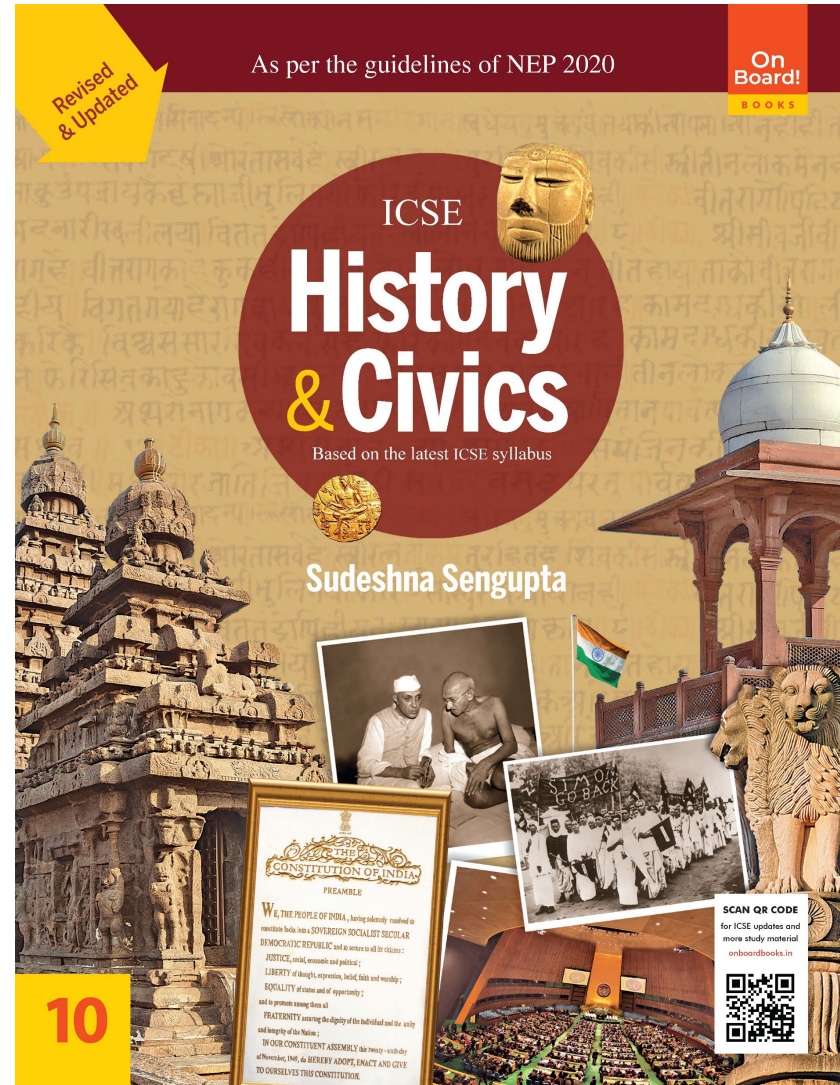


On Board!

B O O K S

ICSE History and Civics 10



Section B: History

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Chapter 2 Rise of Nationalism and Birth of the Congress

MOVEMENTS HIGHLIGHTING NATIONALISM

For many years after the First War of Independence, armed resistance against the British was witnessed in different parts of the country. Though the resistance was mostly localized, it revealed the discontent against the foreign rule. Some of these movements were as follows:

The Wahabi Movement The Wahabis (followers of Syed Ahmad Bareilvi) repeatedly rebelled against the British. They set-up a centre of religious education for Muslims at Deoband (Uttar Pradesh) in 1867. It instilled feelings of hostility towards the British rule and inspired Indians to fight for freedom.

The Kuka Movement In Punjab, the Kukas, led by Guru Ram Singh, rose against the British. They boycotted English education and goods. They were suppressed in 1872.

The Indigo Revolt The European planters forced the peasants in Bengal to grow indigo in the fertile fields against their will. Production of food crops suffered. For the European, indigo planters' oppression knew no bounds.

Revolt by Vasudeo Balwant Phadke The terrible famine (1876–77) in western India deeply stirred Vasudeo Balwant Phadke. He recruited a band of young men, gave them training in the use of arms, instilled the spirit of patriotism among his followers and conducted raids on different British establishments.

