

History Part – 30

30] Freedom Movement In India – Phase I

Notes

Freedom Movement In India – Phase I Pre-Gandhian Era (A.D. 1885 – A.D.

1919) Notes

The indian national awakening witnessed in the great revolt of 1857 was the beginning of a long struggle for freedom which culminated in the achievement of independence in 1947.

The indian nationalism arose out of the conditions created by the british rulers.

Factors Promoting the Growth of Nationalism in India

1. British imperialism

- The most important factor which lead to the rise of national movement was the british imperialism.
- By bringing the whole of india under their domination the british brought about the unification of the country.
- Before the advent of the british , there was no unity among the Indians.
- The british imperialism made the people in the idea of india as one nation.

2. Contact With The European Countries

- As a result of British supremacy, India came into close contact with the various European countries.
- English language became the language of the educated Indians. Indians came into the contact with the ideas and culture of the western ideas.
- Moreover the Indians were motivated by the unification of Germany and Italy. Hence they wanted to fight for their freedom.

3. Modern Methods Of Transport And Communication

- Modern means of transport and communication greatly helped the Indian leaders to carry on their ideas to every nook and corner of the country.
- The frequent meeting of the leaders and their personal contact with the people in different parts of the country gave a momentum to the nationalist movement in the country.

4. The Great Leaders Of India

- The great scholars, poets and national leaders played an important part for the development of national awakening. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda and leaders like Tilak, Nehru, Gandhi, Patel contributed a lot.
- They inspired the people with the ideas of self respect and self confidence. They fought against the foreign rule.

5. The Indian Press and Literature

- The Indian press and literature accelerated the spread of national consciousness among the masses of India and stamped their minds with ideals of freedom.
- Newspapers like the Indian Mirror, Bombay Samachar, the Amrit Bazaar Patrika, the Hindu, the Kesari, and Maratha echoed the public opinion and developed a national outlook among masses.
- The writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Subramani Bharathi and other patriotic writers brought national awakening among Indians.
- The Vernacular Press Act of 1878, curbed the freedom of the press. It led to agitation and unrest among people.

6. The Great Revolt Of 1857

- The English ruthlessly crushed the Great Revolt. The Indians were completely shaken by the atrocities done by the English.
- They were humiliated and so they hated the rule of the British.
- The revolt did not completely crush the spirit. It began to spring out and develop Congress into national awakening, which finally led to the freedom of India.

7. Racial Discrimination

- The British followed the policy of divide and rule. They followed the policy of racial superiority and openly insulted Indians.
- All higher posts were reserved for the English and Indians were debarred from them.
- The British considered the Indians as inferior and uncivilized. The controversy over the Ilbert Bill made it clear that the Indians could not expect justice and fair play from the English.

Freedom Movement In India – Phase II Pre-Gandhian Era (A.D. 1885 – A.D. 1919)

In order to give higher posts to Indians, the Charter Act of 1833 and Act of 1853 were passed. But no Indians were appointed in any higher posts. It ended in failure. The British followed the policy of repression and discrimination which added the fuel to the fire. The political consciousness had dawned and the people wanted more and more powers in their hands. The Arms Act of 1858 and the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 added the freedom spirit among the Indians. The Ilbert Bill of 1853 failed to fulfill the aspirations of the Indians.

The Indian National Congress (1885)

- Allan Octavian Hume, a retired civil servant in the British Government took the initiative to form an all-India organization.

- Thus, the Indian National Congress was founded and its first session was held at Bombay in 1885.
- W.C. Banerjee was its first president. It was attended by 72 delegates from all over India. Persons attending the session belonged to different religious faiths.
- They discussed the problems of all the Indians irrespective of their religion, caste, language and regions. Thus Indian National Congress from the start was an all-India secular movement embracing every section of Indian society.
- The second session was held in Calcutta in 1886 and the third in Madras in 1887.
- The history of the Indian National Movement can be studied in three important phases:

(i) The phase of moderate nationalism (1885-1905) when the Congress continued to be loyal to the British crown.

