a majority to back him in office. He had always to depend upon the backing and support of the official bloc in the Legislature. While the elected members of the Provincial Legislature were divided into many groups on the basis of various religions, the support of the official bloc which always voted under the instruction of the Governor, was always available to a minister who cared for the Governor. No wonder, the ministers always looked up to the Governor and were dependent upon him. It is said that the Raja of Panagal openly used to say in the Madras Legislative Council that he was responsible only to the Governor, and none else. In certain cases, the ministers hoped to become Executive Councillors after the expiry of their term of office as ministers. The result of all this was that the ministers sank to the position of glorified secretaries. C.Y. Chintamani rightly said that the ministers had no power. "The power is with the Governor and not with the ministers." The Governor could interfere in any matter under any minister.
- (4) The Governors did not care to encourage the principle of joint responsibility amongst the ministers. The ministers never worked as a team. They were always quarrelling among themselves. In the case of the Calcutta Municipal Bill, the Nawab Sahib and

Sir Surendranath Banerjee openly canvassed against each other in the Council. In 1928, Sir Feroz Khan publicly criticized and condemned the action of the Hindu colleagues. It is to be noted that the dismissal or resignation of a minister did not affect his colleagues. The Governor dealt with every minister individually.

- (5) The position of the permanent services created many difficulties. The appointment, salary, suspension, dismissal and transfer of the members of All-India Services was under the control of the Secretary of State for India. These persons continued to be under the control of the Secretary of State for India even if they were appointed in the Transferred Departments. They did not care for the ministers. The ministers had no power to choose their own subordinates when vacancies occurred in their Departments. Most of the important jobs were reserved for the members of All- India Services. In the case of Madras, when the post of Surgeon-General fell vacant, the minister concerned could not get his nominee appointed. An I.M.S. officer was sent to fill the post. Although the minister desired to encourage the Indian system of medicine, the Surgeon-General did not care for his views. We are told that if there were certain superfluous jobs, the minister concerned had no right to abolish those job. In the case of U.P., a district officer refused to apply for appeal in an excise case as required by a minister. He was supported by a member of the Executive Council. As a general rule, the Governors could be expected to support the members of the civil services against the ministers.
- (6) According to the rules of executive business, a case in which the minister differed from the opinion of the Permanent Secretary or the Head of the Department, or the Commissioner of a Division, had to be submitted to the Governor for the final orders. Both the Secretary and the Head of the Department had direct access to the Governor. The Secretary had a weekly interview with the Governor and could discuss everything about his department with the Governor. This must have weakened the position of the ministers. Sometimes the Governor knew things about a Department which the minister concerned did not know.
- (7) Another cause of the failure of dyarchy was the reservation of the Department of Finance in the hands of the Member of the Executive Council. All the nation-building departments were given to the ministers, but they were given no money for the

same. The result was that the ministers had to depend upon the sweet will of the Finance Secretary. As a member of the Indian Civil Service, the Finance Secretary had no sympathy with the aspirations of the Indians as represented by ministers. He cared more for the needs of the Reserved Departments than for the Transferred Departments. According to C.Y. Chintamani, "The Finance Member was certainly more anxious to see that his Reserved Departments got all the money they required, before other departments got what they wanted." In certain cases, the Finance Department refused even to examine any scheme on the ground that no money was likely to be available. In the case of U.P., the Finance Department once upon a time issued a circular to all the Heads of the Departments directing them not to send proposals involving expenditure. When actually money was found available, it was contended by the Finance Department that no money could be granted as proposals had not been put in for examination at the right time. Many a time, the reply of the Finance Department was that the proposals were not "worth spending money on." We are told that even when schemes were approved, ways and means were found to defeat them or to delay them till the end of the financial year which compelled the minister to start from the very beginning once again. According to Chintamani, "I am prepared to state this without any exaggeration that it was from general experience of both the ministers in the United Provinces that they had to contend with great difficulties when they went to the Finance Department, that pretty frequently they had to go before the Governor, pretty frequently the Governor did not side with them and pretty frequently they could only gain their point in the end by placing their offices at the disposal of the Governor."

According to Punniyah, "The department thus did not confine itself merely to an examination of the financial aspect of the proposals but often went into the policy underlying them. The Minister was responsible to the Legislature for policy while the Finance Member was not, and this, therefore, placed the Minister in a difficult position. Even when schemes were accepted by the Council, devices were found to defeat them or at least delay them till the end of the official year, which compelled the Minister to start at the very beginning once again. The veto of the Finance Department was final except when the Minister decided to take

his case on appeal to the Governor, who pretty frequently sided with the Finance Department.”

According to Sapru, “But the Devolution Rules seriously detracted from the advantages of the Joint purse by keeping the portfolio of finance in the hand of a member of the Executive Council. The Ministers thus had to look up to him and his Department for all schemes of expenditure. In the financial powerlessness of Ministers is to be found the chief cause of the failure of Dyarchy.”

- (8) There was another hindrance in the way of the successful working of dyarchy. It was born under an unlucky star. The political atmosphere in the country was surcharged with suspicion and distrust on account of the happenings in the Punjab and the attitude of the British Government towards Turkey. The Monsoons failed in 1920 and added to the misery of the people. Slump also came in the market. The result of all this was that the finances of both the Central and Provincial Governments were upset. The favourable balance of trade of India was upset. Under the Meston Award, the Provincial Governments were required to make certain annual contributions to the Government of India. On account of the financial crisis, the Government of India demanded the full contributions from the Provincial Governments which themselves were in a worse condition. Dyarchy could not be expected to work without finances.
- (9) The man in the street knew that the reforms of 1919 were in the nature of a **half-way house**. The Indians knew that they were going to get more in the future. The result was that the people of India were not in a mood to give the reforms a fair trial.

Constitutional Development from 1919 to 1935

The Reforms of 1919 were considered to be utterly inadequate by the Indians. The Indian National Congress at its annual session in 1919 condemned the Reforms as “inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing.” While it asked the British Government to take early steps to establish full responsible Government in India in accordance with the principle of self-determination, it resolved to work the Reforms “so far as may be possible” with a view to bring about the early establishment of responsible government in India.

The Indians were not in an uncompromising mood, but certain events spoiled the political atmosphere in the country. On the Report of a Committee presided over by Justice Rowlatt, two bills were introduced in the Imperial Legislature in February 1919 and passed into law by the official majority in spite of the opposition of the people. Mahatma Gandhi appealed to the people of India to offer Satyagraha against the oppressive laws. Hartals were held all over the country. Martial law was declared in the Punjab. Baisakhi day (13th April, 1919), there occurred the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. General Dyer ordered the opening of the fire on a peaceful crowd at Amritsar. 1,650 rounds were fired, about 400 people were killed and 1,200 were wounded. The people were subjected to great humiliations. The crawling order was most resented. The people were required to pass through a street like four-footed animals. The Punjab leaders were jailed. At different places, bombs were thrown on innocent persons. All this resulted in resentment against the British Government.

Certain events brought the Congress and the Muslims together. The Muslims of India protested against the hard terms imposed on Turkey after the First World War. Mahatma Gandhi joined hands with the Muslims and started his non-violent non-co-operation movement for the redress of the Khilafat and the wrongs of the Punjab and the establishment of Swarajya in India. The Calcutta session of the Congress in September 1920 endorsed the policy of Mahatma Gandhi and called upon the people to give up their titles and honorary offices and also boycott schools, law courts, Legislative Councils, and British goods.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the circumstances that led to Morley- Minto reforms.
2. What was the significance of the August Offer.
3. Discuss the important points formulated in the Congress league scheme.
4. Discuss the context in which Montague- Chelmsford reforms were formulated.
5. Mention and critically analyze the provisions of Indian council's act of 1909.
6. Mention and critically analyze the provisions of Government of India act of 1919.
7. Write about the circumstances leading to the act of 1919.

DDE, Pondicherry University

UNIT – IV

Lesson 4.1 - Rise of Gandhi in Indian Politics

The Indian political landscape before Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa in 1915 was marked by a burgeoning sense of nationalism but lacked a unifying force that could galvanize the masses towards a cohesive and sustained struggle for independence. The Indian National Congress (INC), founded in 1885, was the principal organization representing Indian aspirations, but it was dominated by the moderate approach of leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Surendranath Banerjee. These leaders believed in gradual reform through dialogue and cooperation with the British authorities, seeking incremental changes within the framework of colonial rule.

However, the limitations of this moderate approach became increasingly apparent, particularly after the partition of Bengal in 1905, which ignited widespread protests and gave rise to a more radical strand of nationalism. Leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai, collectively known as the Lal-Bal-Pal trio, advocated for a more assertive stance against British rule, emphasizing self-reliance, boycott of British goods, and passive resistance. This period also witnessed the emergence of revolutionary activities, with young nationalists turning to violent means in their frustration with the slow pace of the freedom struggle.

Amid this evolving political scenario, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who had spent over two decades in South Africa fighting against racial discrimination, returned to India in 1915. His experiences in South Africa had profoundly shaped his political philosophy, particularly his belief in non-violent resistance (Satyagraha) as a powerful tool for social and political change. Gandhi's success in leading the Indian community in South Africa against discriminatory laws had already earned him a reputation, and his return to India was keenly anticipated by the leaders of the Indian National Congress. Before fully immersing himself in Indian politics, Gandhi embarked on a year-long journey across the country to understand the conditions and needs of the Indian populace. He deliberately refrained from getting involved in national-level politics immediately, choosing instead to observe and interact with people from different walks of life. This period of observation was crucial for Gandhi as

it allowed him to connect with the grassroots, understand the complexities of Indian society, and identify the issues that resonated with the common people.

Gandhi's early political mentor in India was Gopal Krishna Gokhale, a respected leader of the moderate faction in the Congress. Gokhale's influence on Gandhi was significant, particularly in shaping his understanding of Indian politics and the importance of gradual reform. However, Gandhi's political ideas were also distinct from those of the moderates, as he believed in the power of mass mobilization and direct action through non-violence. As Gandhi began to engage with the Indian political scene, his approach differed from the existing leadership in several ways. Unlike the moderates, who primarily appealed to the educated elite, Gandhi sought to involve the masses in the freedom struggle, making it a truly national movement. His emphasis on self-reliance (Swadeshi), non-cooperation with the British government, and non-violence set the stage for a new phase in the Indian independence movement.

Gandhi's return to India marked the beginning of a transformative era in Indian politics. His unique blend of moral philosophy and political strategy would soon position him as the undisputed leader of the Indian nationalist movement. Gandhi's rise in Indian politics was not merely a shift in leadership but a profound change in the character of the Indian struggle for independence, one that would ultimately lead to the end of British colonial rule in India.

Gandhi's Initial Years in India (1915-1919)

When Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915, he was already a well-known figure, thanks to his successful campaigns against racial discrimination in South Africa. However, he was not yet the central figure in Indian politics that he would later become. Gandhi's early years in India were marked by a period of observation, learning, and experimentation as he sought to understand the socio-political landscape of the country and identify the issues that resonated with the masses.

Arrival and Observation

Upon his return, Gandhi spent the first few years touring the country, observing the conditions of the people, and learning about the various social and political issues affecting them. This period of observation was

crucial for Gandhi, as it helped him develop a deep understanding of the struggles faced by the Indian population, particularly the poor and marginalized sections of society. He refrained from getting immediately involved in politics, instead focusing on understanding the diverse and complex nature of Indian society.

Establishment of the Sabarmati Ashram

In 1915, Gandhi established the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The ashram became the centre of his activities and a place where he could live out his principles of simplicity, self-sufficiency, and community living. It was also here that Gandhi began to experiment with his ideas of Satyagraha, or non-violent resistance, and self-reliance. The ashram was not just a place of residence for Gandhi and his followers but also a training ground for future leaders of the independence movement.

Early Localized Struggles

During these initial years, Gandhi became involved in several localized struggles that helped him gain the trust and support of the Indian masses.

1. **Champaran (1917):** The first significant movement led by Gandhi in India was the Champaran Satyagraha in Bihar. The peasants of Champaran were forced by British planters to grow indigo on a portion of their land and sell it at prices fixed by the planters, which were often exploitative. Gandhi was invited to Champaran by local leaders to help address the grievances of the peasants. Through his method of Satyagraha, Gandhi successfully led the peasants to resist the oppressive system. The movement resulted in the abolition of the forced indigo cultivation system and marked Gandhi's first major victory in India.
2. **Kheda (1918):** Following the success in Champaran, Gandhi led another Satyagraha in Kheda, Gujarat. The region was affected by floods and famine, and the peasants were unable to pay the high taxes imposed by the British government. Gandhi supported the peasants' demand for the suspension of the taxes until their economic condition improved. The movement saw widespread participation, and ultimately, the British government was forced to suspend the tax collection, marking another victory for Gandhi's method of non-violent resistance.

3. **Ahmedabad Mill Strike (1918):** In Ahmedabad, Gandhi intervened in a dispute between mill owners and workers over a demand for higher wages. The workers, led by Gandhi, went on a hunger strike to press their demands. The strike eventually led to a settlement that favored the workers, further establishing Gandhi's reputation as a leader who could effectively mediate and resolve conflicts.

Impact of these Movements on Gandhi's Rise as a National Leader

These early successes in localized struggles were instrumental in Gandhi's rise as a national leader. They demonstrated his ability to mobilize the masses and achieve results through non-violent means. Gandhi's approach was unique in that it emphasized moral authority and peaceful resistance rather than violence and confrontation. This approach resonated with a large section of the Indian population, who were weary of the oppressive colonial rule but also skeptical of violent revolutionary methods.

Furthermore, these movements established Gandhi's reputation as a leader who was genuinely concerned with the welfare of the common people. His willingness to live among the poor, his emphasis on self-reliance, and his commitment to non-violence earned him the trust and admiration of people from various walks of life. By the end of 1919, Gandhi had not only emerged as a prominent leader in India but had also laid the groundwork for the broader national movements that would follow.

The Rowlatt Act and the Satyagraha of 1919

The Rowlatt Act of 1919 and the subsequent Satyagraha organized by Mahatma Gandhi marked a pivotal moment in India's struggle for independence. This period highlighted the growing discontent with British rule and Gandhi's emergence as the undisputed leader of the Indian nationalist movement. The events surrounding the Rowlatt Act and the Satyagraha provided a clear demonstration of the power of non-violent resistance, setting the stage for future mass movements.

The Rowlatt Act

In March 1919, the British colonial government enacted the Rowlatt Act, officially known as the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act. This legislation was a response to the perceived threat of revolutionary activities in India, which had increased during and after World War I. The

act was named after Sir Sidney Rowlett, the British judge who headed the committee that recommended its passage.

The Rowlett Act essentially extended the emergency wartime restrictions and allowed the British government to suppress political activities deemed seditious without the need for a trial. It granted the authorities the power to arrest and detain individuals without a warrant, imprison them without trial, and conduct searches and seizures without due process. The act was widely seen as draconian and repressive, stripping away basic civil liberties and legal protections.

Nationwide Opposition and Gandhi's Response

The Rowlett Act was met with widespread opposition across India. The Indian National Congress, along with other political organizations, condemned the act as a blatant violation of fundamental rights. Gandhi, who had already gained a reputation for his successful campaigns in South Africa and his leadership in localized struggles in India, saw the act as a challenge to justice and human dignity.

In response, Gandhi called for a nationwide campaign of non-violent resistance, or Satyagraha, against the Rowlett Act. This marked the first time Gandhi applied his principles of Satyagraha on a national scale in India. He believed that non-violent protest would unite Indians across regional, religious, and class divides against the oppressive legislation.

The Satyagraha Movement

The Satyagraha against the Rowlett Act was launched on April 6, 1919, with a nationwide hartal (strike) involving fasting, prayers, and a suspension of business activities. The movement quickly gained momentum, with massive participation from all sections of society, including workers, peasants, students, and intellectuals. It was notable for its inclusive nature, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds in a unified stand against colonial oppression.

However, the movement also witnessed outbreaks of violence in some places, despite Gandhi's insistence on non-violence. This violence was particularly intense in Punjab, where the situation deteriorated rapidly.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

The opposition to the Rowlatt Act reached a tragic climax with the Jallianwala Bagh massacre on April 13, 1919. In Amritsar, Punjab, a large crowd had gathered at Jallianwala Bagh, a public garden, to protest against the arrest of two nationalist leaders. In response, Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered his troops to fire upon the unarmed crowd, killing hundreds and injuring many more. The massacre shocked the entire nation and significantly intensified anti-British sentiments.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre underscored the brutal nature of British rule and further galvanized the Indian population against colonial oppression. Gandhi, deeply disturbed by the violence, called off the Satyagraha, as he did not want the movement to be associated with violence.

Impact on Gandhi's Leadership and the Freedom Struggle

The events of 1919 had a profound impact on the Indian independence movement and on Gandhi's leadership. The Rowlatt Satyagraha demonstrated the potential for mass mobilization under the banner of non-violence, even though it also highlighted the challenges of maintaining non-violent discipline in the face of state repression. Gandhi's decision to call off the movement in response to violence solidified his commitment to non-violence as an unshakeable principle of his political philosophy.

The Rowlatt Satyagraha also marked a turning point in Gandhi's relationship with the Indian masses. His leadership during the movement earned him widespread recognition as the Mahatma, or "Great Soul," a title that reflected the deep trust and reverence people began to have for him. He emerged as the undisputed leader of the Indian nationalist movement, a position he would retain until India achieved independence in 1947.

The Rowlatt Act and the Satyagraha of 1919 were critical in shaping the course of the Indian freedom struggle. These events not only exposed the repressive nature of British colonial rule but also highlighted the power of non-violent resistance as a means of challenging injustice. Gandhi's leadership during this period laid the foundation for the broader mass movements that would follow, making non-violence a central strategy in the fight for India's independence.

The Khilafat Movement and Gandhi's Role

The Khilafat Movement, which took place in the early 1920s, was a significant moment in India's struggle for independence, as it represented the convergence of two major forces: Indian nationalism and Muslim concerns about the fate of the Ottoman Caliphate. Mahatma Gandhi's involvement in the Khilafat Movement marked a pivotal point in his leadership, as he sought to unite Hindus and Muslims in the broader struggle against British colonial rule.

The Khilafat Movement emerged in the aftermath of World War I, a period marked by significant geopolitical changes in the Islamic world. The Ottoman Empire, long seen as the spiritual and political center of the Muslim world, was on the verge of disintegration following its defeat in the war. The Ottoman Sultan, who held the title of Caliph, was considered the protector of Islam and its holy sites. Muslims around the world, including those in India, were deeply concerned about the future of the Caliphate, as the victorious Allied powers, particularly Britain, sought to carve up the Ottoman territories.

In India, the concerns about the fate of the Caliphate resonated strongly with the Muslim population. Indian Muslims viewed the potential dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire as a threat to their religious identity and the unity of the Muslim world. This led to the formation of the Khilafat Movement, which aimed to pressure the British government to preserve the Caliphate and ensure the continued authority of the Ottoman Sultan over Islamic holy sites.

Gandhi's Involvement and the Alliance with the Khilafat Leaders

Gandhi, who had already established himself as a leader of the Indian nationalist movement, saw the Khilafat issue as an opportunity to forge a stronger alliance between Hindus and Muslims in the struggle against British rule. He recognized that the British Empire's exploitation of religious and communal divisions had long hindered the unity of the Indian people. By aligning with the Khilafat Movement, Gandhi hoped to create a united front that could challenge British authority more effectively.

Gandhi's decision to support the Khilafat Movement was strategic and rooted in his broader vision of Indian nationalism. He believed that by showing solidarity with the Muslim community on an issue that deeply affected them, he could foster a sense of trust and cooperation between

Hindus and Muslims. This alliance, Gandhi hoped, would strengthen the broader nationalist movement and create a mass base for the struggle for independence.

The Khilafat leaders, including prominent figures like Maulana Muhammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali, welcomed Gandhi's support. They saw in him a leader who could mobilize not only Muslims but also Hindus in a common cause. This collaboration led to the formation of a united platform, with the Khilafat Movement becoming closely intertwined with the Indian National Congress's broader campaign for self-rule.

The Non-Cooperation Movement and the Khilafat Alliance

In 1920, Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement, which called for a boycott of British goods, institutions, and honors. The movement aimed to cripple the colonial administration by withdrawing Indian support and participation in the British system. The Khilafat issue was incorporated into this broader movement, with Gandhi emphasizing that non-cooperation with the British was a moral duty for both Hindus and Muslims.

The Khilafat Movement added a significant religious dimension to the Non-Cooperation Movement, attracting widespread support from Muslims across India. It also helped to broaden the base of the nationalist movement, bringing in participants who might not have been involved in previous struggles. Mass protests, strikes, and boycotts were organized throughout the country, with both Hindus and Muslims participating in large numbers.

The Decline of the Khilafat Movement

Despite the initial success of the Khilafat-Non-Cooperation alliance, the movement began to face challenges by the early 1920s. The British government, sensing the growing unrest, took a hardline approach, arresting key leaders and suppressing protests. Additionally, the movement faced internal divisions, as some Muslim leaders began to question the efficacy of non-cooperation as a strategy.

The final blow to the Khilafat Movement came in 1924, when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the leader of the Turkish nationalist movement, abolished the Caliphate as part of his efforts to modernize and secularize Turkey.

This development effectively removed the central issue that had driven the Khilafat Movement, leading to its decline.