The Munda Rebellion Mundas, a tribe of the Chotanagpur raised the banner of revolt under the leadership of Birsa Munda and aimed to remove the foreign rulers and their supporters, the landlords, who were responsible for their suffering.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF NATIONALISM

The socio-religious reform movements led to an awakening among the masses, whereby a feeling of oneness developed. This in turn gave birth to a national movement. It was national because it represented the aspirations of the majority of Indians, and people started looking beyond their regional interests.

Economic exploitation of India

The spirit of nationalism was fanned by the discontent and anger against the British rule. The British systematically destroyed the Indian trade, industry and crafts. They were only interested in filling their coffers with no benefits for the Indians in any way.

- **The condition of the peasants and craftsmen** The Indian peasants were the main victims of the harsh British policies. To increase their profits, the British forcibly cultivated cash crops like indigo, opium, jute, etc. as they fetched higher prices in the world market than the food crops. The government took away a large portion of their produce in the form of land revenue and other taxes.
- In the wake of increasing influx of machine-made goods from Britain that were superior in quality and also cheaper than the Indian goods, the Indian handicraft industry was ruined.
- **The educated youth** The educated young men of the country were becoming dissatisfied by the lack of opportunities available to them. Promotions and higher paid jobs were reserved for the British. Deserving Indians were denied top positions on superficial grounds.
- **Economic welfare of the people ignored** The welfare of the Indians was completely ignored. The burden of taxes increased. Expenditure on military operations, army and police maintenance increased sharply while there was a total disregard for the basic requirements of the common man in the country.

Thus, India under the British was a colony that served the interests of the colonial power.

Racial discrimination and repressive policies

The primary cause, which perhaps evoked the anger of the people the most, was the racial arrogance and repressive measures followed by the British.

- **Racial segregation** They were racially segregated by: a. not being allowed to travel in the same compartment with the Englishmen, b. being denied entry into clubs and hotels meant only for the Englishmen. There were exclusive residential areas for the Englishmen. Indians were also severely punished for petty crimes, while the English were given nominal punishments for even grave offences.
- **The Delhi Durbar** The proclamation that gave Queen Victoria her new title of Empress of India put the Indian princes, who ruled about one third of the land (the rest was British India), on a lower rank and made it clear that the British were the paramount power. The Delhi durbar was held during the great famine and was a terrible waste of money at a time of so much suffering.
- **The Vernacular Press Act** According to this act, the editors of newspapers and journals in Indian languages had to sign a bond (agreement) before a judge or collector, not to print anything that would turn people against the government or disturb the peace. This was known as censorship, which took away the freedom of the Indian language press, while the English newspapers and journals were left unaffected. The act was very unpopular and the Indians called it the gagging or choking act.
- **The Arms Act** Indians needed a licence from the government to own and carry weapons. But this law did not apply to the Europeans
- **Ilbert Bill Controversy** Europeans enjoyed the privilege of a trial by a judge of their own race. Later, though an Indian magistrate or judge could try cases against European offenders, the accused could have the benefit of a trial by jury of which half the members were to be Europeans or Americans.

Socio-religious reform movements

The nineteenth century India saw the emergence of social and religious reformers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, etc.

- All these reformers directed their attention to the eradication of many cruel practices performed in the name of religion. They denounced social evils like untouchability, caste distinctions, sati and female infanticide.
- The upliftment of women was the primary concern of all reformers. Education for women was considered essential for the development of the nation as a whole.
- They preached about the greatness of India's culture and philosophy. The ideas of self-reliance, self-respect and national pride were propagated.
- Raja Rammohan Roy, known as the 'Maker of Modern India', was the founder of the Brahmo Samaj which was one of the first Indian socio-religious reform movements. Through it, he condemned child marriage and played a major role in abolishing the sati system. Raja Rammohan Roy campaigned for rights of women, including the right for widows to remarry and the right of the women to hold property.
- Another dedicated reformer was Jotirao Govindrao Phule. With a keen sense of social justice, Phule laid great stress on the education of the women and the lower castes.
- Henry Louis Vivian Derozio started the Young Bengal Movement. He was inspired by the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, popularized by the French Revolution. He encouraged his students to think rationally, challenge the caste system, condemn social evils, and fight for the rights of women, particularly the right to education.
- Another great reformer was Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. He devoted his life for the upliftment of women. He was against child-marriage and polygamy. He waged a long struggle in support of widow remarriage.

