



Sleepy Classes IAS
Awakening Toppers

Political Science & International Relations Crash Course

Lecture - 5

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The early nationalist response in India appeared to be more social than political in its orientations. Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer[15]

Introduce early nationalists and influence on them

Body- Why would we regard 19th century to focus more on the Social than political?
Prove with reference to works of social reformers

Conclusion- Critical Analysis

- Most scholars point to two distinct different phases of Indian nationalism. The first one continues till the formation of the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885 whereas nationalism, in its second phase, was articulated through popular mobilisation around various kinds of anti-imperial ideologies post 1885.
- Chakrabarty and Pandey argue that unlike the second phase when the national intervention was primarily political, namely, the capture of state power, the first phase was largely dominated by the zeal of reform that appeared to have brought together various individuals with more or less the same ideological agenda.
- The early nationalist response was led by leaders like Ram Mohan, Bankim, Dayananda Saraswati, Dadbhai Naroji, Jyotiba Phule etc. Bipan Chandra regards them as the 'theoretical pioneers' of India's anti-colonial struggle.

Influence on early nationalist

- **Enlightenment philosophy**- The European enlightenment philosophy influenced the famous 1832 Macaulay's minutes. Seeking to organise Indian society in a typical western mould, Macaulay argued for an introduction of English education and British jurisprudence that introduced to the early nationalists with tenets of western liberalism and socially and politically progressive ideas of Bentham, Mill, Carlyle and Coleridge.
- **The second** equally important influence was the ideas of German philosophers like Schelling, Fichte, Kant and Herder. These ideas gained ground as the intellectual challenge against the British rule acquired momentum.
- **The third significant** Influence in the early phase of Indian nationalism was the French revolution and its message of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.
- **The final source** is of course the traditional Indian thought

- **Focus on social reform in society:** 19th century reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Jyotiba Phule, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan sought to address the social evils in the country- such as child marriage, widow remarriage, sati, education for lower castes etc.- rather than political reform. So much so that scholars believe 19th century early nationalists to have viewed the colonial rule as a 'blessing in disguise'.
- **Introduction of Humanism and Rationalism in India:** Bipan Chandra argues that Although religious reformation 'was a major concern of these movements, none of them were exclusively religious in character', but more humanist. Akshay Kumar Dutt and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar were agnostics who refused to be drawn into any discussion on supernatural questions. Similarly, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Vivekananda emphasized the secular use of religion and used spirituality to take cognizance of the material conditions of human existence.
- **Ideological struggle against the hegemonic colonial culture:** While Ram Mohan drew upon the Upanishads, Dayananda while articulating his nationalist response, was inspired by the Vedas. The reinterpretation of these texts along with their access to the masses provided tradition to break clutches of religious dogmas allowing for as Chandra argues, Indian society "to modernise not blindly westernise."
- **Provide basis for Nationalism:** Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was probably the first systematic expounder in India of the idea of nationalism, it in indigenous terms by drawing upon the Bhagavad Gita. Early nationalists like Surendranath Banerjee clashed with colonial scholars like John Seeley, to assert that India was a 'nation in making' drawing on its old civilisational values.
- **Socio-economic foundations:** Scholars like Dadabhai Naoroji's "drain" theory developed by Naoroji, for instance, showed the systemic exploitation of India under colonial rule and led to the inescapable conclusion that the "drain", which constituted the basis of the poverty of the Indian people.

Importance of social-economic response of early nationalists-



Bipan Chandra argues that no struggle can take off until its basic theoretical foundations have been built, and the early nationalists, not only provided that foundation but also developed a theoretical corpus that was implacably opposed to the colonial regime in an objective sense.



Similarly, **Partha Chatterjee** argues that the early nationalist thought despite the overt social tones provided 'the moment of departure' in India's national thought.



The early nationalists and their universalist conceptions allowed for Indian nationalism to be plural, non-coercive and civil that appreciated the diversity and traditions of the country but at the same time was brave enough to correct pre-existing contradictions and social flaws.

