UNIT 11: INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT UP TO 1916

UNIT STRUCTURE

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11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to–

- discuss the activities of Moderates as well as of Extremists of Indian National Congress,
- discuss about the rise of Communalism in Indian National Movement,
- analyse the Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement,
- discuss about the Revolutionary Movement.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you have learnt about the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1985. The political conciousness of Indian people become much stronger with the establishment of INC. People became united under the banner of INC to oppose the foreign rule. This unit introduces you to India's struggle for freedom up to 1916.

11.3 MODERATE PHASE (1885-1905)



Moderate-Moderates believed in peaceful and constitutional means.

The first phase of congress (1885-1905) is known as moderate phase. During this period, the Congress worked for fulfilling limited objectives and concentrated more on building up its organization. The national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Surendra Nath Bannerjee, Womesh Chandra Bannerjee, etc dominated the Congress during this period. These people were staunch believers in liberalism and moderate politics.

The moderates believed in the British sense of justice. The basic demands of the Congress at that time were mainly constitutional which stressed on larger share of the Indians in the governance of the country. The Congress also put forwarded some suggestions for the economic improvement of the country. However, the British government paid scant respect to the demands made by the Congress. The early Congress leaders achieved very little of the hopes and aspirations of the Indian people. However, the moderates made a great contribution to the field of Indian National Movement. During the moderate phase for the first time there evolved a common political and economic programme around which Indian people could unite and launch a greater movement against the foreign rule.



LET US KNOW

Certain changes were announced in the structure of Indian government in 1909. The changes were associated with the name of Morley, the Secretary of State and Lord Minto, the Governor General of India. Therefore the changes introduced by the Act of 1909 were also known as the Morley-Minto Reforms.

11.4 EXTREMIST PHASE (1905-1916)

The second stage of the Congress (1905-1916) witnessed the emergence of a new and younger group and advocated the adoption of

Swaraj as the goal of the Congress to be achieved by more self- reliant and independent methods. They had no faith on the British sense of justice.

The Indian resentment against the British rule reached its climax during the last phase of the nineteenth century which contributed towards the growth extremism in Indian politics**.** This phase is known as 'extremist phase'. Leaders like Bipin Chandra Pal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai were the important members of this group. The Extremists differed from the moderates in political ideology, objectives and techniques as well. They preferred not to go out of the Congress but to capture it from within. They opposed the policy of 'prayers and petition' adopted by the moderates. They described it as 'political beggary' and believed in self efforts.

Figure - 11.1



Bal Gangadhar Tilak
Source : Google image

Bal Gangadhar Tilak declared that "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it." Tilak gave his message to the people through his newspaper *Kesri*. Bipin Chandra Pal edited the 'New India' and used it to arise the anti-British feeling among the Indian people.

The partition of Bengal took place in 1905. The difference between the moderates and extremists reached its climax centering the anti-partition agitation. Finally a formal split between the moderates and extremists took place at the Surat session of the Indian National Congress in 1907. However, the two groups were united in 1916. The extremists played an important role in the national movement. The sacrifices of the extremists' leaders caught the pulse of the Indians and they were revered by the people.

The final stage of the Congress was dominated by the objective of *Purna Swaraj* or complete independence to be achieved under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.



ACTIVITY -11.1

Prepare a report on differences between Extremist and Moderate leaders of the Indian National Congress.

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11.5 RISE OF COMMUNALISM

Communalism is an ideology vested in the interest of one's own religion. However, communalism is a modern day phenomenon which is used for political gains. Communalism is a complex subject. On one side there is a communalist assumption that the Hindus and the Muslims are two separate entities, while others, mostly the nationalists, are of the belief that there had never been any communal disharmony earlier, but it was the British who created it, by their policy of divide and rule. In India, like nationalism, the communalist phenomenon is a modern day one. The reason ascribed to this rise was initially the competition for high jobs and political gains among the elite class. However, it cannot be denied that communalism acquired a wide facet from early times. Socio-economic tensions led to this tension.

In the early phase of the national movement, Communalism had just started to raise it head and was slowly making a space for itself. There were frequent riots after the1880's. Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan initially was an advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity, but later became a staunch opponent of the Indian National Congress. At his initiative was formed in 1888 the *United Indian Patriotic Association* with the object of countering the Congress propaganda and policy in England and India and to wean away people from the Congress. This was followed by the formation of exclusively sectarian *Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association* of Upper India in 1893 to keep the Muslims aloof from political agitation and to strengthen British rule in India.