Impact on Gandhi's Leadership and Hindu-Muslim Relations

The Khilafat Movement and Gandhi's involvement in it had a lasting impact on the Indian independence movement. Although the movement itself eventually faded, it demonstrated the potential for Hindu-Muslim unity in the struggle against colonial rule. Gandhi's ability to bridge communal divides and rally diverse sections of the population around a common cause bolstered his standing as the leader of the Indian nationalist movement.

However, the eventual decline of the Khilafat Movement also highlighted the fragility of Hindu-Muslim unity, a challenge that would continue to affect the Indian independence movement in the years to come. The collapse of the Khilafat alliance contributed to the re-emergence of communal tensions, which would later become a significant obstacle in the fight for independence.

Non-Cooperation Movement

The Non-Cooperation Movement, launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, was a significant milestone in India's struggle for independence. It marked the first time that Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence (Ahimsa) and non-cooperation was employed on a large scale against British rule. The movement was born out of widespread dissatisfaction with the British government's repressive policies and the aftermath of World War I, which had left India economically and socially strained. The Non-Cooperation Movement aimed to unite Indians across religious, social, and regional lines in a common cause: the fight for Swaraj (self-rule). It involved a series of nationwide protests, boycotts, and non-violent actions designed to disrupt British governance and undermine their authority in India. This movement galvanized the Indian masses and marked a turning point in the freedom struggle, transforming the Indian National Congress (INC) from a moderate, elite organization into a powerful mass movement.

Causes of the Non-Cooperation Movement

The Non-Cooperation Movement was driven by multiple factors, both immediate and long-term, that fueled widespread anger and disillusionment with British rule:

- **Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919):** The brutal killing of hundreds of unarmed Indian civilians by British troops in Amritsar on April 13, 1919, was a watershed moment. The massacre shocked the nation and deepened the resentment towards British colonial rule. It exposed the ruthlessness of the British administration and convinced many Indians that peaceful protests were no longer sufficient to bring about change.
- **Rowlatt Act (1919):** The British government passed the Rowlatt Act, which gave the colonial authorities sweeping powers to arrest and detain individuals without trial, curb press freedom, and suppress political activities. This legislation was seen as a direct assault on civil liberties and sparked widespread protests across India. Gandhi condemned the Act as “a black act” and called for resistance against it.
- **Khilafat Movement:** The Khilafat Movement was launched by Indian Muslims in response to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after World War I and the threat to the position of the Caliph, the spiritual leader of Muslims worldwide. Indian Muslims, who saw the Caliph as a symbol of Islamic unity, were deeply upset by these developments. Gandhi recognized the opportunity to unite Hindus and Muslims in a common cause and merged the Khilafat Movement with the Non-Cooperation Movement, strengthening the broader struggle against British rule.
- **Economic Hardships and Disillusionment Post-World War I:** India's support for Britain during World War I had led to economic hardships, including rising prices, taxes, and widespread unemployment. Despite Indian contributions to the war effort, the British government failed to fulfill its promises of constitutional reforms and self-governance, leading to widespread disillusionment among Indians.
- **Gandhi's Emergence as a National Leader:** Gandhi's return to India from South Africa in 1915 and his subsequent leadership in local movements, such as the Champaran and Kheda Satyagraha's, had already established him as a prominent leader. His advocacy for non-violent resistance resonated with the masses, and his call for Non-Cooperation gained widespread support across the country.

Objectives

The Non-Cooperation Movement was launched with clear and specific objectives that sought to challenge British authority and pave the way for self-rule:

- **Repeal of the Rowlatt Act and Redressal of Jallianwala Bagh Atrocities:** The movement aimed to force the British government to repeal the repressive Rowlatt Act and take responsibility for the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. The Indian populace demanded justice for the victims and an apology from the British authorities.
- **Restoration of the Khilafat:** The movement sought to address the concerns of Indian Muslims by demanding the restoration of the Caliph's position in Turkey. This objective was crucial in uniting Hindu and Muslim communities under a common cause, thereby strengthening the overall resistance against British rule.
- **Attainment of Swaraj (Self-Rule):** The ultimate goal of the Non-Cooperation Movement was to achieve Swaraj, or self-rule, for India. Gandhi envisioned a complete withdrawal of cooperation from the British government, including the boycott of British goods, institutions, and titles. This would undermine British control and force them to grant India greater autonomy, eventually leading to full independence.
- **Promotion of Swadeshi and Khadi:** The movement emphasized the revival of indigenous industries and the promotion of Swadeshi (use of Indian-made goods) as a means to weaken the British economy in India. The production and use of Khadi (hand-spun cloth) became symbolic of resistance against British economic exploitation and a step towards self-reliance.
- **Fostering Unity and Nationalism:** Gandhi aimed to foster a sense of unity and nationalism among Indians, cutting across caste, religion, and regional divides. By participating in the Non-Cooperation Movement, Indians from all walks of life could collectively work towards the common goal of achieving independence from British rule.

Key Features and Tactics

The Non-Cooperation Movement was marked by a series of strategic actions and tactics aimed at undermining British authority in India and

fostering self-reliance among Indians. The movement employed both symbolic and practical methods to achieve its objectives, mobilizing millions of Indians across the country. Here's an expanded overview of the key features and tactics:

Boycott of Government Institutions and Foreign Goods

One of the central strategies of the Non-Cooperation Movement was the boycott of British-run institutions and foreign goods, which was seen as a way to weaken the economic and administrative foundations of British rule in India.

Indians were encouraged to withdraw from government-run educational institutions. Gandhi and other leaders believed that these institutions were tools of colonial indoctrination, designed to create loyal subjects rather than free citizens. In response, nationalist leaders and organizations set up alternative institutions, such as the Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi and the Kashi Vidyapith in Varanasi, which provided education with an emphasis on Indian culture and values. Lawyers, including prominent figures like Motilal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari, and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, gave up their lucrative practices in British courts to protest colonial rule. This was a significant move, as it deprived the British legal system of its key players, disrupting its functioning and symbolizing a withdrawal of cooperation from British justice.

The boycott extended to British-manufactured goods, particularly textiles, which were a major source of revenue for the British. The public was urged to abandon foreign clothes, and bonfires of British textiles were organized in cities and towns across India. This tactic had a dual purpose: it hurt British economic interests and promoted the indigenous textile industry, particularly the production of khadi (hand-spun cloth).

Resignation from Government Services

Another significant tactic was the mass resignation of Indians from government services, which was intended to cripple the functioning of the British administration. Many prominent leaders and government officials resigned from their posts to protest British rule. Among them were key figures like Subhash Chandra Bose, who resigned from the prestigious Indian Civil Service (ICS) in 1921. The resignations sent a powerful message of defiance to the British government and inspired

many others to follow suit. The movement also called for the boycott of elections to the legislative councils set up under the Government of India Act of 1919 (Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms). The idea was to delegitimize these councils, which were seen as mere instruments of British control, by refusing to participate in them.

Non-Violent Protests

Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence (Ahimsa) was at the core of the Non-Cooperation Movement, and peaceful protests were a key tactic employed to express dissent and resist British rule. Across the country, people took to the streets in large numbers, organizing rallies, processions, and public meetings to protest against British policies. These demonstrations were largely peaceful, adhering to Gandhi's principle of non-violence, although occasional instances of violence did occur. Strikes and hartals (general strikes) became widespread, particularly in urban areas. These were organized by workers, students, and merchants to paralyze economic and administrative activities. The strikes were effective in disrupting the normal functioning of cities, particularly in regions like Bengal, Bombay, and Punjab. The movement witnessed unprecedented mass participation, including women, students, and peasants, who became active in the struggle for independence. The involvement of ordinary people in such large numbers was a significant departure from earlier movements, which were largely confined to the educated elite.

Swadeshi Movement and Promotion of Khadi

The promotion of Swadeshi (indigenous goods) and khadi was not only an economic strategy but also a symbolic rejection of British rule. The movement encouraged the use of Indian-made goods, particularly textiles, as a way to revive local industries and reduce dependency on British imports. This was a continuation of the Swadeshi movement that had gained momentum during the Bengal Partition in 1905 but was now being promoted on a national scale. Gandhi promoted the spinning of khadi as a means of self-reliance and a symbol of resistance against British economic exploitation. He encouraged Indians to spin their own cloth, thereby reducing reliance on British-manufactured textiles. Khadi became a powerful symbol of the nationalist movement, representing simplicity, self-reliance, and a break from the colonial economic system. Gandhi himself adopted the use of khadi, and it became a visual symbol of

the freedom struggle. The spinning wheel, or charkha, became an iconic symbol of the movement and was later incorporated into the flag of the Indian National Congress. It represented the empowerment of the rural masses and the idea of economic independence from British goods.

Major Events

The Non-Cooperation Movement, which spanned from 1920 to 1922, was marked by significant events that highlighted both the widespread participation in the movement and the challenges it faced. These events played a crucial role in shaping the course of the movement and the Indian freedom struggle. Below is an expanded overview of the major events during the movement:

Nationwide Protests

The Non-Cooperation Movement saw unprecedented levels of participation from people across the length and breadth of India, including both urban and rural areas. The movement galvanized millions of Indians who took part in protests, strikes, and demonstrations against British rule. In cities like Calcutta (now Kolkata), Bombay (now Mumbai), and Madras (now Chennai), large crowds gathered to protest British policies, boycott foreign goods, and promote the use of khadi. The movement was not limited to the urban centers; it spread to villages and small towns, where peasants and farmers also participated actively. Rural areas saw a significant rise in protests against oppressive landlords and colonial tax policies, making the movement truly national in scope.

The movement drew in significant participation from students, who boycotted government-run schools and colleges to join nationalist educational institutions. Women also played a vital role, participating in processions, picketing foreign cloth shops, and engaging in spinning khadi. This marked a shift in the freedom struggle, with greater inclusivity and involvement of different sections of society.

The widespread boycotts of British goods, particularly textiles, led to a significant decline in British trade in India. The economic impact of the movement was felt both by the British and Indian merchants who relied on foreign goods, thereby underlining the effectiveness of the boycott as a tactic of non-cooperation.

Chauri Chaura Incident (1922)

One of the most pivotal events of the Non-Cooperation Movement was the Chauri Chaura incident, which led to a dramatic shift in the course of the movement. On February 4, 1922, in the small town of Chauri Chaura in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), a protest by local residents against police harassment escalated into a violent confrontation. The protesters, who were agitated by police actions, attacked a police station, setting it on fire and killing 22 policemen trapped inside. This incident was a significant departure from the non-violent principles that Gandhi had emphasized throughout the movement.

The Chauri Chaura incident deeply disturbed Gandhi, who believed that the movement had deviated from its core principle of non-violence (Ahimsa). Despite the widespread success and momentum the movement had gained, Gandhi felt that it was better to call off the movement rather than allow it to descend into violence. On February 12, 1922, just days after the incident, Gandhi announced the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement. This decision was controversial and led to significant debate within the Indian National Congress and the broader nationalist movement. While some leaders supported Gandhi's stance, others, like Motilal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, were critical, arguing that the momentum of the movement should not have been halted.

Role of Indian National Congress (INC)

The Indian National Congress (INC) played a central role in organizing, strategizing, and leading the Non-Cooperation Movement, making it one of the most significant mass movements in the history of India's struggle for independence.

The INC, under Gandhi's leadership, was instrumental in formulating the strategies and objectives of the Non-Cooperation Movement. At the 1920 Nagpur session, the Congress officially adopted the resolution to launch the Non-Cooperation Movement, marking a significant shift in its approach to British rule. The Congress moved away from its earlier moderate stance of petitions and requests and embraced Gandhi's vision of mass non-violent resistance. The Congress, through its extensive network of local branches, played a crucial role in mobilizing people from various walks of life, including farmers, workers, students, and women. The Congress leaders, such as C. Rajagopalachari, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, traveled across the country to spread the message of non-cooperation and inspire people to join the movement.

The movement also led to significant organizational changes within the Congress. The INC transformed from an elite organization into a mass-based party, with its membership swelling as more people from diverse backgrounds joined the struggle. The movement also brought to the fore new leaders who would later play crucial roles in the Indian independence movement.

After the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement, the INC faced internal challenges and debates about the future course of action. While the movement did not achieve immediate independence, it marked a turning point in the Indian freedom struggle by demonstrating the power of mass mobilization and the potential of non-violent resistance as a tool for political change.

Impact of the Movement

The Non-Cooperation Movement had a profound impact on India's political landscape and the struggle for independence, marked by significant changes in political awareness, the strengthening of the Indian National Congress (INC), and a strong British response.

Political Awakening

The Non-Cooperation Movement saw unprecedented participation from millions of Indians. Major cities like Bombay (now Mumbai), Calcutta (now Kolkata), and Madras (now Chennai) witnessed large-scale protests and demonstrations. Rural areas also saw significant involvement, with villages organizing boycotts and strikes. This widespread participation showcased the ability of the movement to unite diverse sections of Indian society.

The movement played a crucial role in raising political awareness among Indians. The public demonstrations, boycotts of British goods, and refusal to cooperate with the colonial government led to a heightened sense of political identity and empowerment among the masses. This was particularly evident in the increased engagement of previously marginalized groups, including women and lower-caste communities.

Strengthening of INC

The INC's membership grew substantially during the Non-Cooperation Movement. By the end of 1921, the INC had over 20 million members, a significant increase from previous years. This expansion was not only in numbers but also in geographic reach, as the party gained support in previously underrepresented areas.

The movement enhanced the INC's appeal across different social strata. The successful organization of mass campaigns and the party's focus on addressing common grievances helped to build a broad-based support base. This was reflected in the INC's increasing influence in provincial legislatures and its dominant role in the Indian political landscape.

British Response

The British authorities responded to the Non-Cooperation Movement with increased repression. The government implemented the Rowlatt Act of 1919, which allowed for arrest without trial, and used it to detain many activists. Additionally, the British administration imposed curfews and conducted raids on homes and public meetings. The repression was intended to curb the growing unrest and reassert control over the political situation. Mahatma Gandhi was arrested in March 1922 for his role in leading the Non-Cooperation Movement. He was sentenced to six years in prison, although he was released after serving only two years due to health issues. Gandhi's imprisonment was a strategic move by the British to weaken the movement and demoralize its supporters.

Criticisms and Limitations

The Non-Cooperation Movement faced criticisms and limitations that affected its overall effectiveness and outcomes.

Premature Withdrawal

The suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement after the Chauri Chaura incident in February 1922 was a contentious decision. Gandhi's choice to withdraw the movement in response to the violence at Chauri Chaura was criticized by some as premature. The incident, where police were attacked by a mob resulting in the deaths of 22 police officers, led Gandhi to prioritize non-violence over continuing the struggle.

Internal Conflicts

The decision to suspend the movement led to internal dissent within the INC. Leaders like Motilal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose were among those who disagreed with Gandhi's decision. These internal conflicts highlighted the challenges of maintaining unity within the INC, especially when faced with divergent views on strategy and tactics.

The abrupt end of the movement left many leaders and supporters disillusioned. Some felt that the momentum built during the movement could have been leveraged to push for further concessions from the British government. This discontent led to a period of introspection and debate within the INC.

Limited Impact on British Rule

The Non-Cooperation Movement did not achieve its immediate goals, such as full self-rule (Swaraj) or significant constitutional reforms. The British government did not make substantial concessions, and the movement's suspension halted the progress toward these objectives.

Maintaining the movement's momentum proved difficult, particularly in ensuring non-violent discipline across such a vast and diverse country. Instances of violence, like the Chauri Chaura incident, affected the movement's effectiveness and contributed to its eventual suspension.

Legacy of the Non-Cooperation Movement

The Non-Cooperation Movement had a legacy, influencing subsequent political developments and shaping future strategies in the Indian independence struggle.

Foundation for Future Movements

The Non-Cooperation Movement set the stage for the Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-1934). Gandhi, leveraging the experiences and strategies of the Non-Cooperation Movement, called for widespread defiance of British laws and regulations. This movement continued the non-violent resistance and was characterized by acts of civil disobedience, including the famous Salt March of 1930. The legacy of the Non-Cooperation Movement also contributed to the Quit India Movement (1942). The Quit India Movement marked a more radical phase of the struggle, with the INC

demanding an immediate end to British rule and organizing mass protests across the country. The earlier Non-Cooperation Movement provided a foundation for this more aggressive push for independence.

Transformation of INC

The Non-Cooperation Movement transformed the INC from an elite organization into a mass-based political party. This transformation was crucial in establishing the INC as the leading force in the independence movement. The party's ability to mobilize millions and engage with a broad cross-section of society solidified its role in the struggle for freedom.

Gandhi's Leadership

The Non-Cooperation Movement cemented Mahatma Gandhi's position as the leader of the Indian independence struggle. His commitment to non-violence, ability to mobilize diverse groups, and strategic vision established him as the central figure in the fight for independence. Gandhi's leadership during the movement set the tone for future struggles and solidified his legacy in Indian history.

The Non-Cooperation Movement, despite its limitations and challenges, was a critical milestone in India's path to independence. Its impact on political awakening, the strengthening of the INC, and its role in shaping future movements underscored its significance in the broader context of India's struggle for freedom. The movement's legacy continued to influence the trajectory of the independence movement and the strategies employed in subsequent struggles.

Civil Disobedience Movement

The Civil Disobedience Movement, launched in 1930, was a significant phase of the Indian independence struggle, marking a critical shift from passive resistance to active, non-violent defiance of British rule. This mass movement was spearheaded by Mahatma Gandhi and aimed at challenging the authority of the British government through the deliberate violation of unjust laws. The movement catalyzed widespread participation across different sections of Indian society, uniting people in the fight for self-rule.

The Civil Disobedience Movement emerged as a response to the growing dissatisfaction with British colonial rule in the late 1920s. It built upon earlier movements like the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-

1922) and further intensified the demand for complete independence (Purna Swaraj). The movement was part of a broader strategy by the Indian National Congress (INC) to secure freedom through non-violent resistance. It followed the failure of constitutional reforms and negotiations with the British, which had left Indian leaders frustrated with the lack of genuine progress towards self-governance.

Mahatma Gandhi's leadership was central to the initiation and direction of the Civil Disobedience Movement. After the failure of the Simon Commission (1927) and the subsequent rejection of the Nehru Report (1928), Gandhi realized that more radical action was necessary. He chose the salt tax, a symbol of British oppression affecting every Indian, as the focal point of the protest. On March 12, 1930, Gandhi led the iconic Salt March from Sabarmati Ashram to the coastal village of Dandi, covering over 240 miles. This act of defiance inspired millions of Indians to break the salt laws and engage in various forms of civil disobedience, marking the official start of the movement.

The late 1920s were marked by political unrest and economic hardship in India. The British colonial administration had failed to address the growing aspirations of Indians for self-governance. The Indian economy was suffering under British policies that prioritized the interests of the British Empire over those of Indian citizens. High taxes, especially on basic commodities like salt, and the exploitation of Indian resources led to widespread poverty and discontent. The global impact of the Great Depression further exacerbated these economic woes, leading to increased unemployment and suffering among the Indian populace.

The Simon Commission, appointed by the British government in 1927 to review the working of the Government of India Act 1919, was met with widespread opposition in India. The commission, composed entirely of British members, was boycotted by Indian leaders who demanded a greater say in their country's governance. The failure of the Simon Commission led to the drafting of the Nehru Report in 1928, which proposed a dominion status for India within the British Empire. However, the British government's rejection of the Nehru Report's recommendations deepened the sense of betrayal among Indian leaders and fueled the call for complete independence.

The Great Depression of 1929 had a severe impact on the Indian economy, which was already struggling under colonial rule. Agricultural

prices plummeted, leading to widespread rural distress, while industrial production declined, causing job losses in urban areas. The economic crisis intensified the suffering of the Indian people, who were already burdened by high taxes and exploitative economic policies imposed by the British. This economic backdrop created a fertile ground for the Civil Disobedience Movement, as millions of Indians were desperate for change and willing to challenge British authority.

The salt tax was one of the most oppressive and universally resented taxes imposed by the British. It affected all Indians, rich or poor, as salt was an essential commodity in everyday life. Gandhi saw the salt tax as a symbol of British exploitation and chose it as the focus of his protest to unite Indians across different social and economic backgrounds. The decision to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement with the Salt March was a strategic move to challenge British authority through a simple yet powerful act of defiance that resonated with the masses.

Objectives

The primary objective of the Civil Disobedience Movement was the attainment of complete independence (Purna Swaraj) for India. The movement represented a clear shift from the demand for dominion status to the unequivocal demand for full sovereignty. The INC, under Gandhi's leadership, declared January 26, 1930, as Purna Swaraj Day, signaling their resolve to break free from British rule.

A key objective of the movement was to reject British authority and challenge the legitimacy of colonial laws. Through acts of civil disobedience, such as the Salt March and the boycott of British goods and institutions, Indians sought to undermine the colonial government's control and assert their right to self-rule. The movement encouraged Indians to withdraw their cooperation with the British, thereby weakening the colonial administration's grip on the country. The movement also aimed to promote economic self-reliance by encouraging the use of indigenous goods (swadeshi) and boycotting British-made products. This was part of a broader strategy to reduce India's economic dependence on Britain and build a self-sufficient nation. The promotion of khadi (hand-spun cloth) became a symbol of resistance, with Gandhi urging Indians to spin their own cloth and reject British textiles. The movement sought the reduction of oppressive taxes, such as the salt tax, and the abolition of unjust laws that favored the colonial administration at the expense of the Indian people. By

refusing to pay taxes and disobeying discriminatory laws, Indians aimed to force the British government to address their demands and acknowledge the growing clamor for independence.