- Dayanand Saraswati asked Indians to go back to the teachings of the Vedas. He attacked the purdah system. In 1893, Swami Vivekananda participated in the
- World Parliament of Religions at Chicago and made the world take notice of India. He believed that service to man was service to God.
- Annie Besant, though Irish by birth, stood for the development of nationalist ideas among the Indians. She worked to revive Hinduism and urged the Indians to take pride in their culture.
- All the reformers of South India worked for temple reforms. They fought to end the practice of untouchables being denied entry to temples. They were also against the devadasi system. They wanted temple funds to be controlled not by the temple priests, but by the general public. The efforts of these reformers created awareness among the people.

Revivalism among the Muslims

- Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a man with vision and an extraordinary resolve. He realized that the only way to provide opportunities for modernizing the Muslims was to instill in them a desire for western education and social reforms. He also established many schools in different parts of the country. Sir Syed's greatest achievement was the establishment of the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) College at Aligarh in 1875. Later, this College grew into the Aligarh Muslim University. He was a progressive nationalist who believed in Hindu-Muslim Unity. Later he separated from Congress and formed All India Muslim League.
- Reform movements within the Parsi community were started by Naoroji Furdoonji and Dadabhai Naoroji. They also worked to spread education, especially among girls.

Role of the press and Indian literature

The spread of western education was reflected in the emergence of the press. The press, in turn, played a vital role in the dissemination of nationalistic ideas. Further, the prolific literary output by the Indians also contributed to the growth of nationalism.

The press

- The press, especially the vernacular press, spread useful information, articulating problems of public interest. It became the voice of the public opinion in India.
- Some of the English dailies supported the policies of the government, yet reported all political developments for the knowledge of the people. Noteworthy being The Times of India (1861), The Pioneer (1865), The Madras Mail (1868) and The Statesman (1875).
- The papers, owned and edited by the Indians, grew in number. They played an important role in exposing the abuses of administration and the growth of nationalist sentiments.

Indian literature

Nationalist literature in the form of patriotic novels, essays and poetry led to a cultural awakening among the people. The writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Subramania Bharati, Bhartendu Harishchandra encouraged the growth of nationalism.

Modern means of transport and communication

The British realized that they needed an effective network of communication for administrative efficiency. Thus, during Lord Dalhousie's reign, the railway and telegraph systems in India became functional. What the British thought would be beneficial for them alone, proved to be a blessing for the national movement as well. Nationalist leaders from around the country could now communicate ideas as well as establish rapport with like-minded individuals very easily. Through such effective means of communication and transport, nationalist literature could now reach the remotest part of the country. It also proved effective in breaking down caste and religious barriers as people travelled and moved about together.

Other factors

- The myth of European invincibility was shattered. It filled the hearts of the Indians with hope and faith in their own power.
- The initial adversities suffered by the British troops served as a lesson for the Indians that by relying on their own strength they could defy a stronger adversary.
- The Indians who had migrated to the British colonies in South Africa, Australia and elsewhere were subjected to great hardships. Every Indian felt a bitter pain for such humiliation, and it aroused within them a deep longing for national independence.
- Unification of India through the means of railways, telegraph and the postal system helped people to come in contact with one another, weakening caste and regional boundaries and promoting a feeling of solidarity and togetherness.
- Though modern education was introduced by the British to fill the lower levels of administration, it exposed the Indians to new ideas of liberty and equality coming from different political revolutions and thinkers of the world.
- There emerged a western educated middle class in India, who were conscious of their rights and duties.
- Scholars revealed the vivid picture of past glory and greatness of Indian philosophy and culture and made Indians aware of their rich past.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS PRIOR TO THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The growth of nationalism led to the birth of political ideas and organizations. The activities of the associations, which started before the Indian National Congress, were restricted to the region in which they were formed. They were also limited in both membership and aims. Most of their members were educated Indians belonging to the upper sections of the society. They only sent petitions to the government with a request to reduce taxes, end discriminatory practices, introduce administrative reforms and involve more Indians in the administration. The government ignored these petitions.