(ii) The years 1906-1916 witnessed- Swadeshi Movement, rise of militant nationalism and the Home Rule Movement.

(iii) The period from 1917 to 1947 is known as the Gandhian era.

Aims of Indian National Congress

- Expansion and reform of legislative councils.
- Greater opportunities for Indians in higher posts by holding the ICS examination simultaneously in England and in India.
- Separation of the judiciary from the executive.
- More powers for the local bodies.
- Reduction of land revenue and protection of peasants from unjust landlords.
- Abolition of salt tax and sugar duty.
- Reduction of spending on army.
- Freedom of speech and expression and freedom to form associations

Moderate Nationalism

- The leading figures during the first phase of the National Movement were A.O. Hume, W.C. Banerjee, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Feroze Shah Mehta, Gopalakrishna Gokhale, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Badruddin Tyabji, Justice Ranade and G.Subramanya Aiyar.
- Surendranath Banerjee was called the Indian Burke. He firmly opposed the Partition of Bengal.
- He founded the Indian Association (1876) to agitate for political reforms. He had convened the Indian National Conference (1883) which merged with the Indian National Congress in 1886.

- G. Subramanya Aiyar preached nationalism through the Madras Mahajana Sabha.
- He also founded the The Hindu and Swadesamitran. Dadabhai Naoroji was known as the Grand Old Man of India. He is regarded as India's unofficial Ambassador in England.
- He was the first Indian to become a Member of the British House of Commons.
- Gopal Krishna Gokhale was regarded as the political guru of Gandhi. In 1905, he founded the Servants of India Society to train Indians to dedicate their lives to the cause of the country.

For a few years the Congress enjoyed the patronage of the British administrators. Between 1885 and 1905, the Congress leaders were moderates. The Moderates had faith in the British justice and goodwill. They were called moderates because they adopted peaceful and constitutional means to achieve their demands.

Methods of Moderates

- The Moderates had total faith in the British sense of justice and fair play.
- They were loyal to the British. They looked to England for inspiration and guidance.

- The Moderates used petitions, resolutions, meetings, leaflets and pamphlets, memorandum and delegations to present their demands.
- They confined their political activities to the educated classes only. Their aim was to attain political rights and self-government stage by stage.
- In the beginning, the British Government welcomed the birth of the Indian National Congress.
- In 1886, Governor General Lord Dufferin gave a tea garden party for the Congress members in Calcutta.
- The government officials had also attended Congress sessions. With the increase in Congress demands, the government became unfriendly. It encouraged the Muslims to stay away from the Congress.
- The only demand of the Congress granted by the British was the expansion of the legislative councils by the Indian Councils Act of 1892.

Achievements of Moderates

1. The Moderates were able to create a wide national awakening among the people.
2. They popularized the ideas of democracy, civil liberties and representative institutions.
3. They explained how the British were exploiting Indians. Particularly, Dadabhai Naoroji in his famous book Poverty and Un-British Rule in India wrote his Drain

Theory. He showed how India's wealth was going away to England in the form of: (a) salaries, (b) savings, (c) pensions, (d) payments to British troops in India and (e) profits of the British companies. In fact, the British Government was forced to appoint the Welby Commission, with Dadabhai as the first Indian as its member, to enquire into the matter.

4. Some Moderates like Ranade and Gokhale favoured social reforms. They protested against child marriage and widowhood.

5. The Moderates had succeeded in getting the expansion of the legislative councils by the Indian Councils Act of 1892.

The period from 1905 was known as the era of extremism in the Indian National Movement. The extremists or the aggressive nationalists believed that success could be achieved through bold means. The important extremist leaders were Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh.

Causes for the Rise of Extremism

1. The failure of the Moderates to win any notable success other than the expansion of the legislative councils by the Indian Councils Act (1892).