Key Features and Strategies

The Salt March

The Salt March, or Dandi March, began on March 12, 1930, with Mahatma Gandhi and 78 of his followers. The march covered a distance of 240 miles from Sabarmati Ashram to the coastal village of Dandi in Gujarat. Gandhi's decision to break the salt laws was symbolic, highlighting the injustice of a tax that affected every Indian, particularly the poor. As Gandhi and his followers walked through villages, the march swelled in numbers, with thousands joining in. Upon reaching Dandi on April 6, 1930, Gandhi picked up a handful of salt, publicly defying British law. This simple act of defiance sparked a nationwide civil disobedience movement. In the weeks following the march, approximately 60,000 people were arrested, including prominent leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Boycott of British Goods: Emphasis on Swadeshi, Including Khadi

The boycott of British goods, particularly textiles, was a cornerstone of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Indians were encouraged to burn foreign cloth and adopt khadi (hand-spun cloth) as a symbol of self-reliance and resistance to British economic exploitation. Khadi became not just a fabric but a symbol of Indian identity and unity. The movement significantly impacted British textile industries, particularly in Lancashire, where mill owners faced severe economic losses due to the decline in demand from India. The boycott also extended to British educational institutions, legal courts, and other government services, as Indians sought to dismantle the colonial economy from within.

Non-Payment of Taxes: Refusal to Pay Taxes, Especially Land Revenue

Refusal to pay taxes, particularly land revenue, was another powerful strategy employed during the Civil Disobedience Movement. In regions like Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, entire villages collectively refused to pay land taxes, leading to confiscation of property by the British authorities. Despite these harsh reprisals, the non-payment of taxes persisted as a form

of economic resistance. The British government was forced to auction off confiscated land and property at low prices, but even then, Indians refused to bid, further frustrating British efforts to control the situation. This strategy significantly disrupted the colonial administration's ability to collect revenue and maintain control.

Mass Civil Disobedience: Defiance of British Laws and Regulations

Mass civil disobedience during the movement took various forms, including strikes, demonstrations, and the refusal to comply with British laws. The movement was characterized by its mass participation, with millions of Indians from all walks of life engaging in acts of civil disobedience. In Bombay (now Mumbai), the mill workers went on strike, while in Calcutta (now Kolkata), students organized protests and boycotts. In the rural areas, peasants defied forest laws, and tribal communities reclaimed forest lands. The movement's non-violent nature, as guided by Gandhi's principles of satyagraha, was met with severe repression, yet it managed to challenge British authority across the subcontinent.

Formation of Parallel Governments: Establishment of Self-Governance Structures in Some Areas

In some areas, the Civil Disobedience Movement led to the formation of parallel governments, where local leaders established self-governance structures independent of British control. Notable examples include the "Congress Raj" in Midnapore, Bengal, and the "Ballia Republic" in Uttar Pradesh, where local committees took over administrative functions, including maintaining law and order, collecting taxes, and providing justice. These parallel governments were short-lived, often lasting only a few months before being suppressed by British forces. However, they demonstrated the growing organizational capacity of Indian leaders and the feasibility of self-rule, laying the groundwork for future governance structures in independent India.

Major Events

The Salt Satyagraha, initiated by Gandhi's march to Dandi, quickly became a nationwide movement. Following Gandhi's example, similar salt marches and protests were organized across India. In Tamil Nadu, C. Rajagopalachari led the Vedaranyam March, which mirrored Gandhi's Dandi March, culminating in the illegal production of salt. In the North-

West Frontier Province, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan organized mass protests, leading to the imprisonment of thousands. The movement's significance lay in its ability to unite people across different regions and social strata against a common cause. The Salt Satyagraha also attracted international attention, with American journalist Webb Miller's reports on the brutal British crackdown galvanizing global support for India's independence struggle.

The Civil Disobedience Movement spread rapidly across the country, with significant participation in regions like the North-West Frontier Province (now in Pakistan), where Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's Khudai Khidmatgar ("Servants of God") played a pivotal role in organizing non-violent resistance. In Bengal, Subhas Chandra Bose and other leaders organized strikes, protests, and the defiance of repressive laws, despite heavy British repression. Tamil Nadu saw large-scale participation in salt marches and boycotts led by C. Rajagopalachari. The movement's spread to such diverse regions underscored its national character and the widespread desire for independence across different linguistic, cultural, and religious communities.

The British authorities responded to the Civil Disobedience Movement with brutal repression. By the end of 1930, over 90,000 people had been arrested, including Gandhi, who was imprisoned in May 1930. The government also imposed heavy fines, seized property, and used force to suppress protests. In Peshawar, British troops opened fire on unarmed protesters, killing hundreds, an incident that further fueled resistance against colonial rule. Despite the repression, the movement continued to gain strength, and new leaders emerged to sustain the struggle. The British crackdown highlighted the colonial government's determination to maintain control but also exposed the vulnerabilities of their rule in the face of widespread civil resistance.

Following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in March 1931, Gandhi agreed to suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement and participate in the Second Round Table Conference in London. The conference aimed to discuss constitutional reforms for India, but it ended in failure, as the British government was unwilling to concede to Indian demands for complete independence. Gandhi's participation in the conference was significant as it marked a shift from direct action to political negotiation. However, the lack of progress led to the resumption of the movement in 1932, though it faced greater challenges due to increased repression and internal divisions.

within the Indian National Congress. Despite the temporary suspension, the Civil Disobedience Movement had a lasting impact, keeping the demand for independence at the forefront of Indian politics.

British Response

The British response to the Civil Disobedience Movement was characterized by severe repression. The colonial government deployed police and military forces to suppress protests, leading to widespread violence, arrests, and detentions. By the end of 1930, over 90,000 people had been arrested, including key leaders like Gandhi, Nehru, and Patel. The British authorities also imposed heavy fines, confiscated property, and used lathi charges (baton charges) to break up demonstrations. In rural areas, entire villages faced collective punishment, including the seizure of land and livestock. The repressive measures, while temporarily effective in curbing the movement, ultimately fueled greater resentment against British rule.

Despite the repressive measures, the British government also sought to negotiate with Gandhi and the INC to bring an end to the Civil Disobedience Movement. The most significant of these attempts was the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of March 1931, which led to a temporary suspension of the movement. Under the pact, the British agreed to release political prisoners and allow Indians to collect salt, while Gandhi agreed to attend the Second Round Table Conference in London. However, the negotiations failed to address the core demand for complete independence (Purna Swaraj), leading to the resumption of the movement in 1932. The negotiations highlighted the British strategy of using both repression and conciliation to manage the independence struggle.

The Civil Disobedience Movement attracted significant international attention, with global leaders and media closely following the events in India. The movement's non-violent nature and the brutal British repression elicited sympathy for the Indian cause from around the world. American journalist Webb Miller's reports on the violent suppression of protesters, including the infamous Dharasana Salt Works raid, were widely published and helped to galvanize international opinion against British colonialism. Prominent figures like Albert Einstein and President Franklin D. Roosevelt expressed support for Gandhi's methods and India's struggle for independence. The international attention put additional pressure on

the British government, although it did not lead to immediate changes in their colonial policy.

Impact

The Civil Disobedience Movement significantly advanced the Indian independence struggle by increasing the momentum for complete independence and further delegitimizing British rule. The movement demonstrated the widespread support for the INC's demand for Purna Swaraj and exposed the vulnerabilities of British control over India. The participation of millions of Indians, from peasants to urban workers, showed that the demand for independence was no longer limited to the elite but had become a mass movement. The British government's repressive response, including the mass arrests and violence, only served to deepen the alienation of Indians from colonial rule.

The movement played a crucial role in strengthening Indian nationalism by uniting diverse sections of society in a common cause. The participation of different social, religious, and regional groups in the movement underscored the growing sense of national identity and solidarity. Women played a significant role in the movement, with figures like Sarojini Naidu and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay leading protests and organizing boycotts. The involvement of rural and urban populations, along with the active participation of students and workers, further broadened the base of the independence movement. The Civil Disobedience Movement thus contributed to the emergence of a more inclusive and united Indian nationalism.

The Civil Disobedience Movement also had important social and economic impacts. The emphasis on swadeshi and the boycott of British goods promoted self-reliance and encouraged the growth of indigenous industries, particularly the production of khadi. The boycott of British textiles led to significant economic losses for British manufacturers, particularly in Lancashire, where the decline in exports to India caused widespread economic distress. The movement also challenged the economic foundations of British rule by encouraging non-payment of taxes and disrupting the colonial administration's ability to collect revenue. The social impact of the movement was evident in the increased participation of marginalized groups, including women and lower castes, in the independence struggle.

The Civil Disobedience Movement had a lasting global impact, inspiring other colonial struggles and civil rights movements around the world. Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent resistance, or satyagraha, became a model for anti-colonial movements in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States and Nelson Mandela in South Africa drew inspiration from Gandhi's methods in their own struggles for civil rights and freedom. The movement's success in mobilizing mass resistance against a powerful colonial empire demonstrated the potential of non-violent action to achieve political and social change, influencing liberation movements across the globe.

Limitations

Internal Conflicts: Differences within the INC and among leaders

The Civil Disobedience Movement faced internal conflicts and differences within the INC and among Indian leaders. While Gandhi's leadership was widely respected, there were significant disagreements over the direction and methods of the movement. Leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru were more radical in their approach, advocating for more direct action against British rule, while others preferred a more cautious and negotiated approach. These differences sometimes led to tensions within the INC, particularly over issues such as the suspension of the movement following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. The internal conflicts highlighted the challenges of maintaining unity in a diverse and complex political movement.

Limited Achievements: Failure to Achieve Immediate Independence or Major Concessions

Despite its impact, the Civil Disobedience Movement failed to achieve its immediate objective of complete independence or significant concessions from the British government. The movement's suspension following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the subsequent failure of the Second Round Table Conference left many Indians disillusioned. The British government's refusal to grant Purna Swaraj or to make substantial constitutional reforms meant that the movement did not achieve its key political goals. While the movement succeeded in mobilizing mass resistance and delegitimizing British rule, it did not lead to immediate independence, and the struggle for freedom continued for another 17 years.

Violence in Some Areas: Instances Where the Movement Deviated from Non-Violence

Although the Civil Disobedience Movement was largely non-violent, there were instances where the movement deviated from this principle, leading to violence. The British repression often provoked violent responses from protesters, particularly in regions like Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province. In Peshawar, for example, British troops fired on unarmed protesters, leading to violent clashes. In some cases, local leaders and participants resorted to violence in response to the brutal crackdowns, which undermined the movement's non-violent ethos. These incidents of violence were used by the British government to justify their repressive measures and to portray the movement as a threat to law and order.

Impact on Different Social Groups: Varied Impact on Different Classes, Castes, and Regions

The impact of the Civil Disobedience Movement varied across different social groups, classes, castes, and regions. While the movement succeeded in mobilizing a broad cross-section of Indian society, its impact was not uniform. In urban areas, the middle class and business communities were more actively involved in the boycott of British goods, while in rural areas, the movement focused on the non-payment of taxes and land revenue. However, the participation of marginalized groups, such as Dalits and tribal communities, was more limited, and the movement's emphasis on swadeshi and khadi did not always resonate with them. The movement's impact also varied regionally, with some areas witnessing more intense and sustained protests than others.

Delhi Proposal 1927

The Delhi Proposals of 1927 were a set of demands put forward by the Indian National Congress (INC) in response to the British government's plan to hold a Round Table Conference to discuss constitutional reforms in India. These proposals are significant in the history of India's struggle for independence, as they reflected the Congress's increasing assertiveness in demanding self-governance.

In 1927, the British government announced the formation of the Simon Commission to review the Government of India Act, 1919. The

commission, however, had no Indian members, leading to widespread protests across India. The Indian National Congress and other political groups strongly opposed the Simon Commission. In response, the Congress leadership decided to articulate its own vision for India's political future.

Key Points

1. The Muslim League, under Muhammad Ali Jinnah, demanded separate electorates for Muslims, a practice that had been in place since the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. The Delhi Proposals marked a shift, as the Congress was willing to negotiate with the Muslim League on the issue of separate electorates.
2. The proposals suggested that weightage should be provided to minority communities in provinces where they were a minority, specifically for Muslims in provinces like Bengal and Punjab.
3. The Delhi Proposals emphasized greater provincial autonomy, with provinces having more control over their internal affairs, which was a step towards federalism.
4. The Muslim League demanded a minimum one-third representation for Muslims in the Central Legislature.
5. The proposals also called for the residual powers to be vested in the provinces rather than the center, emphasizing a decentralized approach to governance.

Outcome

Response from the British: The British government did not accept the Delhi Proposals, leading to further dissatisfaction among Indian political groups.

Impact on Hindu-Muslim Relations: The Delhi Proposals were a critical moment in the relationship between the Congress and the Muslim League. Although they showed a willingness to negotiate, they also highlighted the growing communal divide in Indian politics.

Nehru Report (1928): The failure of the Delhi Proposals led to the drafting of the Nehru Report in 1928, which was the first attempt by Indians to draft a constitution for India. The Nehru Report, however, rejected separate electorates, leading to further tension between the Congress and the Muslim League.

The Delhi Proposals were an important milestone in the Indian freedom struggle as they demonstrated the Congress's readiness to engage with minority demands. They laid the groundwork for future constitutional discussions and highlighted the complexities of India's communal and political landscape during the fight for independence. These proposals reflect the political dynamics of the time, with the Congress attempting to accommodate diverse interests within the framework of a united India.

The Nehru Report (1928)

The Nehru Report, presented in 1928, holds significant importance in the history of India's struggle for independence. Named after its principal author, Motilal Nehru, this report was the first attempt by Indians to draft a constitutional framework for the governance of an independent India. It emerged in response to the political situation of the time and played a pivotal role in shaping India's constitutional development.

Background

The Nehru Report, finalized on August 15, 1928, and approved on August 28, 1928, was a significant document in India's constitutional history. It was prepared in response to the British government's challenge to Indian leaders to draft a constitution, a challenge first issued by Lord Birkenhead, then Secretary of State for India, in the House of Lords in 1925. The report was a direct response to the Simon Commission, which was appointed in November 1927 to review the Government of India Act 1919. The Commission's lack of Indian representation angered leaders of the Indian nationalist movement, who saw it as an insult to their demand for self-governance.

In December 1927, during its session in Madras, the Indian National Congress decided to take up the challenge of drafting a constitution. The All Parties Conference was formed, which, in its meeting on May 19, 1928, in Bombay, appointed a committee chaired by Motilal Nehru to draft the constitution. This committee's efforts culminated in the Nehru Report, which laid down a comprehensive framework for India's future governance, emphasizing Dominion Status and a federal setup.

Key Provisions

1. Dominion Status and Parliamentary Government:

The Nehru Report advocated for India to be granted Dominion Status, similar to that of Canada and Australia within the British Commonwealth. It recommended a parliamentary form of government with a bicameral legislature comprising a Senate and a House of Representatives.

The Senate was proposed to have 200 members elected for a term of seven years, while the House of Representatives would consist of 500 members elected for five years.

2. Responsible Government:

At both the central and provincial levels, the Nehru Report recommended responsible governments, meaning that the executive would be accountable to the legislature. The Governor-General was to act on the advice of an executive council, which would be collectively responsible to the Parliament. Provincial councils were to have a five-year tenure, with a governor acting on the advice of the provincial executive council.

3. Federal Structure:

The report proposed a federal structure for India, with residuary powers vested in the centre, ensuring a strong central authority.

4. Joint Electorates:

The report suggested the abolition of separate electorates for minorities, arguing that such a system fostered communal sentiments. Instead, it recommended joint electorates to promote unity.

5. Fundamental Rights:

The Nehru Report included a list of nineteen fundamental rights, which guaranteed equality, the right to form unions, and universal adult suffrage. It provided for full protection of the cultural and religious interests of Muslims and ensured the complete dissociation of the state from religion.

6. Language Policy:

The report proposed that Hindi should be the official language, while English would continue to be used for official purposes for a transitional period.

7. Protection of Minority Rights:

Although the report advocated for joint electorates, it also emphasized the protection of minority rights. It proposed safeguards to ensure

that the cultural and religious interests of minorities, particularly Muslims, were protected. The report recommended that minorities should have a fair representation in the legislature, and that special provisions should be made to protect their cultural, educational, and religious rights.

8. Judicial Independence:

The Nehru Report proposed the establishment of an independent judiciary, free from political influence. It recommended that judges should be appointed based on merit and should enjoy security of tenure.

The judiciary was envisioned as a separate and equal branch of government, with the power to interpret the constitution and protect the rights of individuals.

9. Decentralization and Local Self-Government:

The report emphasized the importance of decentralization and proposed strengthening local self-government institutions. It suggested that municipalities and local bodies should be given greater powers and responsibilities to manage local affairs.

The idea was to promote democratic participation at the grassroots level and ensure that governance was more responsive to the needs of the people.

10. Economic and Social Reforms:

The Nehru Report included recommendations for economic and social reforms aimed at improving the living conditions of the people. It proposed measures to address issues like land redistribution, the protection of labor rights, and the promotion of industrial and agricultural development.

The report also suggested the establishment of a commission to study and recommend policies for the economic development of the country.

11. Language and Education Policy:

In addition to recommending Hindi as the official language, the Nehru Report also advocated for the promotion of vernacular languages in education and administration. It recognized the linguistic diversity of India and proposed that education should be imparted in the mother tongue of students at the primary level.

The report also emphasized the importance of making education

accessible to all, regardless of caste, religion, or gender, and proposed the expansion of educational facilities across the country.

12. Citizenship and Nationality:

The Nehru Report proposed clear guidelines for Indian citizenship, advocating for a single, unified concept of nationality. It emphasized the need for all citizens to be treated equally under the law, regardless of their religion, caste, or ethnicity.

13. Prohibition of Titles:

The report recommended the abolition of titles and honors conferred by the British government, arguing that such titles were inconsistent with the principles of equality and democracy.

Reactions and Criticism

- **Congress and Muslim League:** While the Indian National Congress largely supported the Nehru Report, the All-India Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, opposed it. The Muslim League was particularly concerned about the absence of separate electorates for Muslims, a key demand of the community at that time.
- **Jinnah's Fourteen Points:** In response to the Nehru Report, Jinnah proposed his famous "Fourteen Points" in 1929, which outlined the demands of the Muslim League and rejected the Nehru Report's provisions.
- **Impact on Independence Movement:** The Nehru Report marked a significant shift in the Indian independence movement. Although it failed to gain unanimous support, it set the stage for further constitutional debates and was a precursor to the demand for complete independence (Purna Swaraj) by the Indian National Congress in 1929.

Significance

- **First Indian-Authored Constitution:** It was the first comprehensive attempt by Indians to outline a constitution for self-governance.
- **Shift Towards Dominion Status:** The report marked a shift in the Indian independence movement, as it represented a move towards achieving Dominion Status, a concept that was eventually surpassed by the demand for complete independence.

- **Foundation for Future Constitutional Developments:** Although the report was not implemented, many of its principles, such as the idea of a federal structure, fundamental rights, and universal suffrage, influenced future constitutional developments in India.
- **Polarization of Hindu-Muslim Relations:** The rejection of the Nehru Report by the Muslim League deepened the divide between the Congress and the League, contributing to the communal tensions that would later shape the partition of India.

Jinnah's Fourteen Points (1929)

In the late 1920s, as India's struggle for independence intensified, political divisions between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League became more pronounced. The tension came to a head with the Nehru Report of 1928, which was an attempt by Indian leaders, under the guidance of Motilal Nehru, to outline a constitution for India that demanded dominion status within the British Empire.

The Nehru Report, however, was seen as inadequate by the Muslim League, especially because it rejected key demands of the Muslim community, including the continuation of separate electorates and the reservation of seats for Muslims in Bengal and Punjab. The report failed to acknowledge the political and communal sensitivities of Muslims, leading to widespread criticism from Muslim leaders like Aga Khan and Muhammad Shafi, who regarded it as a "death warrant" for Muslim political rights due to its advocacy for joint electoral rolls for Hindus and Muslims.

In response to the growing discontent, an All Parties Conference was convened in 1928 to discuss the future of parliamentary reform in British India. The conference was partly a reaction to the Simon Commission, which had been appointed by the British government to propose constitutional reforms without including any Indian members, a move that deeply offended Indian leaders.

The Nehru Report emerged from this conference, demanding dominion status for India but neglecting to uphold the demands of the Muslim League. Feeling sidelined, the Muslim League turned to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who was authorized to draft a set of principles that would safeguard Muslim interests in any future constitution for India.

Jinnah, who had recently returned from England, presented these principles at a Muslim League session in Delhi in March 1929. His proposals were a direct response to the Nehru Report and were intended to consolidate Muslim viewpoints into a clear set of demands. These demands, known as Jinnah's Fourteen Points, were designed to ensure that Muslims would not be politically marginalized in a Hindu-majority India.

The Fourteen Points

1. **Federal Structure:** The future constitution should be federal, with the residuary powers vested in the provinces.
2. **Provincial Autonomy:** A uniform measure of autonomy should be granted to all provinces.
3. **Minority Representation:** All legislatures and elected bodies should have adequate and effective representation of minorities, without reducing the majority in any province to a minority.
4. **Muslim Representation:** Muslims should have no less than one-third representation in the Central Legislature.
5. **Separate Electorates:** Separate electorates should continue for communal groups, but any community could opt for joint electorates.
6. **Territorial Reorganization:** Any territorial reorganization should not affect the Muslim majority in Punjab, Bengal, and the NWFP.
7. **Religious Liberty:** Full religious liberty, including freedom of belief, worship, and education, should be guaranteed to all communities.
8. **Muslim Representation in Cabinets:** Muslims should have one-third representation in both central and provincial cabinets.
9. **Community Veto:** No bill or resolution should be passed in any legislature if three-fourths of the members of any community in that body oppose it.
10. **Separation of Sindh:** Sindh should be separated from Bombay and made a separate province.
11. **Reforms in NWFP and Balochistan:** Reforms should be introduced in the NWFP and Balochistan similar to those in other provinces.
12. **Muslim Share in Services:** Muslims should have an adequate share in all services, with due regard to efficiency.
13. **Protection of Muslim Culture and Rights:** The constitution should safeguard Muslim culture, education, language, religion, personal

laws, and charitable institutions.