A demand for a separate electorate was made by the Muslims in case the system of election is introduced by the government. For it a delegation under Aga Khan met Lord Minto at Simla in October, 1905 demanding reservation of seats for the Muslim Community and election to such seats to be made by separate Muslim electorates. Lord Minto gladly accepted the Muslim demand for separate communal electorates. The Indian National Congress was termed as an organization of the Hindus. To counterpoise it the All-India Muslim League was established on 30

December, 1906 to look after the political rights and interests of the Muslim community.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: The split in the Congress took place in (Choose the correct answer)

a. 1885 b. 1892

c. 1905 d. 1907

Q 2: Who said "Swaraj is my birth right"?

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Q 3: Who accepted the Muslim demand for separate communal electorates?

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Q 4: When was the All-India Muslim League established?

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11.6 PARTITION OF BENGAL AND SWADESHI MOVEMENT

The Partition of Bengal in 1905 and *Swadeshi* movement opened a new chapter in the history of the national movement in India. During that time Lord Curzon was the Viceroy of India. The worst and the most hated aspect of Lord Curzon's administration was the partition of Bengal. The plan of the partition of Bengal was announced by the government on 19th July, 1905. According to this plan a new province named 'Eastern Bengal and Assam' was to be set up. The new province included Assam, Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi, Malda and Tripura. Dacca was fixed as the capital of East Bengal and Assam.

Hartal: Strike

The 16th October, 1905 was the day fixed by the government for the partition of Bengal.

Swadeshi: Slogan for the use of indigenously availableCrafts and materials.

The official justification for the partition of Bengal was that the province of Bengal was too large to be administered effectively by a single government. The nationalists however, saw the act of partition as a

challenge to Indian Nationalism. According to them it was a deliberate attempt of the government to crush the rising tide of nationalism in Bengal. Another motive behind the partition was to incite the feeling of communalism. East Bengal was Muslim dominated area and West Bengal was that of Hindu dominated. The British wanted to create a division between the Hindus and the Muslims. For that they separated the Muslim dominated areas from the Hindu dominated areas.

The partition announcement fell like a bombshell. The Indians particularly the people of Bengal opposed the partition strongly. It gave rise to anti- partition movement which spread all over the country. On the day of partition, there was a *hartal* in Calcutta. *Bande Mataram* became the national song. On that very day, ceremonies like holy *dip* in Ganges and *Rakhi* were also observed.

The anti-partition movement developed into Swadeshi movement with the boycott of British goods. Mass meetings were held all over Bengal where Swadeshi or the use of Indian goods and the boycott of British goods proclaimed. In reality, the idea of boycott and Swadeshi were interlinked. According to historian Dr. R.C. Mazumdar the boycott was the negative, while the Swadeshi was the positive aspect of the same idea. The boycott of schools and colleges led to the establishment of traditional methods of education. Many educational institutes were established by the nationalists. Emphasis was given to vernacular medium of instruction. Along with the boycott of foreign goods measure was taken for the growth of indigenous industry. The primary aims of the boycott and Swadeshi were to pressurize the British government to annul the partition of Bengal.

However, the movement failed because of the sustained repressive policy of the government, split of the Indian National Congress in 1907, lack of organization etc. The British government annulled the partition of Bengal in 1911.



ACTIVITY – 11.2

Imagine you are a resident of Bengal. How will you react to the partition of Bengal?

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11.7 REVOLUTIONARY NATIONAL MOVEMENTS

Do you think that the Indian National Movement was fought only by non- violent means? There is another side to the story. Both the non-violent and violent movements ran parallel to each other. One was led by the Indian National Congress and the other was guided by the revolutionary nationalists. Both in their different ways carried the message of independence to the Indian masses.

At the end of the 19th century a few leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose, etc imparted a new vigour to the nationalist struggle in India. They were called extremist because they had a radical outlook and advocated active resistance to British imperialism. They called upon the people of India to make sacrifices for the sake of their country. Another school of militant nationalism or extremism was that of the revolutionary terrorists who aimed at turning the British out of India by revolutionary and violent means.

The ideological background for the growth of extremism in Indian politics was prepared by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda, Dayanand Saraswati, etc. Bankim Chandra preached the ideal of self-sacrifice and the necessity of strength for freeing the country from the yoke of foreign rule. His message to the people of India was that the cowardly attitude should be shunned in order to free the country from the hands of the British. The writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Dayanand Saraswati and others taught Indians to be proud of their country and culture and gave a new edge to Indian nationalism. Under the influence of such great persons the Indians became more and more convinced of the fact

that it was their sincere endeavour alone that could change the lot of their country for the better.