2. The famine and plague of 1896-97 which affected the whole country and the suffering of the masses.

3. The economic conditions of the people became worse.
4. The ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa on the basis of colour of skin.
5. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 in which Japan defeated the European power Russia. This encouraged Indians to fight against the European nation, Britain.
6. The immediate cause for the rise of extremism was the reactionary rule of Lord Curzon:

- He passed the Calcutta Corporation Act, (1899) reducing the Indian control of this local body.
- The Universities Act (1904) reduced the elected members in the University bodies. It also reduced the autonomy of the universities and made them government departments.
- The Sedition Act and the Official Secrets Act reduced the freedoms of all people.
- His worst measure was the Partition of Bengal (1905).

Main Objective of Extremists

Their main objective was to attain Swaraj or complete independence and not just self-government.

Methods of the Extremists

The Extremists had no faith in the British sense of justice and fair play. They pointed out the forceful means by which the British had taken control of India. They believed that political rights will have to be fought for. They had the spirit of selfreliance and self- determination.

The methods used by the extremists were:

1. Not cooperating with the British Government by boycotting government courts, schools and colleges.
2. Promotion of Swadeshi and boycott of foreign goods.
3. Introduction and promotion of national education.

Leaders of the Extremists

The extremists were led by Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipinchandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh.

- Bal Gangadhar Tilak is regarded as the real founder of the popular anti-British movement in India. He was known as ‘Lokamanya’. He attacked the British through his weeklies The Mahratta and the Kesari. He was jailed twice by the British for his nationalist activities and in 1908 deported to Mandalay for six years. He set up the Home Rule League in 1916 at Poona

and declared “Swaraj is my birthright and I will have it.” He revived the celebration of Ganapati and Shivaji festivals to arouse the national feelings.

- Lala Lajpat Rai is popularly known as the ‘Lion of Punjab’. He played an important role in the Swadeshi Movement. He founded the Indian Home Rule League in the US in 1916. He was deported to Mandalay on the ground of sedition. He received fatal injuries while leading a procession against the Simon Commission and died on November 17, 1928.
- Bipan Chandra Pal began his career as a moderate and turned an extremist. He played an important role in the Swadeshi Movement. He preached nationalism through the nook and corner of India by his powerful speeches and writings.
- Aurobinda Ghosh was another extremist leader and he actively participated in the Swadeshi Movement. He was also imprisoned. After his release he settled in the French territory of Pondicherry and concentrated on spiritual activities.

Partition of Bengal and the Rise of Extremism

The partition of Bengal in 1905 provided a spark for the rise of extremism in the Indian National Movement.

Curzon’s real motives were:

- ✓ To break the growing strength of Bengali nationalism since Bengal was the base of Indian nationalism.
- ✓ To divide the Hindus and Muslims in Bengal.
- ✓ To show the enormous power of the British Government in doing whatever it liked.

On the same day when the partition came into effect, 16 October 1905, the people of Bengal organised protest meetings and observed a day of mourning.

- The whole political life of Bengal underwent a change. Gandhi wrote that the real awakening in India took place only after the Partition of Bengal.
- The anti-partition movement culminated into the Swadeshi Movement and spread to other parts of India.
- The aggressive nationalists forced Dadabhai Naoroji to speak of Swaraj (which was not a Moderate demand) in the Calcutta Session of Congress in 1906.
- They adopted the resolutions of Boycott and Swadeshi. The Moderate Congressmen were unhappy. They wanted Swaraj to be achieved through constitutional methods.
- The differences led to a split in the Congress at the Surat session in 1907. This is popularly known as the famous Surat Split.

- The extremists came out of the Congress led by Tilak and others. Swadeshi literally means one's own country. The Congress adopted the slogan Vande Mataram composed by the Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.