14. No Constitutional Amendments Without Provincial Consent:

No changes should be made to the constitution without the consent of the provinces.

Significance and Impact

Jinnah's Fourteen Points outlined the conditions under which the Muslim League would consider cooperating with the Congress and other Indian political groups. The points emphasized federalism, with significant autonomy for provinces, and sought to guarantee Muslim representation in legislatures, cabinets, and public services. Additionally, Jinnah's points underscored the need for separate electorates to ensure that Muslims could elect their representatives independently, a key issue that the Nehru Report had dismissed.

Jinnah declared that these points were essential for safeguarding Muslim political, cultural, and religious rights within a future Indian state. He famously stated that the failure to accept these demands would mark the "parting of ways" between the Congress and the Muslim League. This declaration effectively set the stage for the eventual demand for a separate Muslim state, leading to the formation of Pakistan in 1947.

The Congress leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, rejected Jinnah's points, dismissing them as "ridiculous." They were particularly opposed to the idea of a weak central government and greater provincial autonomy, which they believed would undermine the unity of India. The rejection of Jinnah's proposals further alienated the Muslim League from the Congress and solidified the divide between the two major political groups in India.

Jinnah's Fourteen Points were a pivotal moment in the history of the Indian independence movement. They encapsulated the growing rift between the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League, highlighting the divergent visions for India's future. While the Congress aimed for a unified nation with a strong central government, the Muslim League, under Jinnah's leadership, sought to protect the political rights and identity of Muslims in a predominantly Hindu country. The failure to reconcile these differences eventually led to the demand for Pakistan, altering the course of South Asian history forever.

The Simon Commission Report (1927-1930)

Establishment and Objectives of the Simon Commission

The Simon Commission, officially known as the Indian Statutory Commission, was appointed by the British government in November 1927, under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon. The commission was tasked with reviewing the functioning of the Government of India Act 1919, specifically the dyarchical system introduced in the provinces, and to recommend any necessary constitutional reforms for India. The British government intended for the Commission's findings to serve as the basis for further constitutional advancements in India.

The timing and composition of the Simon Commission were critical. The British government's decision to establish the Commission was primarily driven by the provisions of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919, which had promised a review of the Act of 1919 after ten years. However, instead of including Indian members who could provide an indigenous perspective, the British government appointed an all-British commission, a move that was seen as a grave insult by Indian political leaders and the broader nationalist movement.

Indian Response and Nationwide Boycott

The announcement of the Simon Commission was met with immediate and widespread opposition across India. The Indian National Congress, under the leadership of prominent figures like Motilal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi, vehemently opposed the exclusion of Indians from the Commission. The Commission was seen as a direct affront to Indian aspirations for self-governance, and its composition was interpreted as a sign that the British were unwilling to genuinely engage with Indian leaders on constitutional matters.

In response, the Indian National Congress passed a resolution at its Madras session in December 1927, declaring its intention to boycott the Commission. This call for boycott resonated across the political spectrum, uniting diverse groups including the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, and other regional and communal organizations. The Commission's arrival in India in February 1928 was greeted with mass protests, strikes, and demonstrations. The slogan "Simon Go Back" became the rallying cry of the opposition, symbolizing the collective rejection of the Commission's legitimacy.

The intensity of the protests highlighted the deep-seated dissatisfaction with British rule and the growing demand for complete self-rule or “Purna Swaraj.” In several cities, including Lahore, Bombay (now Mumbai), and Calcutta (now Kolkata), the protests turned violent, leading to clashes with the police and several deaths, further intensifying anti-British sentiments.

Key Findings and Recommendations

Despite the boycott and the hostile reception, the Simon Commission proceeded with its work, conducting extensive tours across India and holding meetings with British officials, princely states, and a few Indian groups who were willing to engage with it. After nearly two years of inquiry, the Commission submitted its report in 1930, which outlined its findings and recommendations.

The Simon Commission Report made several key observations and recommendations:

- **Dyarchy in Provinces:** The Commission found the dyarchical system in the provinces to be ineffective and recommended its abolition. The dual system of governance, where control of certain subjects was divided between elected Indian ministers and appointed British officials, was seen as a source of confusion and inefficiency. The Commission proposed replacing dyarchy with a system of provincial autonomy.
- **Provincial Autonomy:** The Commission recommended that provinces be granted autonomy, with ministers responsible to the provincial legislatures. This meant that provincial governments would be fully responsible for all provincial subjects, marking a significant shift towards self-governance at the provincial level.
- **All-India Federation:** While the Commission did not explicitly propose an all-India federation, it recognized the need for a more centralized structure of governance. However, it suggested that the Centre should retain control over certain critical areas, including defense, foreign affairs, and communications, reflecting the British desire to maintain overarching control over India.
- **Communal Representation:** The Commission recommended the continuation of separate electorates for different communities, particularly for Muslims, Sikhs, and other minorities. It suggested that these separate electorates were necessary to protect the rights of

minorities in a predominantly Hindu society. This recommendation was consistent with earlier British policies but was increasingly seen as a tool to divide and rule.

- **Extension of Franchise:** The Commission proposed a gradual extension of the franchise, suggesting that more Indians should be allowed to participate in elections. However, the extension was to be limited and controlled, reflecting the British reluctance to fully democratize the Indian political system.
- **Central Legislative Assembly:** The Commission recommended the enlargement of the Central Legislative Assembly and the Council of State, with increased representation for Indians. However, it also proposed that the Viceroy should retain significant powers, including the ability to veto legislation and act independently in matters of defense and foreign affairs.

➤ **Governor's Powers**

The recommendation to maintain and even enhance the discretionary powers of the Governors in the provinces was a critical finding. This decision ensured that despite any increased Indian participation in governance, the ultimate control over crucial aspects of administration, especially law and order, remained firmly in British hands. This recommendation was seen as a direct attempt to curb the autonomy of provincial governments and maintain British supremacy, which was a major point of contention leading to widespread opposition to the Simon Commission.

➤ **Federal Court**

The proposal to establish a Federal Court was a significant step towards creating a unified judicial system in India. This recommendation was crucial because it laid the groundwork for the development of a central judiciary, which later became a cornerstone of the Indian judicial system. The Federal Court was intended to resolve disputes between provinces and the central government, providing a legal framework that would influence the structure of India's judicial system post-independence.

➤ **Bicameral Legislature at the Centre**

The recommendation to create a bicameral legislature at the central level, consisting of a Federal Assembly and a Council of State, was an important constitutional development. This move was aimed at providing a more representative and structured form of governance

at the central level. Although it was still heavily controlled by the British through the Viceroy, this recommendation set the stage for future discussions on the structure of India's central government, influencing later constitutional reforms, particularly in the Government of India Act 1935.

Indian Reactions to the Simon Commission Report

The release of the Simon Commission Report in 1930 was met with widespread disappointment and rejection across India. The Indian National Congress, which had already declared its goal of complete independence or "Purna Swaraj" in the Lahore session of 1929, dismissed the report as inadequate and irrelevant. The report's endorsement of communal electorates and its failure to propose any meaningful transfer of power to Indians were particularly criticized.

The Muslim League, which had initially supported the idea of constitutional reform, also rejected the report, although for different reasons. The League was dissatisfied with the report's failure to adequately address Muslim concerns, particularly regarding the distribution of power between the Centre and the provinces.

The Simon Commission's findings and recommendations thus did little to bridge the growing divide between the British government and Indian political leaders. Instead, the report further solidified Indian demands for complete independence and set the stage for the next phase of the freedom struggle.

Legacy

The Simon Commission is often remembered as a catalyst that intensified the Indian independence movement. Its exclusion of Indians from the process of constitutional reform highlighted the British government's unwillingness to genuinely involve Indian leaders in deciding their country's future. The widespread protests against the Commission were a clear signal of Indian unity and determination to achieve self-rule.

The Commission's report, while largely rejected by Indian leaders, laid the groundwork for subsequent constitutional discussions. Many of its recommendations, particularly regarding provincial autonomy and the need for a federal structure, were later incorporated into the Government of India Act 1935. However, the Simon Commission also demonstrated

the limits of British reforms and the growing irrelevance of incremental changes in the face of India's demand for full independence.

The Round Table Conferences (1930-1932)

The Round Table Conferences were a series of three high-profile political conferences organized by the British government to discuss constitutional reforms in India. Held in London between 1930 and 1932, these conferences marked a significant attempt by the British to engage Indian leaders in discussions about the future governance of India. However, despite their historical importance, the conferences failed to produce a consensus, largely due to the deep-seated differences among Indian leaders and the British government's reluctance to make substantial concessions.

The Round Table Conferences were convened against the backdrop of increasing political unrest in India. The Indian National Congress (INC), under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, had launched the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930, which included the famous Salt March, protesting against British salt taxes and demanding complete independence (Purna Swaraj). The Simon Commission (1927) had already deepened the discontent, as it was seen as a betrayal due to its all-British composition and failure to address Indian aspirations for self-governance.

In response to the growing unrest, the British government, led by Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, sought to negotiate with Indian leaders. The idea was to involve various Indian political factions in discussions to frame a new constitutional structure for India. The Round Table Conferences were thus convened to address these demands and to quell the rising tide of nationalist sentiment.

First Round Table Conference (November 1930 – January 1931)

The First Round Table Conference was held from November 12, 1930, to January 19, 1931. It was the first such conference in which British and Indian leaders, along with representatives from the princely states, gathered to discuss India's constitutional future.

The conference saw a broad range of participants, including representatives of various political parties, religious communities, and the princely states. Key figures included Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, B. R. Ambedkar (representing the Dalits), Muhammad Ali Jinnah (representing

the Muslim League), and Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III from the princely states. Notably, the Indian National Congress, the most influential political party at the time, boycotted the conference. This boycott was due to the imprisonment of its leaders and its ongoing campaign for complete independence.

The main issues discussed included federalism, minority rights, and the integration of princely states into a unified Indian federation. The British government recognized the need for a federal structure but insisted on retaining control over key areas such as defense and foreign policy. The absence of the Congress meant that the discussions lacked the representation of a significant section of Indian opinion, leading to limited progress. The conference concluded without any substantial agreement, but it set the stage for future negotiations.

The First Round Table Conference was the first instance where the concept of a “Dominion Status” for India was formally discussed, a status similar to that of Canada or Australia within the British Empire. However, this idea was not pursued seriously due to the absence of the Congress and the British government’s reluctance to grant real autonomy.

Second Round Table Conference (September – December 1931)

The Second Round Table Conference took place from September 7 to December 1, 1931, and was more significant than the first because it included the participation of the Indian National Congress.

Mahatma Gandhi attended the conference as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress, following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of March 1931. This pact temporarily halted the Civil Disobedience Movement, secured the release of political prisoners, and allowed Gandhi to represent the Congress in the negotiations. Other notable participants included Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who continued to advocate for the rights of the Dalits (then referred to as “Depressed Classes”), and Aga Khan III, representing the Muslim League alongside Jinnah.

The Second Round Table Conference focused on critical issues such as the structure of the future federal government, minority representation, and the contentious issue of separate electorates for Muslims and other minorities. Gandhi advocated for the abolition of separate electorates, which he believed would divide Indian society and weaken the national

movement. In contrast, Jinnah and other minority leaders insisted on maintaining separate electorates to protect their communities' interests.

The conference ended in a deadlock due to the inability to reach a consensus on the issue of separate electorates. Gandhi's opposition to separate electorates for the Dalits and other minorities, in particular, led to significant tensions. The British government, trying to maintain its influence, supported minority demands, which further complicated the negotiations. The conference's failure deepened the communal divide in Indian politics and weakened the prospects for a unified struggle for independence.

During the conference, Gandhi famously clashed with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar over the representation of Dalits. Gandhi's opposition to separate electorates for Dalits led to the controversial "Poona Pact" in 1932, where Gandhi and Ambedkar agreed to reserved seats for Dalits within a joint electorate, rather than separate electorates.

Third Round Table Conference (November – December 1932)

The Third Round Table Conference was held from November 17 to December 24, 1932, amidst a rapidly deteriorating political situation in India.

The Congress, having resumed its Civil Disobedience Movement after the failure of the Second Round Table Conference, boycotted the third conference entirely. The participants were primarily British officials, representatives from the princely states, and leaders of minority communities, including Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Muslim League representatives.

With the absence of the Congress, the discussions at the Third Round Table Conference were less representative and focused on finalizing the details of the constitutional reforms. The British government and the princely states discussed the modalities of a federal structure and the role of minorities. However, without the involvement of the Congress, the discussions lacked the necessary political legitimacy and consensus to bring about meaningful change.

Despite the lack of a comprehensive agreement, the discussions at the Third Round Table Conference contributed to the drafting of the Government of India Act 1935, which incorporated many of the ideas

discussed during the conferences, such as provincial autonomy and the establishment of a federal system.

Significance

The Round Table Conferences, though ultimately unsuccessful in resolving the constitutional crisis in India, were significant for several reasons:

- **Introduction of Federalism:** The conferences established the framework for a federal structure in India, which was later incorporated into the Government of India Act 1935. The idea of a federation that included both British India and the princely states was first seriously considered during these discussions.
- **Debate on Minority Rights:** The issue of minority representation and separate electorates was a major point of contention during the conferences. The failure to resolve these issues at the Round Table Conferences deepened communal divisions, which played a significant role in the eventual partition of India in 1947.
- **Gandhi-Irwin Pact and the Role of the Congress:** The Second Round Table Conference was significant for Gandhi's participation following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, which marked a brief truce between the British government and the Indian National Congress. The conference highlighted the complexities of negotiating with diverse Indian political factions and underscored the challenges of creating a unified constitutional framework for India.
- **Government of India Act 1935:** The discussions and proposals from the Round Table Conferences directly influenced the drafting of the Government of India Act 1935, which became the constitutional framework for British India until independence. The act introduced significant reforms, including provincial autonomy and the creation of a federal structure, though it fell short of granting India full dominion status.
- **Impact on Independence Movement:** The failure of the Round Table Conferences to achieve meaningful reforms galvanized the Indian independence movement. The frustrations and divisions exposed during the conferences fuelled the demand for complete independence, eventually leading to the Quit India Movement in 1942 and the ultimate partition of India in 1947.

The Round Table Conferences were a critical moment in India's struggle for self-governance. While they failed to produce a consensus on constitutional reforms, they highlighted the deep divisions within Indian society and the British government's reluctance to relinquish control, setting the stage for the final phase of the independence movement.

Government of India 1935

The Government of India Act, 1935, was a significant piece of legislation passed by the British Parliament as part of the constitutional reforms in India. It came at a time when demands for greater Indian participation in governance were intensifying. India's support to Britain during World War I also played a role in the British recognizing the need to involve more Indians in their administration. The Act drew upon several key reports and recommendations, including the Simon Commission Report, the Round Table Conferences, and the White Paper of 1933.

Salient Features

- **All India Federation:** The Act proposed an All India Federation, which included both British Indian provinces and princely states. Powers were divided between the Centre and the units through three lists: Federal, Provincial, and Concurrent. However, the Federation was never realized as the princely states refused to join.
- **Provincial Autonomy:** The Act replaced diarchy at the provincial level with provincial autonomy, allowing provinces to function as autonomous units with responsible governments. However, the governors retained significant powers, including the ability to override the ministers' decisions.
- **Bicameralism:** Bicameral legislatures were introduced in six out of eleven provinces (Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Bihar, Assam, and the United Provinces), as well as at the Centre, where the legislature consisted of the Federal Assembly and the Council of States.
- **Diarchy at the Centre:** While diarchy was abolished at the provincial level, it was introduced at the Centre. Federal subjects were divided into reserved and transferred subjects, with the Governor-General having control over both.
- **Communal and Class Representation:** The Act expanded communal representation by providing separate electorates for

scheduled castes, women, and laborers. Muslims were granted 33% of the seats in the Federal Legislature.

Other Key Features

- Abolished the Council of India, providing the Secretary of State for India with a team of advisors.
- Established the Reserve Bank of India.
- Extended the franchise to 14% of the population.
- Created a Federal Public Service Commission, Provincial Public Service Commissions, and a Joint Public Service Commission.
- Established a Federal Court, which continued until the creation of the Supreme Court of India in 1950.
- Reorganized certain provinces and separated Burma from India.
- The Central Legislature consisted of a bicameral structure with the Council of State and the Federal Assembly, the latter having a five-year term.
- The Governor-General retained extensive powers, including veto authority and control over key subjects like defense and foreign affairs.
- Diarchy was introduced at the Centre, with reserved subjects under the Governor-General's control and transferred subjects managed by Indian ministers.
- The Act aimed to include princely states in a proposed Federation, but their voluntary participation led to its non-implementation.
- Provinces gained control over their finances, though major revenue sources remained with the Central Government.
- British interests were protected through special responsibilities given to governors, limiting the autonomy of Indian administration.
- A separate authority was established to manage Indian Railways, independent of provincial and central governments.
- Voting rights were extended to 14% of the population, based on property, tax, and educational qualifications.
- Burma was separated from India, becoming a distinct British colony.
- Provisions ensured protection of British economic interests and companies in India.

- The Federal Court was established as the highest court for constitutional matters, preceding the Supreme Court of India.
- The rights and privileges of British civil servants were safeguarded, ensuring the continuation of the Indian Civil Service under British control.

Significance

The Government of India Act, 1935, was a crucial step toward a responsible government in India, following the Act of 1919. It marked a point of no return in India's constitutional development by decentralizing power and promoting provincial autonomy. The Act's provisions laid the groundwork for the eventual establishment of India's Constitution, despite its shortcomings. The introduction of separate electorates for women, for instance, was seen as a positive step toward greater inclusion in governance.

Criticism

Despite its significance, the Act faced substantial criticism:

- **Excessive Powers of the Governor-General:** The governor-general's extensive powers undermined the autonomy of the provinces.
- **Promotion of Separatism:** The extension of communal electorates fostered divisions, which eventually contributed to the partition of India.
- **Rigid Constitution:** The Act created a rigid framework with no scope for internal growth, reserving the power of amendment to the British Parliament.
- **Failure of Federation:** The proposed All India Federation never materialized, as it depended on the consent of the princely states, which was never secured.
- **Rejection by Indian Leaders:** The Act was widely rejected by Indian leaders, including the Indian National Congress, which demanded a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution for an independent India. Nehru famously criticized the Act as "a machine with strong brakes but no engine."

The Government of India Act, 1935, was an attempt by the British to retain control while placating Indian demands for self-governance. Though it fell short of expectations, the Act played a vital role in the evolution of

India's constitutional framework and set the stage for future negotiations leading to independence. Despite its flaws, it remains a watershed moment in India's constitutional history.

A. All India Federation

The All India Federation was a central feature of the Government of India Act 1935 and represented one of the most ambitious attempts by the British to restructure the governance of India. Although the Federation ultimately never materialized, its proposed structure and implications provide key insights into British colonial policy and the political dynamics of the time.

Structure and Composition

The All India Federation was envisioned as a union of British Indian provinces and princely states under a single, unified federal framework. This concept was designed to bring together the diverse political entities of British India, creating a semblance of national unity while maintaining British control.

- **Federation of British Indian Provinces and Princely States:** The Federation was to consist of the British Indian provinces, which were automatically included, and the princely states, which were given the option to join voluntarily. This was a significant departure from the previous system, where the princely states operated with considerable autonomy under the suzerainty of the British Crown. The princely states were apprehensive about joining the Federation due to fears of losing their independence and being subjected to central control by the British administration.
- **Bicameral Legislature:** The Federation was to be governed by a bicameral legislature, consisting of two houses—the Council of States (Upper House) and the Federal Assembly (Lower House). The Council of States was intended to represent both the princely states and the British Indian provinces, with its members either nominated by the rulers of the princely states or elected from the provinces. The Federal Assembly was to be composed of representatives elected from the provinces based on proportional representation, ensuring that the larger provinces had greater representation.
- **Council of States:** The Council of States was to act as the upper chamber, with a fixed number of seats allocated to the princely states

and British Indian provinces. The princely states, which would have representation in the Council of States, were apprehensive about joining, fearing it would erode their sovereignty. The Council of States was intended to serve as a check on the more populous Federal Assembly, ensuring that the interests of the princely states and smaller provinces were not overshadowed by the larger provinces.

- **Federal Assembly:** The Federal Assembly was designed to be the lower chamber of the bicameral legislature, with members elected from the British Indian provinces. The Assembly was intended to be the more powerful of the two houses, with the authority to propose and pass legislation on matters included in the Federal and Concurrent Lists.

Powers and Responsibilities

The All India Federation sought to create a division of powers between the Centre and the Provinces, a key feature of federal governance. However, the Centre retained significant control, especially in areas deemed crucial by the British administration.