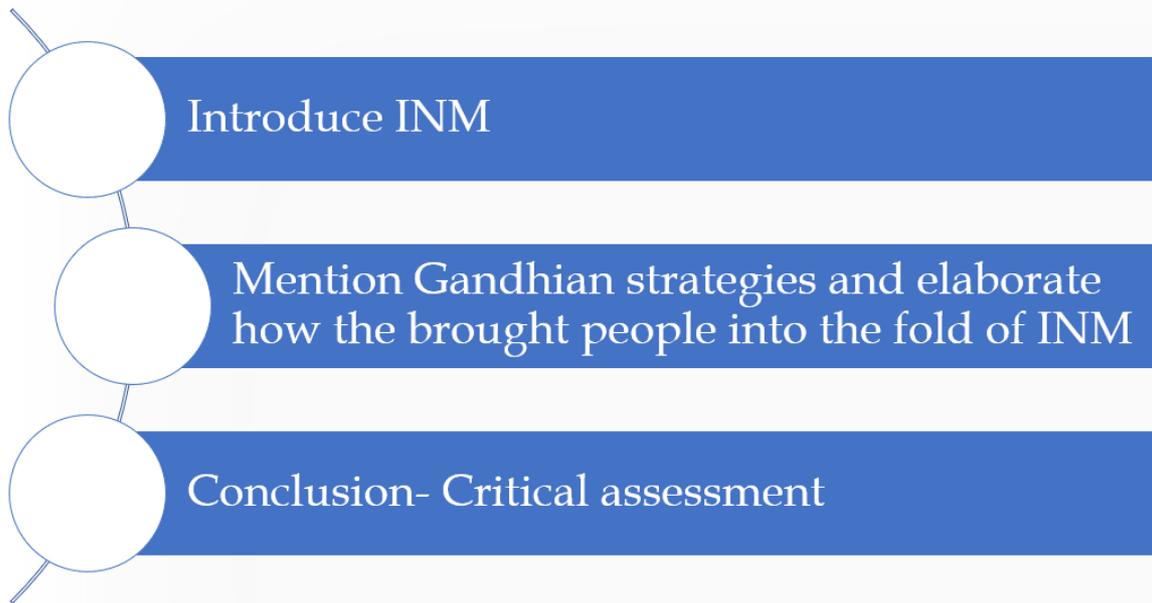
Why they avoided political undertone

- Furthermore, the avoidance of a clear political role was perhaps strategically conditioned in a context when an anti-British stance was likely to draw government attention.
- In other words, apprehending damage to the mission they undertook, these thinkers were persuaded to adopt an agenda allowing them to pursue their ideological mission without governmental intervention.
- The work of these thinkers led to publishing of important texts like Anandamath, Poverty & Un-British Rule in India, Economic History of India etc as well as advent of media and newspapers like Bengal Gazette, Rast Goftar, Samvad Kaumudi etc that provided awareness and sense of patriotism to Indian masses.

Conclusion:

- Despite the contribution of early nationalists to the larger political struggle, they are often criticised for their support of colonial rule.
- Despite the focus on universalism and humanism, much of the social reformists looked to Hindu culture and traditions thereby antagonising the Muslim minority.
- Another major issue was the slow pace of reform as well as the techniques of petitions and cooperation with colonial government to allow for reforms.
- However, regardless of these limitations, the social thought of these reformers was essential as it provided an integral part of the evolving national consciousness.

Examine how Gandhian strategies allowed the National struggle for freedom to become more mass oriented and allow participation of erstwhile marginalised groups. (15)



Introduction To National Movement

- Indian National Movement (INM) is not the only example of mass movement as others like French, Russian and Chinese were also mass movements. But, INM was unique as it was the largest mass movement that reached its logical end.
- In fact **Bipin Chandra** calls it as the "*most spectacular mass movement, the warmth of which can be felt even today*"