Swadeshi Movement

- The Swadeshi Movement involved programmes like the boycott of government service, courts, schools and colleges and of foreign goods, promotion of Swadeshi goods, Promotion of National Education through the establishment of national schools and colleges.
- It was both a political and economic movement. The Swadeshi Movement was a great success. In Bengal, even the landlords joined the movement.
- The women and students took to picketing. Students refused using books made of foreign paper.
- The government adopted several tough measures. It passed several Acts to crush the movement. The Swadeshi volunteers were beaten badly.
- The cry of Vande Mataram was forbidden. Schools and colleges were warned not to allow their students to take part in the movement or else their aid would be stopped. Some Indian government employees lost their jobs.
- Extremist leaders Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh were imprisoned and deported.

Achievements of Extremists

The achievements of extremists can be summed up as follows:

1. They were the first to demand Swaraj as a matter of birth right.
2. They involved the masses in the freedom struggle and broadened the social base of the National Movement.
3. They were the first to organize an all-India political movement, viz. the Swadeshi Movement.

Formation of the Muslim League (1906)

- In December 1906, Muslim delegates from all over India met at Dacca for the Muslim Educational Conference.
- Taking advantage of this occasion, Nawab Salimullah of Dacca proposed the setting up of an organisation to look after the Muslim interests.
- The proposal was accepted. The All-India Muslim League was finally set up on December 30, 1906.
- Like the Indian National Congress, they conducted annual sessions and put their demands to the British government. Initially, they enjoyed the support of the British.

- Their first achievement was the separate electorates for the Muslims in the Minto-Morley reforms.

The Lucknow Pact (1916)

- During the 1916 Congress session at Lucknow two major events occurred. The divided Congress became united.
- An understanding for joint action against the British was reached between the Congress and the Muslim League and it was called the Lucknow Pact.
- The signing of the Lucknow Pact by the Congress and the Muslim League in 1916 marked an important step in the Hindu-Muslim unity.

Surat split – 1907

- Meanwhile the relation between the moderate and extremists reached a breaking point.
- The congress session held at surat in 1907 was a battle ground between the moderate and the extremists.
- A rift arose between them over the election of the congress president.
- The congress was divided and the extremists left the congress. Bala gangadhar tilak became the leader of the extremists and gopala Krishna gokhale became the leader of moderates.

The Minto Morley Reforms Act of 1909

- The minto morley reforms or the indian council Act of 1909 was passed to appease the sentiments of the muslims in india.
- The minto morley reforms introduced separate electorate for the muslims. The moderates criticized the reforms.

The Home Rule Movement (1916)

- Two Home Rule Leagues were established, one by B.G. Tilak at Poona in April 1916 and the other by Mrs. Annie Besant at Madras in September 1916.
- The aim of the Movement was to get self- government for India within the British Empire.
- It believed freedom was the natural right of all nations. Moreover, the leaders of the Home Movement thought that India's resources were not being used for her needs.
- The two Leagues cooperated with each other as well with the Congress and the Muslim League in putting their demand for home rule.
- While Tilak's Movement concentrated on Maharashtra, Annie Besant's Movement covered the rest of the country.
- The Home Rule Movement had brought a new life in the national movement. There was a revival of Swadeshi. Women joined in larger numbers.

- On 20 August 1917, Montague, the Secretary of State in England, made a declaration in the Parliament of England on British Government's policy towards future political reforms in India.
- He promised the gradual development of self governing institutions in India. This August Declaration led to the end of the Home Rule Movement.

Revolutionary Movements

- In the first half of the 20th century, revolutionary groups sprang up mainly in Bengal, Maharashtra, Punjab and Madras.
- The revolutionaries were not satisfied with the methods of both the moderates and extremists.
- Hence, they started many revolutionary secret organizations. In Bengal Anusilan Samiti and Jugantar were established.
- In Maharashtra Savarkar brothers had set up Abhinava Bharat. In the Madras Presidency, Bharathmatha Association was started by Nilakanta Bramachari.
- In Punjab Ajit Singh set up a secret society to spread revolutionary ideas among the youth. In London, at India House, Shyamji Krishna Verma gathered young Indian nationalists like Madan Lal Dhingra, Savarkar, V.V.S. Iyer and T.S.S.Rajan. Lala Hardyal set up the 'Ghadar Party' in USA to organize revolutionary activities from outside India.