- **Division of Powers:** The Act divided legislative powers between the Centre and the Provinces through three lists: the Federal List, the Provincial List, and the Concurrent List.
- **Federal List:** The Federal List included subjects such as defense, foreign affairs, and communications, which were under the exclusive control of the central government. The British government sought to retain control over these critical areas to ensure that the strategic interests of the Empire were safeguarded.
- **Provincial List:** The Provincial List comprised subjects like agriculture, public health, education, and local government, which were under the jurisdiction of the provincial governments. This was intended to give the provinces more autonomy in managing their internal affairs, though the central government retained oversight.
- **Concurrent List:** The Concurrent List included subjects where both the central and provincial governments could legislate, such as criminal law, civil law, and marriage laws. However, in case of a conflict between central and provincial laws, the

central legislation would prevail, further emphasizing the dominance of the Centre.

- **Veto and Control Mechanisms:** Despite the division of powers, the Governor-General retained significant authority over the Federation. The Governor-General had the power to veto any legislation passed by the Federal Legislature and could even issue ordinances when the legislature was not in session. Additionally, the Governor-General had the authority to dismiss provincial governments and assume direct control over provincial administration if deemed necessary. This ensured that the British government maintained ultimate control over the governance of India, despite the nominal transfer of power to Indian hands.

Criticism and Legacy

The All India Federation was met with widespread criticism from various quarters and ultimately failed to come into effect, primarily due to the refusal of many princely states to join.

- **Princely States' Reluctance:** A major obstacle to the implementation of the All India Federation was the reluctance of the princely states to join. The princely states were concerned that their autonomy and privileges would be significantly reduced if they joined the Federation. Many rulers feared that their influence would be diluted in a system where they would have to share power with the British Indian provinces, particularly in the context of a central government dominated by British officials. As a result, most princely states opted to remain outside the Federation, which rendered the entire scheme unworkable.
- **Criticism by Nationalists:** Indian nationalists, particularly those aligned with the Indian National Congress, criticized the Federation as a ploy by the British to maintain their control over India. They argued that the Federation, as proposed, did not represent true federalism but was instead a tool to divide and weaken the Indian nationalist movement by creating divisions between the provinces and princely states. The Congress also opposed the limited nature of the powers granted to the provinces, which were still subject to the overriding authority of the central government and the Governor-General.

- **Legacy:** Despite its failure, the All India Federation left a lasting legacy in the form of the federal structure that was later adopted in independent India's Constitution. The idea of a federal system, with a division of powers between the Centre and the States, became a key feature of India's political system. The experience of negotiating the terms of the Federation and the eventual rejection by the princely states highlighted the complexities of creating a unified Indian state, a challenge that would continue to shape Indian politics in the years leading up to independence in 1947.

The All India Federation under the Government of India Act 1935 was a bold but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to create a unified system of governance for British India and the princely states. While it never came into effect, the proposal and the debates surrounding it played a significant role in shaping the political discourse of the time and influenced the eventual structure of independent India's federal system.

B. Provincial Autonomy

Provincial Autonomy was one of the most significant aspects of the Government of India Act 1935, representing a substantial shift in the administrative framework of British India. This reform aimed to decentralize power by granting greater self-governance to the provinces, which was seen as a crucial step towards eventual self-rule.

The Government of India Act 1935 marked a pivotal change in the relationship between the British government and the provinces of India. Under the provisions of the Act, provinces were granted a significant degree of autonomy, allowing for the establishment of responsible government at the provincial level.

- **Decentralization of Power:** Provincial Autonomy aimed to reduce the centralization of power that had been a hallmark of British colonial rule in India. Before this Act, provincial governments were heavily controlled by the central government and the British-appointed Governors. The new arrangement provided for a more decentralized structure, wherein elected provincial governments could exercise authority over a wide range of subjects.
- **Elected Ministries:** The most notable feature of Provincial Autonomy was the introduction of elected ministries in the provinces. Provincial governments were now composed of ministers

who were responsible to the elected provincial legislatures, rather than to the British-appointed Governors. This was a marked departure from the earlier system where the Governor had the final say in all provincial matters.

- **Wider Legislative Powers:** The Act granted provincial legislatures the authority to legislate on subjects listed in the Provincial List, which included areas such as agriculture, public health, education, and local self-government. This gave the provinces greater control over their internal affairs, allowing them to tailor policies to the specific needs and conditions of their regions.

Powers of Provincial Governments

Under the new system, provincial governments were empowered to govern a broad range of subjects, while still remaining within the overall framework of British control. However, this autonomy was not absolute, as the British authorities retained significant powers of intervention and control.

- **Provincial List:** The Provincial List included subjects that were under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provincial governments. These included key areas like agriculture, public health, education, and local government. The provinces had the authority to enact laws and implement policies on these subjects, which was a significant step towards self-governance.
- **Constitutional Responsibilities:** The elected ministries were responsible for the administration of their respective provinces. They had to ensure the smooth functioning of various departments, implementation of laws, and maintenance of public order. The ministries were accountable to the provincial legislatures, and their survival depended on maintaining the confidence of the majority in these legislatures.
- **Governor's Reserve Powers:** Despite the increased autonomy, the Governors retained significant reserve powers under the Act. The Governors had the authority to intervene in provincial matters if they believed it was necessary for the maintenance of law and order, the protection of minorities, or the safeguarding of British interests. They could dismiss elected ministries, veto legislation, and even take direct control of provincial administration in exceptional circumstances. This effectively limited the scope of true self-

governance, as the Governors could override the decisions of the elected ministries.

- **Financial Control:** Another limitation of Provincial Autonomy was the continued financial control exercised by the British authorities. The central government retained control over key sources of revenue, such as customs duties and income tax, which restricted the financial independence of the provinces. This made the provincial governments reliant on grants and subsidies from the Centre, which could be used as a tool to influence provincial policies.

Impact

The introduction of Provincial Autonomy had a profound impact on the political landscape of India, laying the groundwork for the development of responsible government at the provincial level and influencing the structure of governance in independent India.

- **Political Empowerment:** Provincial Autonomy led to the political empowerment of Indian leaders at the provincial level. For the first time, Indian politicians had the opportunity to govern large and complex territories, make decisions on important issues, and implement their political agendas. This experience proved invaluable in the years leading up to independence, as many of these leaders went on to play key roles in the national government after 1947.
- **Growth of Regional Politics:** The Act also contributed to the growth of regional politics in India. As provinces gained more control over their affairs, regional political parties and leaders emerged, advocating for the interests of specific regions and communities. This regionalization of politics became a defining feature of Indian democracy after independence, with regional parties playing an important role in the political process.
- **Limitations and Discontent:** Despite the increased autonomy, the continued powers of the Governors and the financial dependence on the Centre led to dissatisfaction among Indian leaders. Many viewed Provincial Autonomy as a half-measure that fell short of true self-government. The overarching control retained by the British authorities, coupled with the ongoing centralization of

critical powers, was seen as an obstacle to the full realization of Indian aspirations for self-rule.

- **Legacy in Independent India:** The concept of Provincial Autonomy laid the foundation for the federal structure adopted by India after independence. The division of powers between the Centre and the States, the role of elected state governments, and the mechanisms for resolving conflicts between different levels of government were all influenced by the experiences of Provincial Autonomy under the Government of India Act 1935. However, the lessons learned from the limitations and challenges of this system also informed the framers of the Indian Constitution, who sought to create a more balanced and equitable distribution of powers in the new Republic of India.

Provincial Autonomy under the Government of India Act 1935 was a crucial development in the evolution of self-government in India. While it represented a significant step towards decentralization and the empowerment of Indian leaders, it was also marked by limitations that highlighted the continued control of the British authorities. The experience of Provincial Autonomy played a key role in shaping the political institutions and governance structures of independent India.

C. Communal Award (1932)

As the Indians could not arrive at any settlement, Ramsay MacDonald gave his famous “award” known as the Communal Award on 16th August 1932. The scope of this Award was purposely confined to the arrangements to be made for the representation of British Indian communities in the provincial legislatures, consideration of representation to the Central Legislature being deferred for the time being as that involved a question of the representation of the Indian States which needed further discussion. The hope was expressed that once a pronouncement was made upon questions of the method and proportions of representation, the communities themselves may find it possible to arrive at a modus vivendi on the communal problem. If before the passing of the new Government of India Act the Government was satisfied that the communities concerned were mutually agreed upon any alternative scheme they would be prepared to recommend to parliament the substitution of the alternative scheme for the Communal Award.

The communal award was announced by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, on August 16, 1932. The communal award, based on the findings of the Indian franchise committee (also called the Lothian committee), established separate electorates and reserved seats for minorities, including the depressed classes which were granted 78 reserved seats. Thus, this award accorded separate electorates for Muslims, Europeans, sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo- Indians, depressed classes and even to the marathas for some seats in Bombay. The award was perceived by the national leaders led by the Congress as another manifestation of the British policy of divide and rule. It should be noted here that doctor BR Ambedkar in the past, in his testimony to the Simon Commission, had stressed that the depressed classes should be treated as a distinct independent minority separate from the cast Hindus. Even the Bengal depressed classes association had lobbied for separate electorates with seats reserved according to the proportion of the depressed class members to the total proportion as well As for adult franchise. But the Simon Commission rejected the proposal of separate electorate for depressed classes ; however, it retained the concept of reserving seats. In the second round table conference held in London, Ambedkar again raised the issue of separate electorate for the depressed classes. Earlier in the conference, Ambedkar had attempted to compromise with Gandhi on reserved seats in a common electorate, but Gandhi, who declared himself this old representative of India's oppressed masses, rejected Ambedkar's proposal and denounced the other delegates as unrepresentative. Further Gandhi attempted to strike a deal with Muslims, promising to support their demands as long as the Muslims voted against separate electorates for the depressed classes. It is argued that political considerations might have motivated Gandhi to adopt such a stand. But despite such efforts, a consensus on the minority representation could not be worked out among the Indian delegates. In the wake of such a situation, Ramsay McDonald, who had chaired the committee on minorities, offered to mediate on the condition that the other members of the committee supported his decision. And, the outcome of this mediation was the communal award.

Main Provisions

- Muslims, European, Sikhs, Indian Christians and Anglo- Indians, depressed classes, women and even the Marathas were to get separate electorates.

- Such an arrangement for the depressed classes was to be made for a period of 20 years.
- In the provincial legislatures the seats were to be distributed on communal basis.
- The existing seats of the provincial legislatures were to be doubled.
- Muslims wherever they were in minority were to be granted or weightage.
- Except in the northwest frontier province, 3% seats were to be reserved for women in all provinces.
- The depressed classes were to be declared/ accorded the status of minority.
- The depressed classes were to get double vote, one to be used to separate electorates and the other to be used in the General Electorates.
- Allocation of seats were to be made for labourers, landlords, traders and industrialists.
- In the province of Bombay seven seats were to be allocated for Marathas.

Though opposed to separate electorates, the Congress was not in favour of changing the communal award without the consent of minorities. Thus while strongly disagreeing with the communal award the Congress decided neither to accept it nor to reject it.

According to the Award, elections to the seats allotted to Muslim, European and Sikh constituencies were to be by voters voting for separate communal electorates covering between them the whole area of a province, Special provisions were made for excluded areas. Provision was to be made in the new Constitution of India to allow the revision of electoral arrangements after the lapse of 10 years with the assent of the communities affected, for the ascertainment of which suitable means were to be devised.

All qualified voters who were not voters in Muslim, Sikh, Indian-Christian, Anglo-Indian or European constituencies were entitled to vote in a general constituency. Seven seats were reserved for the Marathas in certain selected plural member general constituencies in Bombay.

The members of the depressed classes who were qualified to vote, were to vote in a general constituency. However, special seats were to be reserved for them. Those seats were to be filled up by election from special constituencies in which only the members of the depressed classes

electorally qualified were to be entitled to vote. Any person voting in such a special constituency was also to be entitled to vote in a general constituency. These constituencies were to be formed in those selected areas where the depressed classes were most numerous, and except in Madras, they were not to cover the whole of the area of a province. In the case of Bengal, in some general constituencies, the majority of the voters belonged to the depressed classes. Consequently, no special number was to be fixed for their seats in that province. However, they were not to get less than 70 seats in Bengal. The maximum duration of the depressed classes constituencies was to be 20 years, provided they were not abolished earlier.

The election of the Indian Christians was to be by voters voting in separate communal constituencies. It was felt that practical difficulties would prevent the formation of the Indian Christian constituencies covering the whole area of a province and consequently special Indian Christian constituencies were to be formed in one or two selected areas in a province. The Indian Christian voters in those areas were not to vote in a general constituency. Outside those areas, they were to vote in a general constituency. Special arrangements were to be made in Bihar and Orissa where a large number of the Indian Christians belonged to the original Tribes. The Anglo-Indians were also to vote on communal lines. The intention was that the Anglo-Indian constituencies were to cover the whole area of a province and postal ballot was to be employed for that purpose.

Women were also given special representation on communal lines. The electors of a particular community were to elect their own quota.

Special seats were to be allotted to Commerce and Industry, Mining and Planting, to be filled up by election through the Chambers of Commerce and other associations. Their details were to be worked out later on.

Seats allotted to land-holders were to be filled by the land-holders' constituencies.

It was stated that the work of the determination of the constituencies was to begin soon. The Government reserved to itself the right of making slight variations in the number of seats given to the various communities with a view to facilitate the work of the delimitation of constituencies. However, the proportion was not to be materially changed. The composition of the second chambers in the provinces was not to disturb in any essential

the balance between the communities resulting from the composition of the Lower House.

Poona Pact (1932) and Gandhi's Response

Gandhi saw the communal award as an attack on Indian unity and nationalism. He thought it was harmful to both Hinduism and to the depressed classes since it provided no answer to the socially degraded position of the depressed classes. Once the depressed classes were treated as a separate political entity he argued the question of abolishing untouchability would get undermined, while separate electorates would ensure that the untouchables remained untouchables in perpetuity. He said that what was required was not protection of the so-called interest of the depressed classes but root and branch eradication of untouchability.

Mahatma Gandhi in his letter written in March 1932 to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for India, had warned him that he would resist with his life the grant of separate electorates to the depressed classes. When the Communal Award was published and it was found that the British Government was determined to give separate communal representation to the depressed classes Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Ramsay MacDonald that the matter was "one of pure religion" with him and he asked: "Do you realise that, if your decision stands and the constitution comes into being, you arrest the marvellous growth of the work of the Hindu reformers who have dedicated themselves to the uplift of their suppressed brethren in every walk of life?" Mahatma Gandhi's letter had no effect on the Prime Minister of England who took the matter light-heartedly and would not have bothered if the Mahatma had died. When the British Government refused to move in the matter and the condition of Mahatma Gandhi became serious on account of his fast unto death, the Indian leaders made up their minds to get the Award modified by mutual agreement. Negotiations took place with Dr. Ambedkar and Rajah and ultimately the Poona Pact was signed in September 1932 and was accepted by the Government.

The Poona Pact reserved seats for depressed classes out of the general electoral seats in provincial legislature as follows:-Madras 30, Bombay with Sind 15, Punjab. 8, Bihar and Orissa 18, C.P. 20, Assam 7, Bengal 30, and U.P. 20. The total of the reserved seats for the depressed classes was 148.

As regards the procedure for elections to these seats by joint electorates, all members of the depressed classes registered in the general electoral

roll in a constituency were to form an electoral college which was to elect a panel of 4 candidates belonging to the depressed classes for each of the reserved seats by the method of single vote. The four persons getting the highest number of votes in the primary election were to be candidates for election by the general electorate.

The depressed classes were to have representation in the Central Legislature on the principle of joint electorates and seats were to be reserved for them in the same way as in the case of the provinces. 18 per cent of the general seats for British India were to be reserved for the depressed classes. The system of primary elections to a panel of candidates for election to Central and Provincial Legislatures was to be abolished after 10 years or earlier, if an agreement to that effect was made. The depressed classes were to be given fair representation in the local bodies and the public services subject to educational qualifications.

In every educational grant in the provincial budget, an adequate sum was to be earmarked for the education of the depressed classes. The procedure to be adopted for election of the representatives of the depressed classes to the Central Legislature was postponed as that involved the whole system of representation at the Centre.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Examine the reasons behind Gandhi's opposition to the Rowlatt Act and the outcomes of the Satyagraha initiated in response.
2. Evaluate the success and failure of the Non-Cooperation Movement. How did it change the political landscape of India?
3. What were the key demands of the Civil Disobedience Movement, and how did the British government respond?
4. Compare the demands of Jinnah's Fourteen Points with those of the Nehru Report. What were the key areas of divergence?
5. What was the significance of the Round Table Conferences in the process of constitutional reforms in India?
6. In what ways did the Government of India Act 1935 set the foundation for India's post-independence political structure?
7. Explain the significance of the Poona Pact in resolving the political deadlock created by the Communal Award.

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UNIT – V**Lesson 5.1 - Congress-Muslim League Conflict Since 1937****Introduction**

The Government of India Act of 1935 was intended as a constitutional tool to extend British influence within Indian society. However, the Indian National Congress perceived the Act as yet another obstacle to their push for independence. Authorities noted that Congress ministers prioritized party goals over adherence to the constitutional framework. This concern grew with the revival of grassroots Congress activism. While administering the provinces, Congress not only reinforced its volunteer organizations but also broadened their reach. Although corruption and internal divisions weakened formal party institutions during this time, grassroots workers revitalized public sentiment against compromises with British rule, thus empowering Congress ministers in their confrontations with the authorities.

The authorities were particularly concerned about the links between Congress ministers and party activities opposing British rule, even though a shared interest between Congress and British officials allowed provincial autonomy to continue. In response, the British authorities made practical concessions but also considered alternative approaches, notably engaging with the Muslim League, which gained mass support after 1937. Although not a direct ally, the League counterbalanced the potential for complete mobilization under Congress. British authorities, adhering to constitutional principles while being cautious of supporting Congress ministries, recognized the strategic importance of Muslim mobilization under the League and regarded it as a challenge worth addressing.

By the time provincial autonomy was implemented, many Muslims already felt increasingly alienated from the Indian National Congress, a sentiment that had been growing since the Government of India Act of 1919. This exacerbated Muslim separatism by institutionalizing communal divisions in electoral politics. The local-level separatism eventually expanded across the Indian subcontinent for various reasons.

The 1932 Communal Award further solidified these divisions, paving the way for the partition of India. Despite the Congress Party's secular

and nationalist stance, many of its members-maintained ties with Hindu communal groups in the 1920s, deepening Muslim distrust.

Congress and the Muslim League: Struggles in Muslim-Majority and Minority Provinces

The 1937 provincial election results confirmed this distrust, with Muslims overwhelmingly rejecting the Congress, except in the North West Frontier Province, which had a Muslim majority. In Muslim-minority provinces, Congress maintained some influence through groups like the Ahrars and Nationalist Muslims within its fold. However, like the Congress, the Muslim League's influence in Muslim politics in regions like UP, Bihar, and Bombay remained limited at this stage, even in UP, which was prone to communal tension.

Although formal, constitutional, and agitational politics deepened Muslim disillusionment in UP, they still did not perceive the Muslim League as their defender. In the 1937 elections, the League, running on an overtly communal platform, performed poorly except in certain urban pockets of UP. The subsequent increase in the League's support was shaped by experiences of provincial autonomy under both Congress and British rule.

The results of the 1937 election clearly revealed that the Congress was the only party that was well-organized and capable of fighting the elections on a national front. Other parties, including the Muslim League, struggled to carry out extensive campaigning and canvassing. In the absence of a dedicated team of workers, they relied on hired agents who lacked the effectiveness and sincerity required, resulting in their electoral failure. In terms of Muslim seats, both the Congress and the League failed to secure an adequate number of seats to claim representation of the Muslim population. The Muslim League won only 108 out of 485 Muslim seats, while the Congress contested 58 Muslim seats and won 26.

Immediately after the elections, both the Congress and the Muslim League focused on expanding their influence among the Muslim masses. The Congress, recognizing its weak following among Muslims, endeavored to penetrate deeper into the Muslim community to challenge the League's claim of being the sole representative organization of Muslims. It was argued that while the Muslim League's membership was exclusive to Muslims, the Congress, by its constitution, had open membership for

Hindus, Muslims, and all other groups. This gave the Congress a national basis that the League lacked.

Congress's Nationalist Approach vs. the League's Communal Strategy

With this in mind, Congress leaders proposed conditions for forming a coalition ministry in the United Provinces (U.P.). They demanded that the League in the U.P. Legislature cease to function as a separate group, that League members join the Congress Party and share the same privileges and obligations, that all members follow the policy laid down by the Congress Working Committee, and that the Muslim League Parliamentary Board in U.P. be dissolved, with no candidates set up by the Board in any bye-elections.

These conditions were unacceptable to the Muslim League, as they would have meant the complete loss of identity and subjugation to the Congress. The Congress, on the other hand, was unwilling to accept the League as a political organization because it did not find any reference to political or economic issues in the League's appeals to the Muslim masses. Congress leaders believed that the League only raised religious sentiments by using the slogan "Islam in Danger" and that it aimed to classify every other organization as "non-Muslim," even if it had Muslim members.

They argued that this approach was not suitable for political elections and would not lead to the political awakening of the masses. Congress claimed to be the true representative of both Hindus and Muslims, pointing to the support of many prominent Muslim leaders.

The Congress maintained that the differences between the League and the Congress were fundamental and that as long as these differences persisted, no real settlement could be reached. The Congress argued that while the Muslim League wanted to work within the framework of the existing reforms, the Congress was committed to challenging and changing them. To appease the League by changing its policies would, in their view, undermine and ruin any political party or national movement.