The earliest association was the **Landholder's Society** formed in 1838 to protect the interests of the landlords of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. This was followed by the **British India Association** founded in 1851 to improve the system of administration and the welfare of India. The **London India Society** (1865) with Dadabhai Naoroji and WC Bonnerjee was started in London to enable Indians and Englishmen to meet and discuss various matters concerning Indian administration. The London Society soon amalgamated with the **East India Association** (1866). This association under the leadership of Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, provided information about the Indian administration to the British public and suggested remedial measures.

The **Hindu Mela**, an annual gathering, was started by Nabagopal Mitra in 1867 in Bengal. It was set up to foster a sense of unity among the Hindus of India and to establish a self-sufficient India.

The **Poona Sarvajanik Sabha**, originally Poona Association (1870) was founded by Justice Ranade. It endeavoured to arouse a sense of political rights and to urge them to fight through constitutional methods. The concepts of Khadi and Swadeshi were also popularized.

Perhaps the most important organization during this period was the Indian National Association(1876) established in Calcutta by Surendranath Banerjea. The objectives of this Association were:

- Creation of a strong body of public opinion in the country.
- Unification of the Indian people upon the basis of common political interests.
- Promotion of unity between Hindus and Muslims.

The Indian Association was welcomed by all groups of public opinion. It was, however, a provincial organization and a need was felt for an association, which would embrace the whole of India. Thus, Surendranath Banerjea convened the Indian National Conference (1883), the first all-India political conference that offered a model to the Indian National Congress. This Conference was a forerunner of the Indian National Congress and provided the pattern for this dynamic all-India national organization.

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

Founding of the Indian National Congress

The credit for organizing the Indian National Congress goes to an Englishman, Allan Octavian Hume. He devised the Congress as a safety-valve to stem the growing tide of nationalism among the people. He wanted to create an organization which, while remaining under the supervision of the British, would let the government know the demands of the people acting as a channel of communication. He thus wanted to prevent another nationwide revolt, like the one that took place in 1857. The Congress had very modest beginnings. It held its session once a year, usually in the month of December. In the early years, many Englishmen were associated with it.

Immediate objectives

WC Bonnerjee, the President of the Congress, stated the objectives of the organization as follows:

- To promote cooperation and friendly relations between the nationalist workers from all over the country.
- To promote a sense of national unity by removing all racial, religious and provincial prejudices.
- To represent before the government the vital social issues and the matured opinions of the educated Indians.
- To determine the tasks or issues to be addressed in the coming year.
- To train and mobilize public opinion in the country.

Demands and achievements

The demands were:

The appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into the working of Indian administration.

- Abolition of the India Council.
- Creation of Legislative Councils for the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), Awadh and the Punjab.
- Reduction of military expenditure.
- Conducting Public Service Examinations simultaneously in England and India and raising the age of the candidates.

The main achievement of the first session was that it increased the political consciousness of the people and also the plea by the President to the Muslims to join the Congress.

Year after year the Congress passed resolutions, protesting against the wrongs and demanding for reforms in various branches of administration. Protests were made against various measures undertaken by the government. The role of the Congress increased manifold till it launched the Non-cooperation and the Quit India Movements that ultimately put an end to the British rule in India.

To Remember

Movements highlighting nationalism – The Wahabi Movement, The Kuka Movement, The Indigo Revolt, Revolt by Vasudeo Balwant Phadke, The Munda Rebellion.

Factors contributing to the growth of nationalism – Economic exploitation of India, development of modern means of transport and communication, unification of the country, racial discrimination and repressive policies, influence of western education and culture, role of the middle class, role of the press and Indian literature, rediscovery and revivalism, socio-religious reform movements, other factors.

Political organizations prior to the Indian National Congress – The Landholder's Society, British India Association, The London Society, East India Association, Hindu Mela, The Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, The Madras Mahajan Sabha, Bombay Presidency Association, Indian Association.

The Indian National Congress – Was founded by A O Hume in 1885, Congress was devised as a safety-valve to channelise the feeling of nationalism in a proper direction, first session of Congress was held in 1885 in Bombay, WC Bonnerjee was the president of the first session of the Congress.

Immediate objectives of the Indian National Congress – To promote national unity, to present vital social issues before the government, to train and mobilize public opinion.

Demands and achievements of the Congress – Demands: Appointment of the Royal Commission, abolition of the India Council, Creation of Legislative Councils for the NWFP, Awadh and the Punjab, reduction of military expenditure, Achievements: The Congress heightened the political consciousness of the people, played a crucial role in India's struggle for independence.

Thank You