The First World War 1914 – 1918

- The first world war broke out in 1914. During the war , britin , france and Russia were on one side.AS india was a part of the british empire , indian soliders actively participated in the war.
- The indian national congress supported the british hoping that at the end of the war they would be rewarded with self government.

August Declaration -1917

The august declaration of 1917 promised responsible government to the people of india by stages , so that the Indians would learn the art of governing their own state. Hence the home rule league was slowly withdrawn.

Montague Chelmsford Reforms Act of 1919

- During the first world war india co operated with the british for their success.In return the brirish passed the montague Chelmsford reforms in 1919.
- It explained the legislature at the centre and in the provinces.It introduced diarchy in the provinces.It further encouraged the communal , racial and religion interest by allowing the Sikhs , nglo Indians and Europeans to send their own separate representatives.

- However the congress rejected their own reform and decided to revolt against it. Mrs. Annie Besant described this act as ungenerous for England to offer and unworthy for India to accept.
- On the whole, the local movements at Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad brought Mahatma Gandhi closer to the life of the people and their problems at the grass roots level. Consequently, he became the leader of the masses.

Rowlatt Act (1919)

- In 1917, a committee was set up under the presidency of Sir Sydney Rowlatt to look into the militant Nationalist activities.
- On the basis of its report the Rowlatt Act was passed in March 1919 by the Central Legislative Council. As per this Act, any person could be arrested on the basis of suspicion.
- No appeal or petition could be filed against such arrests. This Act was called the Black Act and it was widely opposed. An all-India hartal was organized on 6 April 1919.
- Meetings were held all over the country. Mahatma Gandhi was arrested near Delhi. Two prominent leaders of Punjab, Dr Satya Pal and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew, were arrested in Amritsar.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (13 April, 1919)

- The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre took place on 13 April 1919 and it remained a turning point in the history of India's freedom movement.
- In Punjab, there was an unprecedented support to the Rowlatt Satyagraha. Facing a violent situation, the Government of Punjab handed over the administration to the military authorities under General Dyer.
- He banned all public meetings and detained the political leaders. On 13th April, the Baisakhi day (harvest festival), a public meeting was organized at the Jallianwala Bagh (garden).
- Dyer marched in and without any warning opened fire on the crowd. The firing continued for about 10 to 15 minutes and it stopped only after the ammunition exhausted.
- According to official report 379 people were killed and 1137 wounded in the incident. There was a nation-wide protest against this massacre and Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood as a protest.
- The Jallianwala Bagh massacre gave a tremendous impetus to the freedom struggle.

Khilafat Movement 1919

- The chief cause of the Khilafat Movement was the defeat of Turkey in the First World War.

- The harsh terms of the Treaty of Sevres (1920) was felt by the Muslims as a great insult to them.
- The whole movement was based on the Muslim belief that the Caliph (the Sultan of Turkey) was the religious head of the Muslims all over the world.
- The Muslims in India were upset over the British attitude against Turkey and launched the Khilafat Movement. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, M.A. Ansari, Saifuddin Kitchlew and the Ali brothers were the prominent leaders of this movement.
- A Khilafat Committee had been formed and on 19th October 1919, the whole country had observed the Khilafat day.
- On 23 November, a joint conference of the Hindus and the Muslims had also been held under the chairmanship of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Mahatma Gandhi was particularly interested in bringing the Hindus and the Muslims together to achieve the country's independence.
- Subsequently, the Khilafat Movement merged with the Non-Cooperation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920.