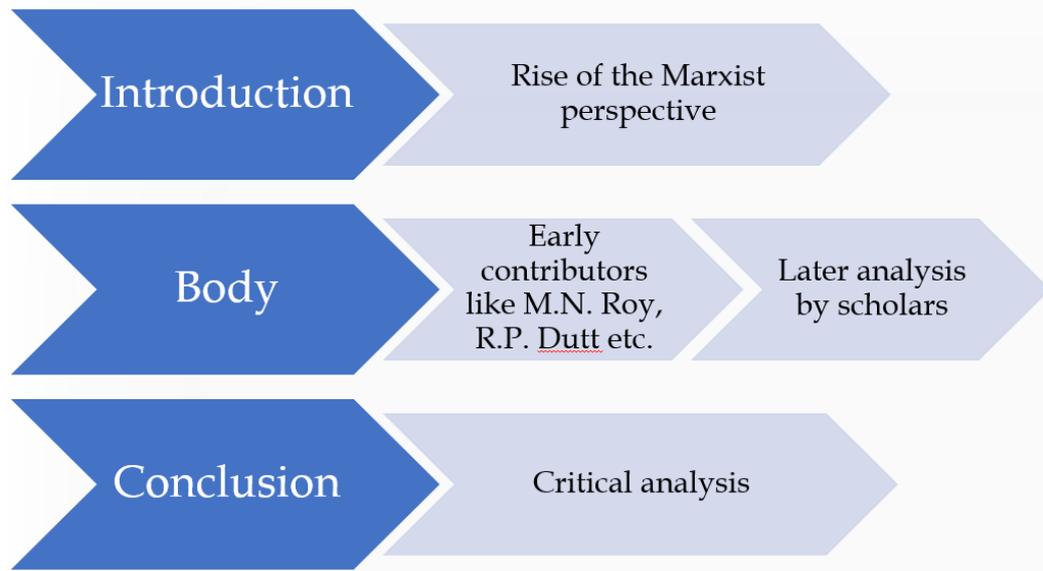
How Gandhi Made It A Mass Movement

- **Introduction of Novel Techniques:** A large part of credit for making INM a mass movement goes to Gandhi for adopting novel techniques that brought masses into the struggle.
 - ❖ After arriving in India, Gandhi toured the countryside and understood the issues of the poor, peasants, farmers and labourers.
 - He championed the cause of downtrodden and successfully led Champaran Satyagraha, Kheda Satyagraha etc.
 - This brought peasants, trade unions and farmers within the fold of INM
 - ❖ **Incorporation of Ahimsa:** Secondly, Gandhi stressed heavily on non-violence.
 - According to **Francis Hutchin**, **Non-Violence** was Gandhi's strategic move to give INM a mass character. It brought women into the fold on national movement

Ideological opposition to Colonial rule: Thirdly, over the years Gandhi had successfully exposed the exploitative nature of British rule. People no longer believed that the British were just and had begun to reject myths like white man's burden. Thus, Gandhi had won the **War of Position**.

- Thus, during the Quit India Movement, Gandhi gave the clarion call for Do or Die to win the final **War of Manoeuvre**. Gandhi even called it the last struggle of his life. Consequently, QIM saw rise of grassroot leaders and popular participation by masses despite being leaderless.
 - According to **Francis Hutchnins**, Gandhi was a strategist and he knew that the purpose of non-violence to bring masses within the fold of INM was complete.
- **Providing breathers between struggle:** Gandhi was also a great mass psychologist. He knew that masses have limited capacity to sacrifice, hence he used to call off the movement whenever it began to lose steam. **Bipin Chandra** called it the strategy of **Struggle-Truce-Struggle**.
 - During the passive phase, Gandhi used to work on constructive programmes like Khadi, Hindu-Muslim Unity, Untouchability, Empowering villages.
 - This ensured that marginalised stay connected to Gandhian ideas and later contribute to his action plans.
 - Thus movements like Non Cooperation and Civil Disobedience owe their success to constructive programmes undertaken by Gandhi during the passive phase.
 - **Conclusion:** While the Gandhian movement provided for national struggle to become a genuinely mass movement, certain scholars have criticised the 'bourgeois base' of Gandhian movement. Sumit Sarkar argues that Gandhian leadership coincided with aims and interests of the Indian capitalists as may be seen in the timing of calling off of NCM and CDM. Subaltern theorists like Shahid Amin argue how Gandhi's embodiment as Mahatma sought to reinforce existing social hierarchies in the movement

Analyse the Marxist perspective of the nature of Indian national movement. [10] (UPSC 2021)



- The Marxist perspective on the Indian National movement became predominant in the 1920's especially with the formation of Communist Party and the writings of Dange (The Socialist and Gandhi and Lenin). The founding of the Congress Socialist Party was symbolic of the wave of socialism on the Indian political scene.
- M.N Roy, a Marxist thinker further enriched the political ideology through his Indian Experience giving birth to Radical Humanism. He believed that the foreign and National bourgeoisie had joined hands in exploiting Indian masses. He presented an elaborate programme at the 1922 Gaya Session of INC with emphasis on modernization of agriculture, abolition of landlordism and indirect taxes, need for minimum wages etc.
- He emphasized on the need for a mass based political party that would mobilize the workers and peasants for collective action. He was critical of both Congress and Gandhi and sought to reinvigorate Marxism by adding his thoughts on morality and freedom to it.
- In 1940's the works of R.P Dutt (India Today) and A.R Desai (Social Background of Indian Nationalism). They consider the Indian National Movement to be bourgeois in character, especially its leadership. If not being the representatives of the class itself, they sought to lead the masses to fulfil the interests of the Bourgeoisie.
- They believe the very values of the Indian National Movement served the interests of the National and petty bourgeoisie. They are especially dismissive of the relationship between INC, bourgeoisie and also the forms of struggle undertaken.