Another important cause for the growth of extremism in Indian politics was the distressing economic condition of the Indian people under British rule. The drain of wealth that had started since the battle of Plassey ultimately led to the breakdown of the Indian economic structure. The growing industrialist class in India bitterly resented the imperialist policy of thwarting industrial development in this country and sacrificing its economic interest in favour of those of the British manufacturers. Most of the educated Indians were without any employment.

From almost the beginning of the national movement a school of militant nationalism had existed in the country. In 1896-97, Damodar Hari and Balkrishna Hari known as the Chapekar brothers formed the Vyayam Mandal. The Chapekar brothers assassinated two unpopular officials in Poona. Damodar Hari was hanged and later Balkrishna Hari was also sentenced to death. In 1904 at Maharastra, V.D. Savarkar established *Abhinav Bharat* which was the first important organized society of the revolutionaries. Soon secret societies of the revolutionaries came up all over the country. The *Anusilan Samiti*, the most famous and long lasting secret society, with it's headquarter at Calcutta created revolutionary centers all over India.

It was the movement against the Partition of Bengal in 1905 where the revolutionary nationalism found expression. After the Partition of Bengal in 1905 several newspapers began to advocate revolutionary terrorism openly. The *Sangha* and the *Yugantar* in Bengal and *Kal* in Maharastra were the most prominent among them. The failure of the Swadeshi movement in getting the partition of Bengal annulled forced the youths of Bengal to find out some other way to get the desirable results. Out of frustration they adopted violent means to achieve their goal of freedom from the British rule. They felt that passive resistance would not bring any success and the British should be expelled from India by force. This resulted in revolutionary and terrorist activities both inside and outside the country.

Revolutionary nationalism took an organized form in Bengal and the chief apostle of militant nationalism in Bengal was Aurobindo Ghose. He added spiritualism to the movement. In 1907 an unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Allen, the district magistrate of Dacca was killed in December 1907. On 30th April, 1908 Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram Bose threw a bomb at a carriage which they believed was occupied by Kingsford, the unpopular judge of Muzaffarpur. Unfortunately two European ladies were killed in this incident. Khudiram Bose was tried and hanged while Prafulla Chaki shot himself dead. The incident was followed by murders of a deputy superintendent of police and a public prosecutor. Both were shot in the premises of the court itself. An unsuccessful attempt was made under the leadership of Ras Bihari Bose and Sachin Sanyal to kill the Viceroy Lord Hardinge in Delhi who was wounded by the bomb thrown at him. Another important revolutionary action was the assassination of Curzon-Whylie in London by Madan Lal Dhingra.



LET US KNOW

In Assam, some educated young people like Ambikagiri Rai Choudhury, Raktim Bora, Triguna Barua and others were influenced by extremism. Ambikagiri had contacts with some revolutionary leaders of Bengal. He started a voluntary association called *Seva Sangha* which is said to have developed into a terrorist one, in line with the *Anusilan Samiti*. He wrote a patriotic drama *Bandini Bharat*. Its manuscript was intercepted by the police in 1906 and till 1915 he was kept under police vigilance. It marked the beginning of a new type of political development in Assam. In the Surma Valley, on the other hand, the extremist movement gained greater ground. Bipin Chandra Pal frequently visited the valley and his fiery speeches stirred up the dormant elements there into action.

The revolutionaries set up their societies in several foreign countries like the U.S.A, Germany, Indo-China, Singapore, Siam, Thailand and Middle and Near East as well. Shyamji Krishnavarma, V.D. Savarkar in London, Madam Cama in Paris and Ajit Singh and Ambar Prasad in Middle East became famous for their revolutionary activities. However, the most prominent party abroad was the *Ghadar Party* in U.S.A. which was formed by Lala Hardayal in 1913, with its headquarters at San Francisco. The party succeeded in enlisting the support of quite a large number of people in America and Europe for the cause of Indian independence. It also tried to supply arms to the revolutionaries but failed. During the World War I German help was successfully sought by Indian revolutionaries abroad and preparations were made for a general uprising in 1915 but with no positive result.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 5: In which year Bengal was partitioned?

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Q 6: Bengal was divided into ..... and.....

Q 7: The capital of East Bengal was …….....

Q 8: In which year the partition of Bengal was annulled?

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Q 9: Who were known as the Chapekar brothers?

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Q 10: Who was the chief apostle of militant nationalism in Bengal?

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Q 11: Name some foreign countries where the revolutionaries set up their societies?