J. B. Kripalani, a prominent Congress leader, highlighted that yielding to the League's demands would set a dangerous precedent. If the Congress capitulated to the League today, he argued, it might be forced to yield to any other group that objected to the basic principles of the Congress in the future. This, he contended, would compromise the integrity of the Congress's core values, such as non-violence.

The Congress's main objections to recognizing the Muslim League as the sole representative organization of Muslims can be summarized as follows:

1. The Congress was the largest political organization in India, without any religious or communal label, and had thousands of Muslim members. Accepting the League's demands would mean political suicide for these Muslim members.
2. Other organizations, such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulama, also represented significant sections of Muslims.
3. Recognizing the League as the sole representative of Muslims would imply that the Congress was a Hindu organization, a position the Congress could never accept.

The Congress could not accept the communal outlook of the League. They believed that Jinnah was elevating communalism to an extreme level, aiming for Muslims to function as a separate group and negotiate with other groups as if they were separate nations. According to Jinnah's perspective, only those Muslims who followed him were considered true Muslims, thereby excluding Congress Muslims.

At the Lucknow session of the Congress, a resolution was adopted expressing that the Congress was not a class organization but a national organization comprising individuals from all classes and sections of society. Another resolution, adopted at the Working Committee meeting of the Congress in Calcutta that same year, clarified the Congress's policy towards minorities. It emphasized the aim of achieving an independent and united India where no class, group, majority, or minority would exploit another, and where all elements of the nation would cooperate for the common good and the advancement of the people of India.

Many Congress leaders believed that the Hindu-Muslim problem did not exist in India and that the real conflict was economic. To the Congressmen, the League's ideas seemed medieval and out of touch with contemporary social and economic realities. They argued that religion was a private matter with no place in politics. Nehru commented on the situation, saying that although there were many groups and parties in the country, the real contest was between nationalism and imperialism. He asserted that communal groupings had no real importance and that the Congress represented Indian nationalism, charged with a historic destiny.

Despite the Muslim League's lack of solid arguments to denounce the Congress's claims of being a national organization and the League a communal organization, they insisted that Congress leaders did not understand the significance of religion in Muslim political thinking. Some Muslim Leaders were outraged by Congress attempts to merge them into the Congress and forget their identity as a community. They criticized the Congress, saying that the Hindu-Muslim problem could not be solved by meetings of Congress Muslims and unanimous resolutions, as these did not carry weight with the Muslim public or represent the policy of Indian Muslims.

The Muslim League expressed its willingness to collaborate with the Congress but emphasized that it was up to Congress leaders to address Muslim fears and suspicions. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, speaking at a session of the All-India Muslim Students' Federation, declared that the League was prepared to work with any group or party for the good of the country, but only on equal terms, stating that they would not be camp followers or a subject race under a Hindu Raj.

After 1937, communalism began to gain a broader popular base, mobilizing mass opinion and transforming into a mass movement characterized by aggressive, extremist politics among the urban lower middle classes. This shift required issues or slogans that could stir mass emotions. Due to its reactionary, upper-class foundation, communalism could not appeal to radical social issues, so it relied on religion and irrational sentiments of fear and hatred.

Throughout 1938, intermittent conversations and correspondence took place between Jinnah and Congress leaders. However, in December of that year, Subhas Bose, the Congress President, informed Jinnah that these discussions were not promoting communal unity but rather hindering the settlement of the communal problem. Jinnah maintained that any agreement between Congress and the Muslim League required Congress to recognize the Muslim League as the sole authoritative and representative political organization of Muslims in India. Congress refused this position, seeing it as implying that the Indian National Congress was a purely Hindu organization. Congress claimed to be a national organization representing all communities and was willing to address the Muslim League's complaints that were fair and reasonable, but nothing more.

In December 1938, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha and declared the Muslim League to be a communal organization whose political activities were anti-national and in conflict with Congress. Therefore, Muslim League members could not be elected to any Congress committee. However, the Provincial Congress Committees were urged to ensure adequate Muslim representation on local committees. The Working Committee met again at Bardoli in January 1939 and considered making a declaration on the communal problem to clarify its policy. It was decided that such a declaration would not be useful and that Congress should continue efforts to ensure justice for all communities and address doubts as they arose.

An “Instrument of Instructions” for Congress Ministries regarding the treatment of Muslims and other minority communities was prepared and discussed. This document reiterated Congress’s commitment to safeguarding the religious, cultural, and linguistic rights of minorities and outlined policies on the representation of Muslims and other minorities in public services and local and provincial bodies. Mahatma Gandhi also emphasized respecting minority sentiments in these matters in a July 1939 article in the *Harijan*.

Around the same time, Nehru initiated a Muslim mass contact campaign in several provinces. This move was interpreted by the Muslim League as an attempt to destroy Muslim unity and isolate the League. The Congress-League “war” intensified as political antagonisms developed sharply, with the federal scheme envisaged in the Government of India Act looming large before the country. The Congress agitation aimed at compelling the princes, who were to form an integral part of the federal scheme, to support Congress. This provoked the Muslim League, which announced at the 1938 Patna Session that interference by British Indian political parties in the affairs of the Muslim States would not be tolerated. During this period, provincial and all-India Muslim League conferences called on Muslims to fight for their rights, accusing the Hindu Congress of maliciously collaborating with the anti-Muslim British and predominantly Hindu Princes to damage Muslim interests.

The Outbreak of World War II

The idea of dividing India into communal regions was revived and carefully examined by Muslim League leaders. Plans were made to garner the sympathy of Islamic and other foreign countries on behalf of Indian

Muslims and to expose the perceived malevolence of Congress. When World War II broke out on September 3, 1939, the Governor-General announced the suspension of the federal scheme a week later, which was celebrated in Muslim League circles as a personal triumph for Jinnah.

When Britain unilaterally declared India a belligerent in the war without consulting Indian leaders, the Indian National Congress reacted with outrage. The Congress, which had been pushing for greater self-governance, saw this as a blatant disregard for Indian aspirations. Consequently, the Congress ministries in various provinces resigned in protest in October 1939. This marked a clear break between the Congress and the British government, and it set the stage for a more confrontational phase in the Indian struggle for independence.

The Congress's stance during this period was characterized by its demand for complete independence and the refusal to support the British war effort unless India was granted immediate dominion status. This position, however, was not universally shared, and the Congress found itself increasingly isolated, particularly as it faced internal and external challenges.

The Muslim League's Response

In contrast, the All-India Muslim League, under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, saw the war as an opportunity to further its objectives. The resignation of the Congress ministries was viewed by the League as a chance to consolidate its position as the sole representative of Muslims in India. Jinnah's strategy involved aligning more closely with the British, who were eager to secure support from Indian factions for the war effort.

The League's cooperation with the British was strategic. Jinnah sought to use the war as leverage to gain political concessions, particularly in securing separate electorates and ensuring that any future constitutional framework would recognize and protect the rights of Muslims as a distinct community. This period marked a significant deepening of communal politics in India, with the League increasingly advocating for the creation of Pakistan as a separate Muslim state.

Diverging Allegiances and Constitutional Implications

The diverging paths taken by the Congress and the Muslim League during World War II had profound implications for India's constitutional

development. The Congress's insistence on independence and its refusal to support the British war effort without significant concessions led to a series of repressive measures by the British, including the arrest of key Congress leaders. This weakened the Congress's immediate political influence but also galvanized popular support for its cause. On the other hand, the Muslim League's collaboration with the British enhanced its political standing, especially as the British sought to counterbalance the Congress's influence. The League's position was further strengthened by the Lahore Resolution of 1940, which formally articulated the demand for a separate Muslim state. This demand was rooted in the League's insistence that Muslims were a distinct nation with their own political aspirations, a stance that would eventually lead to the partition of India.

Distrust towards Gandhi and the Congress high command, which Jinnah denounced as a "Fascist Grand Council," continued to increase. The Muslim League started a strong agitation against Congress governments, accusing them of autocratic disregard of Muslim interests and highlighting both real and imaginary grievances of Muslims in Congress-governed provinces. This question of Congress "atrocities" on Muslims had been a concern since March 1938, when the Pirpur Committee was appointed to investigate Muslim complaints against the Congress governments of Bihar, the United Provinces, and the Central Provinces. The Pirpur Report was considered by the League at the December 1938 Patna Session, resulting in a resolution demanding immediate redress of Muslim grievances and authorizing the League's Working Committee to resort to direct action if necessary.

In August 1939, the Council of the Muslim League passed a resolution at Delhi deploring the failure of the Viceroy and Governors of Congress-administered provinces to use their special powers to protect minorities from Congress "tyranny". In October 1939, Rajendra Prasad offered to have the Federal Chief Justice or another similar judicial figure investigate any specific charges formulated by the Muslim League against Congress Ministries. However, Jinnah responded that he had already presented the entire case to the Governor-General for adjudication. Gandhi expressed regret over Jinnah's rejection of Rajendra Prasad's offer of friendship. He observed that the fear of the so-called minority was unfounded because the majority was ineffective without military strength and could only function under British support. Gandhi's arguments did not sway Jinnah, who, in December 1939, demanded the appointment of a Royal Commission with

judicial personnel from His Majesty's High Court, chaired by a Law Lord of the Privy Council, to investigate Muslim charges against the Congress Ministries.

The Congress Working Committee, seeking a settlement with the Muslim League, appointed Nehru to discuss the communal problem with Jinnah. However, before negotiations could resume, the Congress Ministries resigned in October-November 1939, protesting India's association with Britain's war policy, leading to the suspension of provincial autonomy in provinces governed by Congress.

In response, Jinnah declared December 22nd a "Day of Deliverance and Thanksgiving," celebrating the fall of what he termed the tyrannical Congress governments, accusing them of destroying Muslim culture and suppressing Muslim rights. Nehru, feeling that any further attempts at negotiation would be futile, agreed with Rajendra Prasad that further conversations with Jinnah could be misunderstood both within and outside Congress. Gandhi, in frustration, remarked, "Let the Muslims spoil the position: we will allow them to spoil it." Consequently, Congress ceased direct approaches to the Muslim League for resolving the communal issue. Nehru, in a letter to Krishna Menon, succinctly captured the situation, noting that the communal issue was dominant, and talks with Jinnah were no longer feasible. He suggested that Jinnah deliberately avoided discussions to evade a political decision.

The interplay between the Congress and the Muslim League during the early years of World War II played a critical role in shaping the trajectory of India's constitutional development. The differing allegiances and strategies of these two major political entities not only deepened communal divides but also set the stage for the eventual partition of India. The war period highlighted the complexities of India's path to independence, where the quest for self-governance was inextricably linked with communal identities and the competing visions of India's future.

British Declaration 1940

The British declaration on 8th August, 1940, also known as the "August Offer" was a significant proposal made by Viceroy Lord Linlithgow in 1940, during a critical phase of World War II. At a time when Britain were facing mounting challenges in the war, especially after the fall of France, there was a renewed attempt to seek Indian cooperation in the British war

effort. It stated that the British Government would not coerce large and powerful elements in India's national life into submission to a government system they directly denied. Jinnah interpreted this as clear recognition of the special status and importance of the Muslim League.

In October 1940, Congress launched the civil disobedience campaign to protest the Viceroy's refusal to permit unrestricted freedom to Congress speakers to speak against the war. Jinnah was convinced that the campaign was a deliberate attempt to pressure and diminish the Muslim League's influence, further deepening the divide between the two major political entities in India.

Key Provisions of the August Offer

1. **Expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council:** The proposal aimed to include more Indian representatives in the council, granting Indians a more significant role in governance.
2. **Establishment of an Advisory War Council:** This council was meant to involve Indian leaders in discussions regarding the war and defense efforts.
3. **Minority Rights and Veto Power:** The British government emphasized giving full weight to minority opinions, particularly those of the All-India Muslim League. The offer essentially provided the League with a veto, as no constitutional changes would be made without their agreement.
4. **Constitution-Making After the War:** The British recognized the right of Indians to frame their own constitution once the war concluded.

The rift between Congress and the Muslim League widened further during 1940, culminating in Jinnah's demand for a separate nation for Muslims. Jinnah asserted that the problem in India was not merely inter-communal but international, and Muslims were a distinct nation deserving their own homeland. This led to the historic Lahore Resolution in March 1940, where the Muslim League called for independent states in Muslim-majority regions.

Jinnah's resolute stance created a formidable challenge for Congress. Their attempts to sway Muslim opinion through "Independent Muslim" conferences were ineffective and only deepened communal divisions. In July 1940, Congress offered to cooperate in forming a provisional

National Government if Britain immediately declared India's complete independence. This proposal included Rajagopalachari's offer to let the Muslim League nominate a Prime Minister. However, Jinnah dismissed this as a ploy to establish a permanent Hindu majority government.

The offer came at a time when Britain needed India's full support in the war effort. The change in British leadership with Winston Churchill becoming prime minister and the deteriorating situation in Europe made Indian cooperation more critical. However, the August Offer failed to satisfy either the Congress or the Muslim League, leading to continued political deadlock.

The British Government's August 8th declaration, not to coerce any significant group in India was seen by Jinnah as acknowledgment of the Muslim League's importance. In response to Congress's civil disobedience campaign launched in October 1940, Jinnah accused Congress of attempting to pressure the British to disregard Muslim interests. He argued that the campaign was an anti-Muslim move aimed at forcing the British to revoke assurances to Muslims and other minorities.

The culmination of Congress-League disagreement came when the Muslim League decided to amend its constitution at the Madras session. The new goal was the establishment of Pakistan, replacing the previous aim of full independence through a federation of free democratic states. This marked a definitive shift towards a separate Muslim nation, solidifying the League's commitment to partition.

Despite its failure, the August Offer marked a shift in British policy by formally recognizing the possibility of Indians framing their own constitution post-war, laying the groundwork for future discussions about India's political future.

Muslim League: Lahore Declaration

The Lahore Resolution, also known as Pakistan Declaration was a direct response to the British offer and the prevailing political environment. The Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had increasingly felt marginalized in Indian politics, especially in the face of Congress's growing dominance and its claims to represent all communities, including Muslims.

The resolution called for the creation of “independent states” in the north-western and eastern zones of India, where Muslims were in the majority. This was a clear departure from earlier demands for safeguards and minority rights within a united India. The Lahore Resolution was rooted in the belief that Muslims constituted a separate nation, with distinct cultural, religious, and political identities that could not be adequately represented in a Hindu-majority India.

On March 23, 1940, the Lahore Resolution was formally presented by A.K. Fazlul Huq, the Premier of Bengal, and approved by the Muslim League leadership. The resolution stated:

1. **Separate States for Muslims:** The resolution proposed that geographically contiguous areas with a Muslim majority in north-western and eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states, where the constituent units would be autonomous and sovereign.
2. **Safeguards for Minorities:** The resolution also recognized the importance of protecting the rights of religious minorities within these Muslim-majority regions, ensuring that adequate safeguards would be provided for them.

Notably, the term “Pakistan” was not explicitly mentioned in the resolution, but the concept of separate Muslim states laid the groundwork for what would later become Pakistan.

Background

In 1940, the rift between the Congress and the Muslim League became irreparable. Jinnah’s thoughts had been increasingly inclined toward separatism, and this culminated in a dramatic turn during the Muslim League’s plenary session at Lahore in March. Jinnah delivered a speech that shocked the Indian political landscape by making an unambiguous demand for the partition of India along communal lines into regions with sovereign powers.

The Muslim League, influenced by Jinnah’s views, passed the resolution demanding the division of India into “autonomous national States.” The resolution called for geographically contiguous units to be demarcated into regions where Muslims were in the majority, specifically in the north-western and eastern zones of India. These areas were to be grouped into “independent States” with autonomous and sovereign constituent groups.

The resolution also insisted on effective and mandatory safeguards for protecting Muslim minority rights and interests in minority areas, to be included in the constitution, and similar protections for non-Muslim minorities in the Muslim zones.

With this, the demand for Pakistan was formally articulated, and the path towards partition was firmly set with Jinnah leading the charge. He had raised before Congress eyes the terrifying specter of the disruption of the country and made plain his determination to resist the demand for independence as conceived by the Congress, even if this meant the continuance of British rule. Jinnah had taken a firmly communal stand, and by publicly endorsing the Pakistan scheme, he strongly appealed to the Muslim masses. His prestige among his coreligionists reached its zenith at this juncture.

Congress efforts to undermine the Muslim League and split Muslim opinion through a series of “Independent Muslim” conferences failed dismally, only exacerbating communal ill-feeling. In July 1940, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution offering to cooperate in forming a provisional National Government at the Centre if Britain made an immediate and unequivocal declaration acknowledging India’s complete independence. This suggestion was further bolstered by Rajagopalachari’s “sporting offer” (C.R. Formula) to the Muslim League. The proposal aimed to bridge the gap between the Congress’s vision of a united India and the League’s demand for a separate Pakistan. It is crucial to understand this formula in the context of the political climate of the time, where communal tensions were high, and the future of India’s governance was under intense negotiation.

The C.R. Formula: Key Provisions

The C.R. Formula sought to find a compromise between the INC and AIML on the issue of Pakistan. The main provisions of the proposal included:

1. **Formation of a National Government:** The formula proposed the immediate formation of a National Government at the center, which would include representatives from both the Congress and the Muslim League.
2. **Plebiscite in Muslim-Majority Areas:** After World War II, a plebiscite would be held in Muslim-majority provinces (like the

North-West Frontier Province, Sindh, and Bengal) to determine whether they wanted to form a separate sovereign state (i.e., Pakistan).

3. **Mutual Agreement on Defense and Essential Matters:** The regions that opted for secession would be required to reach a mutual agreement with India on defense, communication, and other essential shared services.
4. **Protection of Minorities:** The formula emphasized the protection of religious and cultural rights of minorities in the regions that decided to secede.

The Significance of the Lahore Resolution in the Context of the British Declaration

The timing of the Lahore Resolution was significant. The British government's August Offer aimed to placate both the Congress and the League by offering constitutional concessions, but it failed to address the Muslim League's demand for separate Muslim representation and adequate safeguards. The League's response was to shift its focus from seeking protection within a united India to demanding a separate state altogether.

The Lahore Resolution, therefore, can be seen as a strategic move by the Muslim League in response to the limited scope of the British declaration. It reflected the League's growing realization that constitutional reforms under British rule would not guarantee the political autonomy and representation they sought within a united India. Furthermore, the resolution highlighted the failure of the British government to bridge the communal divide, inadvertently strengthening the League's stance.

By not fully addressing Muslim concerns in the August Offer, the British unintentionally pushed the League towards a more radical position, which eventually culminated in the demand for Pakistan. The Lahore Resolution of 1940 symbolized the formal adoption of the demand for a separate Muslim state, marking a departure from earlier efforts to find a compromise within a united India. The British declaration of 1940, while intending to appease Indian political aspirations, inadvertently catalyzed this shift by failing to fully address the distinct political ambitions of the Muslim League. The resolution set the stage for the eventual partition of India in 1947, reshaping the subcontinent's political landscape.

Cripps Mission (1942)

The Cripps Mission was a crucial event in the history of India's struggle for independence. It was launched in March 1942 during World War II when the British government, facing significant military challenges in Asia, sought to secure Indian support for the war effort. Led by Sir Stafford Cripps, a senior British politician and member of the War Cabinet, the mission aimed to negotiate a deal with Indian leaders that would ensure their cooperation during the war in exchange for post-war constitutional reforms.

Background: The Context of World War II

By early 1942, the situation in the war had become precarious for the British. Japan's rapid advance in Southeast Asia and its capture of Singapore posed a direct threat to British-controlled India. The British government realized that Indian cooperation was essential to defending the subcontinent. However, the Indian National Congress had adopted a stance of non-cooperation due to its frustration with Britain's refusal to grant meaningful self-governance.

At the same time, the British were facing growing demands from the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which had become increasingly vocal about its demand for a separate Muslim state. The British government, aware of these tensions and the potential for unrest, decided to send Cripps to India to offer political concessions that would placate both the Congress and the League.

The Cripps Proposal

The key elements of the Cripps proposal were as follows:

1. **Dominion Status:** After the war, India would be granted dominion status, allowing it full self-governance while remaining within the British Commonwealth.
2. **Constitutional Assembly:** An elected body would be set up to frame a new constitution for India. This constitution would be accepted only if a majority of Indian states and provinces agreed to it.
3. **Right to Secede:** Provinces and princely states were given the right to opt out of the Indian Union and either retain their separate status or form a separate federation.

4. **Interim Government:** An interim government would be formed with Indian representation, though the British would retain control over defense and key areas.

Reactions to the Cripps Mission

The Cripps Mission was met with disappointment and rejection by both major Indian political groups:

- **Indian National Congress:** The Congress, led by Mahatma Gandhi, rejected the proposal, with Gandhi famously describing it as a “post-dated cheque on a crashing bank.” Congress objected to the provision that allowed provinces to secede, which they feared would lead to the fragmentation of India. They also criticized the lack of real power for Indians in the proposed interim government.
- **Muslim League:** The League, under Jinnah, also rejected the proposal. Although the offer included the option for provinces to secede, which aligned with the League’s demand for Pakistan, Jinnah felt that the proposal did not clearly guarantee a separate Muslim state and did not meet the League’s expectations.

The Failure and Consequences of the Cripps Mission

The Cripps Mission ultimately failed to achieve its objectives, as it did not satisfy either the Congress or the Muslim League. The rejection of the mission deepened the political deadlock in India, contributing to a worsening relationship between Indian leaders and the British government. Soon after the failure of the mission, the Congress launched the Quit India Movement in August 1942, intensifying the demand for immediate independence. The movement led to widespread protests, arrests, and repression, marking a decisive shift towards India’s eventual independence.