- A slightly varied perspective is offered by Bipan Chandra and Sumit Sarkar. Both agree with the nationalist role of the Indian leadership. However, they are of the view that the ideals that the national struggle came to adopt made them take up a centrist position, wherein all classes were included. But such a structure invariably served the cause of the Bourgeoisie rather than the masses.
- The idea of Passive Revolution or War of Position adopted by Bipan Chandra in his analysis is of crucial significance here. It was a strategy “that involved the waging of a hegemonic struggle based on a mass movement” so as to effectively oppose the legal-authoritarian colonial State.
- The Indian Marxist writers do not agree to Marx’s view of Indian colonial history too. While Bipan Chandra and A Bagchi accept the destructive nature of Colonialism, they are skeptical of the regenerative role Marx accords to it.
- Marxist political economist Prabhat Patnaik is wary of the success of colonial government in breaking the pre-capitalist, feudal hierarchies. It only transforms these pre capitalist modes and relations of production to make them a part of colonial structure.
- Perry Anderson points to the major lacuna in the Indian Nationalist ideology as far as the Indian left is concerned. He underlines its political weakness that prevented it from playing a monumental role in the National struggle.

Conclusion

- The Marxist perspective highlighted the contradictory nature of Colonialism in India. Colonialism destroyed the institutions that could have made possible the birth of Capitalism in India. However, it had a positive effect in the sense that the uniform law and education encouraged social reform and new classes that eventually led to the growth of nationalism.
- Despite its contribution, the Marxist school is criticised by both the Cambridge and subaltern school- Anil Seal asserted that nationalist movement was simply a result of competition among elites for colonial favours. Ranajit Guha criticised the Marxist school for not taking into consideration the subaltern movements in their historiography.

The constitution of India is a product of a historical process, rich with constitutional antecedents. Comment. (10) (UPSC 2021)



- Sujit Choudhry, Madhav Khosla, And Pratap Bhanu Mehta argue that The Indian constitutional project can be described in many ways. It was as much a 'social revolution' as a political one.
- Uday S. Mehta terms the Indian Constitution as a **Political Document** as it provided India's **revolutionary moment of rupture**. At the same time, it was also a a document of **Social Transformation**- Makes a break between Politics and certain Historical Practices such as casteism, untouchability, gender and communal discrimination etc.
- The drafting of the Indian constitution was the long-drawn process, carried out by the constituent assembly of India, which culminated in 1950. It was not the result of violent revolution but was evolved and was influenced by the ancient Indian ethos, constitutional developments during the colonial era and established constitutions of the time.

Historical process and constitutional antecedents

- As per Justice Srikrishna, Dharma was the essence of rule of law and pivotal on which the universal order revolved. Ancient Indian thought included the concepts of Rajdharma and yogakshema.
- These ideals are reflected in the different provisions of the constitution including the goals of Preamble as well as DPSPs. .
- Similarly, the principle of Sarva Dharma Sambhao (equal respect for all faith) has influenced the concept of Indian secularism.

Amalgamation of different sources

- The structural part of the Constitution is, to a large extent, derived from the Government of India Act of 1935.
- The philosophical part of the Constitution (the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy) derive their inspiration from the American and Irish Constitutions respectively.
- The political part of the Constitution (the principle of Cabinet Government and the relations between the executive and the legislature) have been largely drawn from the British Constitution. The other provisions of the Constitution have been drawn from the constitutions of Canada, Australia, Germany, USSR (now Russia), France, South Africa, Japan, and so on.
- The most profound influence and material source of the Constitution is the Government of India Act, 1935. The Federal Scheme, Judiciary, Governors, emergency powers, the Public Service Commissions and most of the administrative details are drawn from this Act. According to Subhash Kashyap, Indian constitution was the 75% reproduction of the Act of 1935.
- Upendra Baxi looks at the Indian Constitution as a 'value document' embodying goals and ideas of Freedom Movement.
- The colonial history witnessed numerous examples where leaders of national movement synthesised ideas of both western liberalism, socialism and traditional Indian corpus to provide a base for constitutional government.
- The Swaraj bill 1895, Nehru Report of 1928, Gandhian ideals and the vast experience of colonial struggle also shaped the Indian constitution. Jawaharlal Nehru's historic 'Objectives Resolution' laid down the fundamentals and philosophy of the constitutional structure.
- These are apparent in the Preamble, Fundamental rights, working of Indian federalism and the incorporation of local governments through 73rd and 74th amendments to the

Constitution.

- The diversity of the historical antecedents aided the Indian Constitution in becoming what P.B. Mehta calls a 'cosmopolitan Constitution'.

Conclusion

- The Constitution of India thus, Rohit De argues was a product of a series of conflicts with a set of interactions between historical culture, constitutional texts and constitutional aspirations. The Constituent Assembly, argues Granville Austin, through the processes of consensus and accommodation shaped the fundamental law of the land to instil a spirit of constitutional morality within it.

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