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11.8 HOME RULE MOVEMENT

Home Rule Movement started a new chapter in the history of India. In 1916, Mrs. Annie Besant, one of the celebrated leaders of the Indian national movement founded the Home Rule League. Annie Besant was an Irish lady. In 1889, she joined the Theosophical Society. The Theosophical Society established its office at Adiyar near Chennai and she became the president of it. Later she got involved in the national movement in India. She thought that the best political reform of India was to grant self-rule. The Home Rule league started an all India movement for the introduction of self-government in India. The object of the *home rule* movement was to attain Home Rule within the British Empire. In the same year in Pune, Bal Gangadhar Tilak also initiated Indian Home Rule League. Both Tilak and Besant carried out the message of the Home Rule among the masses. Both the leaders toured all over India, established branches of the league in different cities of India and carried the message through newspapers, mass meetings and distribution of leaflets etc.

Figure - 11.2



Annie Besant
Source : Google image



LET US KNOW

In 1914 First World War had begun. In the war Great Britain, France etc. had been fighting against the powers like Germany, Hungary, Turkey, etc. The British administration deliberately declared India to be a 'war Country' and Indian resources were used abundantly.

Home Rule Movement earned so much popularity that thousands of people joined the movement. Thus, the Home Rule movement was a powerful movement during the course of First World War. Besides, there had been lull in Indian politics at that time. The Congress had no new programme to offer to the people. The leaders of the league meant to keep up the spirit of Indian nationalism by spreading the idea of Home Rule. However, it remained within constitutional limit.

The popularity of the Home Rule movement alarmed the British government. The government tried to suppress the movement by force. Mrs. Annie Besant was kept under home confinement. Gangadhar Tilak was imprisoned. But the government repression instead of demoralizing the people created great enthusiasm.

Though the Home Rule Movement failed to achieve its objective, yet it made a solid contribution to the national movement. It was owing to this movement that the British government had to concede the demand for self-government at least in certain levels of administration. It also kept alive the Indian Nationalism during the course of First World War.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 12: In which year Home Rule League was founded in India?

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Q 13: Name two leaders of the Home Rule Movement.

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Q 14: What was the main objective of the Home Rule Movement?

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11.9 LET US SUM UP

After going through this unit, you have learnt about–

- the first phase of the Congress was dominated by the moderates who believed in constitutional means. Then the extremists came who believed in radical methods.
- the ugly seed of Communism too was sown in the Indian soil and the All India Muslim League was formed to counterbalance the Congress party to crush the rising tide of nationalism in Bengal and

to incite the feeling of communalism the Bengal was partitioned in 1905. To oppose it the Swadeshi movement was started.

- the Revolutionary movements were also going on side by side with the non-violent movement for securing independence to the Indian masses. During the anti-partition agitation it took an organised form in Bengal.
- the Home Rule movement which was started during the First World War.



11.10 FURTHER READING

1) Bandyopadhyay, Sekhara. (2004). From *Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India.* New Delhi, India: Orient Longman.
2) Chandra, B., Mukherjee, A., Panikkar, K.N. & Mahajan, S. (Ed.). (1988). *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947.* Delhi, India: Penguin.
3) Majumdar, R.C., Raychaudhuri, H.C. & Datta, K. (1978). *An Advanced History of India* (4th Ed.). New Delhi, India: Macmillan India



11.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to the question No.1: 1907

Answer to the question No.2: Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Answer to the question No.3: Lord Minto

Answer to the question No.4: 1906

Answer to the question No.5: 1905

Answer to the question No.6: East Bengal, West Bengal

Answer to the question No.7: Dhaka

Answer to the question No.8: 1911

Answer to the question No.9: Damodar Hari and Balkrishna Hari

Answer to the question No.10: The chief apostle of militant nationalism

in Bengal was Aurobindo Ghose.

Answer to the question No.11:U.S.A, Germany, Indo-China, Singapore, etc

Answer to the question No.12: 1916

Answer to the question No.13: Mrs. Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak

Answer to the question No.14: To attain Home Rule within the British Empire.



11.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question within 50 words)

Q.1 Name one of the moderate leaders of the Indian National Movement.

Q.2 Name one of the revolutionary leaders of Assam.

Q.3 Name the newspaper edited by Tilak.

Q.4 Who founded the *Ghadar* Party in U.S.A.?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question within 150 words)

Q.1 Distinguish between the moderate nationalists and the extremist nationalists

Q.2 Write a short note on Swadeshi Movement.

Q.3 Write a short note on the revolutionary national movement of Indian Freedom Struggle.

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in between 300-500 words)

Q.1 Trace the growth of Communalism in Indian National Movement.

Q.2 What was the main motive of the British Government to partition Bengal? Discuss about the consequences of the partition of Bengal.

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