Significance of the Cripps Mission

The Cripps Mission was significant for several reasons:

1. It highlighted the growing irreconcilable differences between the Congress and the Muslim League, particularly over the issue of a united or divided India.
2. The mission’s failure demonstrated that the British government was unwilling to offer substantial concessions regarding India’s future

governance while retaining control during the war.

3. The mission's rejection laid the groundwork for the escalation of the independence movement, as the Congress resorted to more radical measures, notably the Quit India Movement.
4. The right to secede granted to provinces hinted at the eventual partition of India, as it was a precursor to the demand for Pakistan.

The British Government had accepted the principle of Indian self-determination in the "uncertain" postwar future, but certain provisions were introduced which could potentially jeopardize the development of a free and united national government and the establishment of a democratic state. Criticizing the introduction of "non-representative elements," specifically the Princes' appointees, into the constitution-making body, it warned that the plan might create "enclaves" where British authority would still prevail and where it was likely that "foreign armed forces" would be maintained.

The acceptance of the "novel principle of non-accession" for a Province would create an "apple of discord" and endanger the conception of Indian unity. It maintained further that the question was not one of compelling any part of the population to enter the Indian Union against its expressed will, but of "creating conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life." No changes which "would result in fresh problems being created" should be made.

The new British plan for the future of India could hardly be accepted by the Indian National Congress unless the latter was prepared to abandon the principles which had led to its foundation and inspired its entire history. There remained the question of the interim government of India during the war. This was, after all, the immediate problem and the crux in relation to the task of organizing the full participation of India in the war on the side of the United Nations. Congress, in its reply to Cripps, recognized that "in today's grave crisis it is the present that counts." It therefore based its rejection of the British plan on a consideration not only of its effects on India's future but also on its adequacy for the present.

The Congress response to the Cripps Mission highlighted several critical points of contention:

1. **Non-representative Elements:** The introduction of Princes' appointees into the constitution-making body was criticized, as it

would create enclaves with lingering British authority and potential foreign armed forces, undermining the development of a unified democratic state.

2. **Non-accession Principle:** Accepting this principle for any province was seen as a threat to Indian unity, creating discord and endangering the formation of a cohesive national government.
3. **Conditions for Unity:** The focus was on creating conditions that would foster a cooperative national life, rather than imposing unity on any unwilling parts of the population.
4. **Encouragement of Separation:** The British proposals were perceived to encourage attempts at separation right from the start of the Union, fostering friction at a time when cooperation was crucial.

The Congress found these provisions unacceptable as they contradicted the principles that had inspired the party's foundation and history. The immediate concern was the interim government during the war, as organizing India's full participation in the war was seen as essential. Thus, the rejection of the British plan was based not only on its future implications but also on its adequacy for the present, emphasizing the need to address the immediate crisis effectively. In conclusion, the Cripps Mission, while unsuccessful in its immediate objectives, played a critical role in shaping the final stages of the Indian independence movement. Its failure exposed the deepening communal divisions and the British government's inability to resolve them, leading to a more determined push for independence from Indian leaders.

Quit India Movement: A Historical Turning Point

The Quit India Movement, launched on August 8, 1942, came at a time of global turmoil. World War II was raging in the West and East, and anti-colonial movements were gaining momentum across the world. In India, the struggle for independence was reaching its peak under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who emphasized non-violence and Satyagraha. The Quit India Movement emerged in response to the British government's failure to address Indian demands for self-governance and its decision to involve India in World War II without consulting Indian leaders. The Congress, which had supported the British war effort in exchange for a promise of post-war constitutional reforms, was disillusioned by the British refusal to grant substantial concessions. The movement's objective

was to demand an immediate end to British rule in India and to mobilize mass support for this cause.

Impact on Indian Constitutional Development

1. **Intensification of the Independence Struggle:** The Quit India Movement marked a turning point in the struggle for independence. It galvanized mass mobilization and intensified the demand for complete independence, shifting the focus from constitutional reforms to outright sovereignty. The movement demonstrated the widespread discontent with British rule and the growing political consciousness among Indians.
2. **Suppression and Repression:** The British government's response to the Quit India Movement was marked by severe repression. The movement was met with widespread arrests of Congress leaders, mass detentions, and brutal suppression of protests. This repression, while temporarily stifling organized resistance, also hardened Indian resolve and underscored the unsustainable nature of British control.
3. **Impact on Political Dynamics:** The movement significantly impacted the political landscape in India. The arrest and imprisonment of Congress leaders left a leadership vacuum, which allowed other political groups, including the All India Muslim League, to gain prominence. The Muslim League capitalized on the Congress's predicament to advance its demand for a separate Muslim state, eventually leading to the Lahore Resolution of 1940 and the demand for Pakistan.
4. **Accelerated Constitutional Changes:** The Quit India Movement and the associated unrest highlighted the urgent need for political reform in India. The British government, recognizing the untenability of continuing colonial rule in the face of growing unrest, began to reassess its policies. This reassessment eventually led to the Cripps Mission in 1942, which, despite its failure, signaled the British intent to negotiate India's future. The movement set the stage for subsequent negotiations and plans for independence, culminating in the Indian Independence Act of 1947.
5. **Rise of Mass Movements and Leadership:** The movement demonstrated the effectiveness of mass mobilization in achieving political objectives. It also highlighted the role of leadership in

inspiring and directing public sentiment. The Congress's ability to mobilize millions in support of the movement underscored the importance of grassroots support in the struggle for independence.

6. **Constitutional Framework for Independence:** The agitation and unrest created by the Quit India Movement contributed to the urgency of finding a constitutional solution. The British government's need to address Indian aspirations led to the formation of the Cripps Mission and eventually to the proposal for independence. The movement's pressures made it clear that any future constitutional framework would need to address the demand for full self-governance and accommodate the diverse political and communal aspirations in India.

Rising Momentum for Freedom

India's long history of mass movements had prepared the ground for the Quit India Movement. Despite the immediate arrest of top Congress leaders within 24 hours of the movement's announcement, the movement did not falter. It led to the rise of new leaders from various sections of society. Mass protests, strikes, and demonstrations erupted across the country, targeting British institutions and disrupting the administration. Government offices were occupied, Congress flags were hoisted on government buildings, and students, workers, and peasants actively participated in the struggle.

The Quit India Movement saw ordinary Indians stepping up, including farmers, factory workers, journalists, students, religious figures, and Dalits, all of whom played pivotal roles. It was not just a fight against British rule but also a collective awakening of the Indian masses. The movement gave rise to prominent leaders like Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Jai Prakash Narayan, and Aruna Asaf Ali, who emerged as key figures during this period. Parallel governments were established in several regions, with figures like Chittu Pandey in Balia and Y.B. Chavan and Nana Patil in Satara leading local administrations against British rule.

One of the unique aspects of the Quit India Movement was the significant participation of women, who played leadership roles. Matangini Hazra led a procession of 6,000 people, mostly women, to storm a local police station and was martyred with the Tricolour in her hands. Sucheta Kripalani, who would later become India's first woman Chief Minister, was a prominent figure. In Orissa, Nandini Devi and Sashibala Devi led

the charge, while in Assam, young girls like Kanaklata Baruah and Kahuli Devi laid down their lives. Usha Mehta's contribution was distinct as she operated the Secret Congress Radio in Mumbai, spreading news and messages despite British censorship.

Conclusion

The Quit India Movement was a watershed moment in India's freedom struggle, profoundly influencing the course of Indian constitutional development. By shifting the focus from constitutional reforms to the demand for complete independence, the movement accelerated the end of British rule and set the stage for the creation of an independent India. It also highlighted the need for a political solution that addressed the aspirations of diverse Indian communities, ultimately leading to the formulation of the Indian Independence Act of 1947 and the establishment of India as a sovereign nation. The movement's legacy is reflected in the democratic and constitutional framework that emerged in post-independence India, rooted in the principles of self-determination and popular sovereignty.

The Quit India Movement was not just a protest against foreign rule but a moment of mass awakening for Indian society. Despite the lack of central leadership due to widespread arrests, the movement was marked by spontaneous participation across all sections of society. It showcased the readiness of Indians to break free from colonial shackles, paving the way for the eventual achievement of independence in 1947.

Wavell Plan and Simla Conference (June, 1945)

The war in Europe had ended but it was raging in Asia. Japan was still unbeaten. World attention was now focused on the Eastern front. India was to be the base of military operations against Japan. The British now more than ever before needed the moral and material support of the Indian people. It was the one reason why the British Government made a new offer for settlement. The other two reasons were the pressure from the Russian Government and the accusation by the Labour Party that Churchill was incapable of handling the constitutional crisis in India. Lord Linlithgow completed his term in October, 1943, and Lord Wavell became the new incumbent of the office of Viceroy of India. Soon after his appointment Wavell announced that he was carrying bagful of presents for the Indian people. But after taking over the charge, he did nothing except releasing Mahatma Gandhi from jail in May, 1944.

Wavell flew to London on 21st March, 1945 to consult His Majesty's Government on Indian affairs for about a month and a half. During this period, the hostilities in Europe had ended and the entire attention of Allies was diverted towards Japan. This necessitated the return of Mr. Wavell to India and Mr. Amery, The secretary of state for India and Lord Wavell simultaneously issued a statement which is known as Amery-Wavell Plan of Simply Wavell Plan. Wavell came back on 4th June, 1945. On 4th June, 1945 he published his new plan known as Wavell Plan.

Main Provisions of Wavell Plan

This plan was mainly related to Viceroy's Executive Council and the following provisions were proposed:

- (1) Lord Wavell's Plan was a sort of interim arrangement till a new Constitution for India was framed and agreed to by Indians themselves. The highlight of the Plan was the reconstitution of Viceroy's Executive Council. It was to be largely Indian in character and composition, and more representative of the organized political opinion in the country. It was to have only two Englishmen the Viceroy acting as its President and the Commander-in-Chief holding war portfolio. The Executive was to include equal number of Caste Hindus and the Muslims.
- (2) The proposals, as Wavell said in his broadcast, were designed to ease the political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-government.
- (3) Leaving the border arrangement and tribal affairs, all other affairs were to be looked after by the Indians themselves.
- (4) The new Executive Council was to work under the Act of 1935. Lord Wavell, however, assured that he would not exercise his overriding powers unreasonably. He also promised that if at all the Secretary of State interfered, it would be not in British interests but in the interests of India.
- (5) Since the Viceroy had to perform the dual role of the representative of the Crown and Head of the Indian Executive, the Wavell Plan proposed to appoint a High Commissioner to look after Great Britain's commercial interests in India.
- (6) The Executive Council was to work like a Provisional National Government

- (7) The formation of the Interim Government was in no way to prejudice the framing of a New Constitution at some later stage by the Indians themselves.
- (8) The Provinces, which were being administered by the Governors under Section 93, were to have ministries again formed on coalition basis.
- (9) All these changes will be introduced without making any change in the existing statute law except for one amendment to the 9th schedule to the Act of 1935 requiring that not less than three members of the Council must have at least 10 years' service under Crown in India.

Simla Conference and its Failure

With most of the political leaders in jail, political life of the country was practically at a standstill. In order to enable the Congress leaders to participate in the conference and also make the atmosphere congenial for a settlement, Lord Wavell ordered the release of all the members of the Congress Working Committee. He sent invitations to 21 leaders including the former Chief Ministers of Provincial Governments, the leaders of the Congress and the League in the Council of State, Gandhiji and Jinnah and one representative each of the Sikhs and the Scheduled Castes. The political conference began its deliberations in Simla on 29th June, 1945.

The question of parity of Caste Hindus and Muslims in the Viceroy's Executive also created some problem. The Congress, although quite unwillingly, agreed to equal representation of Hindus and Muslims in the Cabinet, it was certainly not prepared to forgo its right of appointing nationalist Muslims. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, however, stuck to the point that only the League was competent to send Muslim Representatives in the Executive. Dawn, the official organ of the Muslim League, on 15th June, 1945 said that with regard to Muslim Society, the Mussalmans will tolerate no infiltration of non-League stooges to humour any party.' Had the Congress submitted to this unreasonable demand of the League, then it would have lost its national character and Mohammad Ali Jinnah would have characterised the Congress as a purely Hindu organisation. The Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and the Punjab Chief Minister Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, strongly protested against League's exclusive claim of sending Muslims to the reconstituted Cabinet. Mr. Tiwana was intending to send one Muslim to represent the Unionist Party

in the Cabinet. The Congress too had in mind to offer a couple of seats to the Nationalist Muslims. Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah refused to budge from the stand he had taken. He could not agree to the appointment in Executive Council of Muslims who did not belong to ukelele. The talks crashed on the rock of communalism. Lord Wavell announced the failure of conference on 14th July, 1945.

After the failure of talks, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad issued a statement at Simla. He declared that the Viceroy had assured him "In his first interview that no party to the conference would be allowed to obstruct settlement out of wilfulness. Everyone knew what Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah would do and everyone believed that against that possibility the Viceroy had armed himself with authority to deal with him appropriately. Yet Wavell's hand was stayed at the last moment even as Cripps' was."

Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah had his own explanation regarding the failure of Simla Conference. At a Press Conference on 14th July, 1945, he remarked: "On a final examination and analysis of the Wavell Plan, we found that it was a snare. There was the combination consisting of Gandhi-Hindu Congress, who stood for India's Hindu National Unity, Lord Wavell, and Glancy-Khizr, who were bent upon creating disruption among the Mussalmans in Punjab, and we were sought to be pushed into this arrangement, by which, if we had agreed to, as proposed by Lord Wavell, we would have signed our death warrant."

"On the top of this came the last straw on the camel's back, that even about the five members of the Muslim Bloc, which were allotted to us community-wise, which is the essence of the Wavell proposals, we were told that the Muslim League was not entitled to nominate all the Muslim Representatives as our chosen spokesmen and there were two claimants-the Congress which claimed two, and Glancy-khizr on behalf of the Punjab claimed one. This move on the part of these two went at the very root and the very existence of the Muslim League regarding its position, character and status. But finally we broke as Lord Wavell insisted upon his having one non-Leaguer, a Nominee of Malik Khizr Hayat Khan, representing the Punjab Muslims."

I.N.A. Trial, November, 1945

Wavell's Plan was a sincere attempt to lead the country to the goal of independence. The failure of Simla Conference plunged the country into

despair once again. Nevertheless, it led to the release of all the members of the Congress Working Committee. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel after their release heartily praised the doings of the people and also paid homage to the martyrs of the revolt of 1942 and thus removed the gloom of despair. Moreover, the trial of I.N.A. personnel and their magnificent defense by our leaders further enthused the people. The trial was staged in the Red Fort, Delhi. Three officers who stood in the dock were Dhillon, Sehgal and Shah Nawaz. They were convicted for defection from the British forces and joining the Indian National Army of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The three Generals one a Hindu, other a Sikh and the third a Muslim-fell into British hands after the fall of Japan on 14th August, 1945. In order to defend the brave sons of soil, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru appeared in the court donned as a barrister. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Bhulabhai Desai also acted as defense counsels. In spite of their best efforts, the judges found the accused guilty and awarded death sentences. All the three were, however, released by the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Claude Auchinleck.

The release of the three I.N.A. accused meant another political victory of the Congress. The inspiring arguments of the defence counsels roused a wave of patriotism in every part of the country. Mr. Bhulabhai Desai in the course of his arguments asserted that it was the birthright of a slave people to take up arms against the foreign rulers. Another good outcome of the trial was that it dispelled the fear of British imperialism from Indian hearts. Thirdly, it had its stimulating effect on the Indian army. The Government was convinced that it would be foolish to expect faithfulness and loyalty from the Indian forces. The Naval Mutiny in February, 1946, further impressed on the British overlords the desirability of leaving India to Indians themselves.

Broadcasts By Lord Wavell and Attlee

Labour Party comes to power in Great Britain. On 10th July, 1945, Labour Party in England came to power. Mr. Attlee replaced Churchill as Prime Minister and Mr. Pethick Lawrence became the Secretary of State in place of Mr. Amery. Both Attlee and Lawrence were in sympathy with India's demand for self-government. The change in British Cabinet was a good augury for India.

In August, 1945, Lord Wavell summoned all the Governors of the Provinces for consultations. It was decided to hold elections. On 25th

August, 1945 the Viceroy flew to London conferring with Labour Leaders returned to India on 18th September, 1945. Next day he declared that the elections which had been postponed owing to the outbreak of war, would be held in coming winter. The British King in his address to the British Parliament declared that in accordance with the promises already made to my Indian people, my government will do their utmost to promote to conjunction with the leaders of Indian opinion, early realization of full self-government in India. The Viceroy also declared on behalf of the Crown that a constitution-making body would be set up soon after discussing the matter with the State Representatives. He expressed his hope that not before long the Provinces would again have responsible governments.

Results of the Election in India. During the winter months of the year 1945, elections were conducted in all the provinces. The Congress made the famous 'Quit India' resolution as the central issue in its election manifesto and gained spectacular success. It swept the polls in general constituencies. It, however, could not gain much in Muslim Constituencies. The Muslim League captured 446 Muslim seats out of 495. Even the Unionist Party in the Punjab had a bad luck and it lost most of the seats to the League. The Congress succeeded in forming ministries in seven out of eleven Provinces. In North West Frontier Province, the Red Shirts formed the Ministry headed by Dr. Khan Sahib, who was a Congressman. The Muslim League seized power in Sind and Bengal. In the Punjab, a coalition Ministry was formed by Khizr Hayat Khan with the support of the Congress and the Sikhs led by Akali Party.

Cabinet Mission Plan

The failure of the Shimla Conference led to widespread frustration in India. However, the arrival of the Cabinet Mission in 1946 brought a sense of hope, as it represented a potential solution to the ongoing constitutional crisis. This shift in British policy towards India was driven by international factors, particularly the complications and hostilities in Europe, which compelled the British government to reconsider India's demand for responsible government. Prime Minister Clement Attlee's decision to send the Cabinet Mission was a significant step in addressing the constitutional issues and seeking a compromise between the Congress and the Muslim League.

Regarding the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, the Cabinet Mission rejected it for several reasons:

1. **Communal Minorities:** The proposed creation of Pakistan would not resolve the issue of communal minorities. In the North-West zone of Pakistan, about 38% of the population would be non-Muslim, while in the North-Eastern zone, non-Muslims would constitute 48%. This would result in significant minority communities within Pakistan itself.
2. **Non-Muslim Districts:** The predominantly non-Muslim districts in Bengal, Assam, and Punjab would be adversely affected by the demand for Pakistan, as they would be included in a state where they did not align religiously or culturally.
3. **Division of Punjab and Bengal:** The creation of Pakistan would require dividing Punjab and Bengal, which would be detrimental to the large populations in these provinces. The division would be against their economic, social, and political interests.
4. **Disruption of Infrastructure:** Partitioning India would disintegrate vital systems like transportation, postal, and telegraph networks, creating logistical chaos and disrupting the country's unity.
5. **Division of Armed Forces:** Splitting the Indian armed forces would lead to serious security risks and instability in the region, creating vulnerabilities for both India and the proposed Pakistan.
6. **Princely States' Dilemma:** The Princely States would face difficulty choosing between joining Pakistan or India, leading to confusion and possibly even conflicts regarding their allegiance.
7. **Geographical Challenges:** The proposed Pakistan's two parts (West and East) would be geographically separated by a vast distance and would rely heavily on India for trade, communication, and transport, making them dependent on India's goodwill.

The Cabinet Mission Plan thus concluded that partition was not a viable solution and recommended an alternative approach to accommodate the interests of all communities while preserving India's unity. The Cabinet Mission of 1946 proposed a constitutional framework to ensure India's unity while addressing communal tensions and the demands of various communities. The recommendations were as follows:

1. **Union of India:** The Mission proposed a Union of India, which would include both British India and the Princely States. The Union would handle critical subjects like foreign affairs, defense, and communications and have the necessary financial powers to

manage these functions. The Union would consist of an Executive and a Legislature comprising representatives from British India and the States. Decisions on major communal issues in the Legislature would require a majority vote.

2. **Provincial Autonomy:** Provinces would have full autonomy over subjects not reserved for the Union, retaining significant control over their governance.
3. **Residuary Powers:** Any powers not specifically assigned to the Union would rest with the provinces, giving them significant authority over regional matters.
4. **Provincial Grouping:** Provinces could form Groups with their own Executive and Legislature. Each Group would determine its common provincial subjects. The proposed Grouping was:
 - **Group A:** Hindu-majority provinces, including Madras, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, and Central Provinces.
 - **Group B:** Muslim-majority provinces in the North-West, including Punjab, Sindh, and the North-West Frontier Province.
 - **Group C:** Bengal and Assam, where Muslims had significant representation.
5. **Special Arrangements for Chief Commissioner's Provinces:** The Chief Commissioners' Provinces were also assigned to specific Groups. Delhi, Ajmer, and Marwar were included in Group A, while Baluchistan was included in Group B.
6. **Constituent Assembly:** The plan proposed the formation of a Constituent Assembly to draft India's constitution. Members would be elected by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, and adult suffrage was excluded to avoid delays. The Assembly members would be divided into three categories: General, Muslim, and Sikh, each electing its representatives based on proportional population distribution (roughly one member per million people). The plan allocated 292 members from British India, 4 from the Chief Commissioner's Provinces, and up to 93 from the Indian States.

Overall, while the Cabinet Mission Plan was an attempt to balance competing demands, its proposals highlighted the deep communal rifts and ultimately set the stage for further negotiations, leading eventually to the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan.

The Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 not only focused on the formation of a Constituent Assembly and the grouping of provinces but also laid out provisions for a treaty with Britain and the status of Indian princely states after independence. Key aspects of these provisions included:

1. **Treaty with Britain:** The Constituent Assembly was expected to conclude a treaty with the British Government to address various issues arising from the transfer of power. This treaty was meant to ensure a smooth transition and settle matters like the status of British officers, defense agreements, and financial obligations.
2. **Paramountcy and Indian States:** The Mission declared that once the new constitution came into effect, the British government would cease to exercise powers of paramountcy over the Indian princely states. Paramountcy referred to the British Crown's authority over the princely states, which included oversight and intervention in their affairs. With the end of British rule, all rights and obligations associated with paramountcy would revert to the Indian states.
 - As a result, the political arrangements between the princely states and British India would be terminated. The states would no longer be bound by treaties they had with the British, leaving them to decide whether to join the Union of India, Pakistan, or remain independent.
3. **Interim Government:** The Cabinet Mission also proposed the establishment of an Interim Government to govern India during the transitional period until the constitution was finalized. This government was to be composed of Indian leaders representing all major political parties. The idea was to have a coalition government where important portfolios would be managed by Indian leaders, reflecting the diversity of political opinions and ensuring inclusive governance.

The Cabinet Mission's provisions for the princely states and the interim government were crucial steps towards India's independence. The plan intended to create a unified Indian state while addressing the complexities of integrating princely states and ensuring collaboration among different political factions during the critical period leading to independence.

The **Cabinet Mission Plan** of 1946 played a crucial role in shaping the constitutional development of India and guiding the process of transferring power from the British to Indian leaders. Here are some key points that highlight its significance:

Importance of the Cabinet Mission Plan

1. **Foundation for Constitutional Development:** The plan laid the groundwork for framing a constitution for India by recommending the creation of a Constituent Assembly. The assembly would be elected by provincial legislatures and represent diverse communities. It aimed to establish a constitution based on democratic principles, reflecting the strength of the people.
2. **Idea of Pakistan:** The Cabinet Mission Plan is also significant because it addressed the demand for Pakistan. While it rejected the notion of a separate Pakistan, it recognized the communal divide and proposed a framework for regional autonomy. It suggested a grouping system where provinces with a Muslim majority could form their own groups while remaining part of a united India.
3. **Federal Structure:** The plan proposed a federal structure with a two-tier system consisting of:
 - **Union Level:** The central government would manage foreign affairs, defense, and communications.
 - **Provincial Autonomy:** Provinces were given autonomy in all other subjects and had the freedom to form groups based on their regional interests.
4. **Balancing National Unity and Regional Autonomy:** The Cabinet Mission Plan sought to maintain India's national unity while accommodating regional aspirations. It was an attempt to balance the interests of various communities, which was vital in a country as diverse as India.

The Cabinet Mission Plan was a significant milestone in British India's constitutional history. It charted a path for the peaceful transfer of power and set the stage for India's independence. Although both the Congress and the Muslim League initially accepted the plan, differences soon emerged. Disagreements over the interpretation of the grouping clauses and the plan for an interim government ultimately led to conflicts. The Congress formed an interim government under Jawaharlal Nehru in September 1946, which the Muslim League joined reluctantly. However, the League soon withdrew from the Constituent Assembly, leading to a deadlock.

In summary, while the Cabinet Mission Plan was an earnest attempt to resolve India's political deadlock and preserve unity, the rising tensions between the Congress and the Muslim League set the stage for partition and the eventual creation of Pakistan.

Causes of Cabinet Mission's Failure

While initially both the Congress and the Muslim League accepted the plan, significant differences soon emerged. The Congress interpreted the groupings as temporary, insisting on the right of provinces to opt out. The Muslim League, however, viewed the groupings as mandatory and essential for securing Muslim autonomy. As tensions escalated, Jinnah eventually withdrew his support and declared August 16, 1946, as "Direct Action Day," leading to widespread communal violence across India.

The Cabinet Mission's failure underscored the deepening divide between Hindus and Muslims, reinforcing the notion that a united India was becoming increasingly untenable. The communal clashes and mistrust further entrenched the idea that partition might be the only viable solution.

The Path to Mountbatten's Plan

The failure of both the Wavell Plan and the Cabinet Mission led to a political vacuum and rising chaos. The British government, under Prime Minister Clement Attlee, recognized that time was running out, and any further delay could result in civil war. It became evident that the only way forward was a decisive and swift resolution.

In early 1947, Lord Louis Mountbatten was appointed as the last Viceroy of India with the clear mandate to oversee the transfer of power. Mountbatten quickly concluded that partition was the only realistic solution, given the irreconcilable demands of the Congress and the Muslim League. His plan, formally announced on June 3, 1947, proposed the partition of India into two independent dominions, India and Pakistan. This plan was accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League, albeit reluctantly, and led to the birth of two nations on August 15, 1947.

Conclusion

The failures of the Wavell Plan and the Cabinet Mission revealed the depth of communal tensions and the limitations of the British strategy to maintain a united India. Both initiatives, while well-intentioned, underestimated the entrenched nature of religious and political differences between the Congress and the Muslim League. The resulting impasse and violence paved the way for Mountbatten's partition plan, bringing an end to British rule but also leading to one of the most tragic chapters in Indian history—the partition, marked by large-scale displacement, communal massacres, and lasting animosities.

The Mountbatten or Partition Plan:

The 'Great Calcutta Killing' of August 1946, also known as the Direct-Action Day riots, was a significant turning point in the history of the Indian subcontinent. It marked the beginning of large-scale communal violence that ultimately paved the way for the partition of India and the creation of Pakistan. The violence was triggered by the Muslim League's call for Direct Action Day on August 16, 1946, to demand the creation of Pakistan. Under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the League aimed to demonstrate its determination to achieve an independent Muslim state. In Bengal, where the Muslim League held power, the government led by Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy failed to prevent the violence, which many believe was tacitly encouraged.

The Great Calcutta Killing

The day led to what seemed like a civil war in Calcutta, with massive bloodshed between Hindus and Muslims. The riots, which lasted for several days, left thousands dead and tens of thousands injured. The violence in Calcutta soon spread to other regions like Noakhali (East Bengal), Bihar, and the North West Frontier Province, fueling communal hatred and deepening the divide between Hindus and Muslims.

Impact on the Partition Decision

The Calcutta killings and subsequent communal clashes showed the inability of the British government to maintain law and order in India. The violence also made it clear that coexistence between Hindus and Muslims in a united India might no longer be possible. As a result, Indian leaders began to see the partition as a necessary evil to prevent a full-scale civil war. The idea was that by granting the Muslim League its demand for Pakistan, communal tensions might subside.

Failed Assumptions and Mass Migrations

One major assumption during this period was that even after partition, large numbers of Muslims would remain in India, and vice versa for Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. However, this expectation was quickly shattered. The partition of India led to one of the largest and bloodiest mass migrations in history, as millions of people moved across newly drawn borders, fleeing communal violence. The riots and killings that followed partition exceeded even the horrors of the pre-partition violence.

Two key decisions exacerbated the tragedy:

1. **Hurried Transfer of Power:** The British decision to advance the date of independence from June 1948 to August 15, 1947, left little time for a well-planned transition. This hasty process led to inadequate preparation, especially in managing the partition of territories, assets, and populations.
2. **Division of Services:** The partition of vital institutions like the police, military, and civil services along communal lines left both India and Pakistan unprepared to handle the ensuing violence. This lack of coordination contributed to the chaos and bloodshed.

Mountbatten's Role and the Accelerated Timeline

The final decision to bring forward the transfer of power was largely influenced by Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India. Despite knowing that the time frame was insufficient, he chose to push for an early date, perhaps under pressure from both British and Indian leaders eager to see an end to colonial rule. This decision led to widespread violence as the administrative machinery could not cope with the massive challenges of partition.

The 'Great Calcutta Killing' and the events that followed exposed the deep communal rifts within Indian society and forced political leaders to reconsider the viability of a united India. While the hope was that partition would contain the communal violence, it instead unleashed an even greater tragedy. The hurried and poorly managed division of the subcontinent left a lasting legacy of bitterness and conflict, shaping Indo-Pakistani relations for decades to come.

The terminal date for the transfer of power in India was initially set for June 1948. This timeline was agreed upon after Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, met with British officials and assessed the situation. However, upon arriving in India and engaging with local political leaders, Mountbatten realized that waiting until June 1948 would be too long. The political and communal tensions in India were escalating rapidly, leading Mountbatten to conclude that a quicker resolution was necessary to prevent complete disintegration of law and order.

The advancement of the date for the transfer of power in India was indeed a critical decision, given the immense complexity involved in partitioning a vast and diverse country like India on religious grounds. For centuries,

various religious communities had coexisted across different regions, sharing a unified political, economic, and administrative structure. The sudden move to divide this intricate system based on religion presented enormous challenges that required careful planning and implementation.

The political settlement reached in 1947 should have been executed with caution, ensuring that all parties were held accountable for maintaining peace during the transition. Ideally, the agreement could have been used to ease communal tensions before finalizing the partition, but the rushed timeline complicated these efforts.

Notably, there were significant differences between the initial announcement of 20 February 1947 and the 3 June 1947 declaration. The February statement did not mention Dominion status for India or Pakistan, nor did it indicate that either country would remain within the British Commonwealth. However, by the time of the 3 June announcement, there was a clear shift in the British government's approach. The new plan emphasized the transfer of power within 1947, with Dominion status being granted to one or two successor states—India and Pakistan.

This shift reflected a strategic change in British policy, likely influenced by the desire to keep the newly independent countries within the Commonwealth framework. Mountbatten's plan, initially presented in early May, did not include Dominion status, but by June, it was incorporated as a key element. This adjustment played a crucial role in shaping the final terms of independence and the subsequent division of the subcontinent.

Mountbatten's Decision to Accelerate the Timeline

Mountbatten's interactions with Indian leaders, as well as the deteriorating situation in regions like Punjab and the North West Frontier Province, led him to push for an earlier date. During a Conference of Governors in April 1947, it became evident that waiting until 1948 would be disastrous, as civil war was a looming threat, especially in Punjab.

Mountbatten's assessment was confirmed by senior British officials like Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, who warned that the region was on the brink of collapse. These insights prompted Mountbatten to move the transfer of power date to August 15, 1947, barely two and a half months away. Although Mountbatten himself acknowledged that this was a drastic advancement and that even the original date of June 1948 was insufficient for such a complex operation, the urgency of the situation left little choice.

Consequences of the Hasty Partition

The rushed decision had severe consequences. The division of territories, assets, and populations was conducted in a chaotic manner, leading to mass migrations, violence, and a humanitarian crisis on both sides of the newly formed border. The hastened timeline made it nearly impossible to manage the situation effectively, resulting in widespread communal violence and the tragic displacement of millions.

In retrospect, many historians have debated whether more time could have prevented the bloodshed. However, Mountbatten's decision was influenced by the immediate need to avoid civil war and anarchy, which appeared inevitable if the power transfer was delayed.

Mountbatten's decision to expedite the transfer of power, while controversial, was driven by the rapidly deteriorating political and social conditions in India. The communal tensions, particularly in Punjab, and the risk of a civil war made it imperative to find a solution quickly, even if it meant a poorly planned and executed partition. The result was one of the most tragic events in modern history, as the subcontinent was divided amidst violence, leading to long-lasting repercussions for both India and Pakistan.

The situation in India during the early months of 1947 was marked by intense political calculations as the subcontinent approached independence. The British were eager to transfer power, but the question of whether India would remain united or be divided into two separate states was a pressing issue. As tensions grew, Sardar Patel and other Congress leaders began considering the advantages of accepting Dominion status within the British Commonwealth.

The Shifting Strategy of Congress

From as early as December 1946, Sardar Patel had recognized that the hostility from both the Muslim League and British officials was a significant challenge for Congress. He believed that accepting Dominion status could be a pragmatic move. Although the Congress had officially been committed to full independence, Patel argued that Dominion status would not compromise India's freedom. Instead, it could facilitate the early departure of the British and reduce the chances of further mischief by "unruly elements" as the country awaited independence.

By April-May 1947, Patel had identified another strategic benefit: the British, particularly Lord Mountbatten, were highly interested in retaining India within the Commonwealth. Patel realized that offering to stay within the Commonwealth as a Dominion could appeal to Mountbatten's sense of achievement and vanity. This, in turn, could make Mountbatten and the British government more receptive to keeping most of India unified rather than breaking it into numerous smaller states. Patel's calculation was that agreeing to Dominion status might help preserve a greater portion of India's territorial integrity.

The Path to Partition

Ultimately, these considerations contributed to Congress accepting the idea of partition based on the creation of two Dominions: India and Pakistan. Sardar Patel, who had initially been a staunch opponent of partition, came to see it as the lesser evil compared to the possibility of continued civil unrest and a chaotic power transfer. The strategic decision to agree to Dominion status, even temporarily, helped facilitate the negotiations and allowed the Congress to focus on avoiding further disintegration.

The acceptance of Dominion status was not merely a concession; it was a tactical move aimed at securing a more stable and unified future for India amidst the escalating communal tensions. The decision also played a key role in shaping the terms of the transfer of power, leading to the partition of the subcontinent into two sovereign states on August 15, 1947.

The situation in India in early 1947 had reached a point where immediate decisions were needed, not just regarding when to transfer power, but more crucially on how it would be done. The urgency of the situation culminated in the 3 June Plan, which announced the partition of India, including the division of Punjab and Bengal. This plan was seen as a last-ditch effort to prevent further administrative collapse and bloodshed in a country already on the brink of civil war.

Nehru's Stance on the British Commonwealth

Around the same time, Jawaharlal Nehru made his position on the British Commonwealth clear. He was adamant that India would not remain within the Commonwealth after independence. Nehru's strong stance reflected a broader sentiment within the Congress leadership, which saw continued ties with Britain as unacceptable. In a series of

letters, Nehru emphasized that the departure of British officers, even if it led to challenges, would be a necessary step toward India's self-reliance. He believed that severing ties with the Commonwealth would not only strengthen India's security but also free the country from being entangled in Britain's global commitments.

The Shift Toward Dominion Status

Despite these strong statements, the Congress leadership agreed to the concept of Dominion status as part of the 3 June Plan. This shift was surprising given the Congress's previous insistence on full independence. The decision to temporarily accept Dominion status was likely a strategic compromise aimed at facilitating a smooth transition of power. The urgency of the situation, combined with the fear of escalating violence, made this compromise necessary.

The Practical Challenges of Partition

While the 3 June Plan provided a framework for partition, its implementation within just two and a half months was a rushed and problematic decision. There were significant logistical and administrative challenges in dividing a country as vast and complex as India in such a short timeframe. These challenges ultimately led to widespread violence and displacement during the partition. The 3 June Plan marked a turning point in India's path to independence. It was a response to the immediate need for a political solution, even if it required compromises that contradicted earlier positions. The acceptance of Dominion status and the hasty timeline for partition were driven by the desire to avoid further chaos. However, the rushed nature of the process contributed to the tragic human cost of partition, which remains one of the darkest chapters in Indian history.

There is significant evidence suggesting that the date for the transfer of power in India was advanced, in part, as a strategy to persuade the Congress leadership to keep India within the British Commonwealth. This move aligns with the broader interests of the British monarchy and government. According to Collins and Lapierre, King George VI expressed concern in January 1947 that an independent India might turn away from the Commonwealth. The King envisioned a multi-racial Commonwealth that could play a significant role in global affairs, with Britain continuing as its leader. If India remained within the Commonwealth, it would

set an example for other Afro-Asian nations that were on the path to independence.

From the outset of his mission, Lord Mountbatten was encouraged to propose a settlement that would keep India within the Commonwealth. This was a priority for British officials who believed that retaining India in the Commonwealth would bolster Britain's geopolitical influence and maintain London as a global financial center. On the Indian side, some Congress leaders were beginning to see the benefits of accepting Dominion status, despite the party's long-standing demand for complete independence. Sardar Patel, one of the most influential Congress leaders, had discussions in December 1946 that highlighted the pragmatic reasons for considering Dominion status. Patel recognized that this compromise could ease British hostility and facilitate an earlier withdrawal of British officials from India. He believed that the sooner the British left, the fewer complications would arise, and the less likely it would be for disruptive elements to exploit the situation.

By April-May 1947, Patel had concluded that accepting Dominion status offered a tactical advantage. It would likely make the British more sympathetic to the idea of preserving the territorial unity of India, as it would appeal to Mountbatten's desire to present the transfer of power as a successful mission. Moreover, the Congress leaders calculated that agreeing to this compromise would lead to an expedited departure of the British, allowing them to focus on the challenges of nation-building.

Indian Independence Act

The Indian Independence Act of 1947 was a landmark legislation passed by the British Parliament that led to the end of British rule in India and the creation of two independent dominions, India and Pakistan. The Act, which received royal assent on July 18, 1947, was based on the recommendations of the Mountbatten Plan, which sought to address the escalating communal tensions and the growing demand for independence. The object of this Act was to give effect to June 3rd Plan of Lord Mountbatten. It merely legalized what had already been promised to the people of India.

- The Act provided for the partition of India and the establishment of two Dominions of India and Pakistan from the appointed day (15th August, 1947). The Act also provided for the legislative supremacy of the two Dominions.

- The Legislatures of the two Dominions were given full power to make laws having extra-territorial jurisdiction. It declared that Indian princely states were either dominion of India or dominion of Pakistan or remain independent.
- The British Government was to have no control over the affairs of the Dominions, Provinces or any part of the Dominions after 15th August 1947.
- The office of the Viceroy was also abolished and the Act initiated for the providence of two separate Governor-Generals to be appointed for the dominions of India and Pakistan on the advice of the British Cabinet.
- Until a new Constitution was framed for each Dominion, the Act made the existing Constituent Assemblies the Dominion Legislatures for the time being. The Assemblies were to exercise all the powers which were formerly exercised by the Central Legislature in addition to its power regarding the framing of a new Constitution.
- Pending the framing of a new Constitution, each of the Dominions and all Provinces were to be governed in accordance with the Government of India Act, 1935. Each Dominion was authorized to make modifications in the Government of India Act, 1935 under the Indian Independence Act.
- The Governor-General was given the power to modify or adapt the Government of India Act, 1935, as might be considered necessary till 31st March 1948. After that day, it was open to the Constituent Assembly to modify or adapt the old Government of India Act, 1935.
- The right of the King to veto laws or to reserve laws for his pleasure was given up. This right was given to the Governor-General. He was given the full right to assent in the name of His Majesty to any law of the Dominion Legislature made in the ordinary legislative capacity.
- The Act provided for the termination of the suzerainty of the Crown over the Indian States of the All treaties, agreements and functions exercisable by His Majesty with regard to States and their rulers were to lapse from 15th August 1947. It was also provided that the existing arrangements between the Government of India and the Indian States were to continue pending the detailed negotiations between the Indian States and the new Dominions.

- Agreements with the tribes of the North-Western Frontier Province of India were to be negotiated by the successor Dominion.
- The office of the Secretary of State for India was to be abolished and his work was to be taken over by the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs.
- The title of “Emperor of India” was to be dropped from the royal style and titles of the King of England. Appointment to civil services and reservation of posts by secretary of state of India was stopped. The members of the civil services appointed before August 15, 1947 would continue to enjoy all benefits that they were entitled to till that time.

The act terminated British authority over India, set up two independent Dominions, each with full authority to make any constitution it pleased. Both the Dominions were given full powers and rights to leave the British Commonwealth of Nations if they so pleased.

1. The Act decided to grant independence to India and Pakistan with effect from 15th August 1947.
2. The new boundaries of the dominions would be demarcated by the Boundary Commission.
3. This Act received the royal assent on 18th July 1947 and entered into force.
4. Pakistan became independent on 14th August and India on 15th August 1947. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was appointed Pakistan's Governor-General and Lord Mountbatten became India's

Impact and Significance

The Indian Independence Act of 1947 was a watershed moment in the history of the Indian subcontinent. It brought an end to nearly 200 years of British colonial rule and marked the birth of two sovereign nations. However, the hurried partition process resulted in one of the largest migrations in human history, accompanied by widespread communal violence, leading to the deaths and displacement of millions.

The Act also left several contentious issues unresolved, including the fate of the princely states and the precise boundaries between India and Pakistan, particularly in Punjab and Bengal. These unresolved issues have had lasting geopolitical implications, particularly in the Kashmir conflict.

In summary, the Indian Independence Act of 1947 was the legal framework that facilitated India's and Pakistan's emergence as independent nations. While it achieved its immediate goal of transferring power, the act also set the stage for enduring challenges related to partition and communal division, shaping the future trajectory of South Asia.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Explain the key reasons behind the Congress-League conflict from 1937 to 1940. How did this impact the Indian independence movement?
2. What were the main demands outlined in the Muslim League's Lahore Resolution of 1940? How did it shape the future of India's partition?
3. Discuss the significance of the Cripps Mission of 1942. Why did it fail to satisfy the Indian political leaders?
4. Analyze the Quit India Movement of 1942. What were its causes, and how did it influence the British decision to expedite India's independence?
5. What were the main proposals of the Wavell Plan of 1945? Why did it fail to achieve its intended objectives?
6. Examine the key features of the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946. What led to its ultimate failure in preventing the partition of India?
7. Discuss the Mountbatten Plan of 1947. How did it differ from earlier proposals for the transfer of power, and what were its key outcomes?
8. Analyze the provisions of the Indian Independence Act of 1947. How did this legislation pave the way for the creation of India and Pakistan?