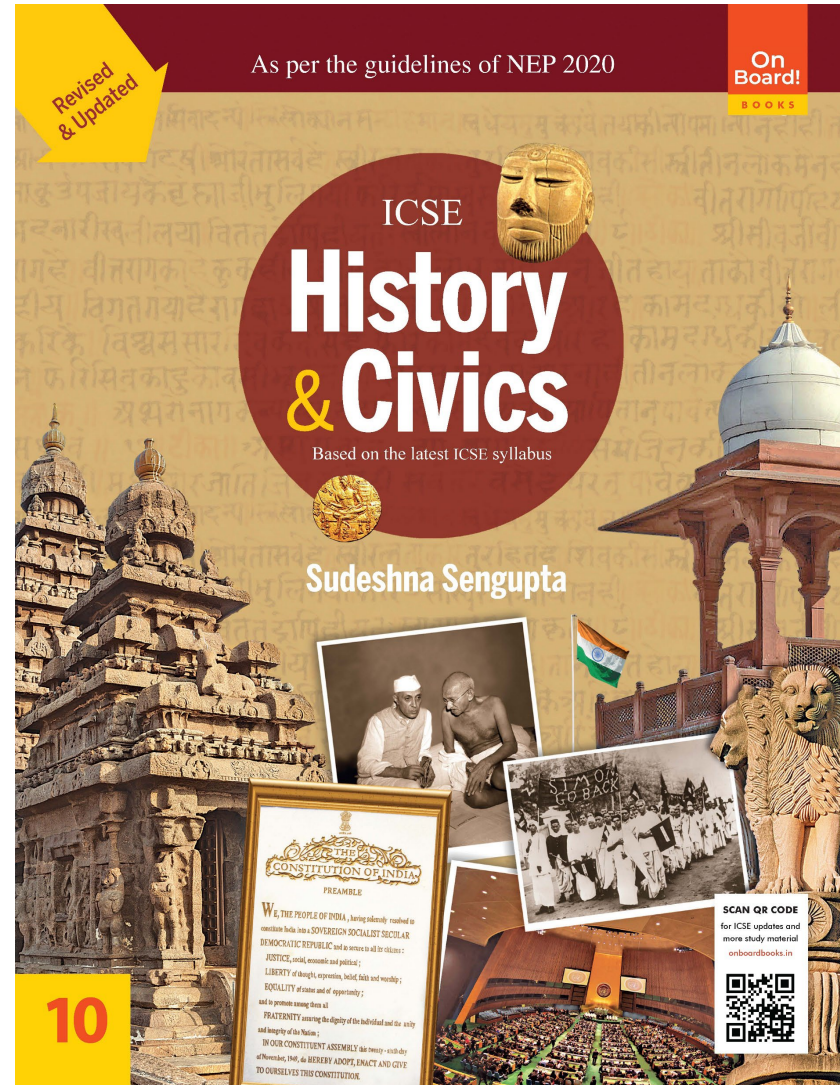


On Board!

B O O K S

ICSE History and Civics 10



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Chapter 4 Rise of the Radicals

WHO WERE THE RADICALS?

Dissatisfied with the petitions, prayers and pleas of the Early Nationalists, there emerged a vibrant group of young men who did not believe in the methods of the early nationalists. This group stood for complete Swaraj which was to be achieved by active resistance and fundamental changes. These men were called the Assertive Nationalists or Radicals. They were led by dynamic nationalists like Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal. The trio referred to as Lal-Bal-Pal, exercised a strong influence on the Congress, and inaugurated the 'Assertive Nationalist phase' or Radical phase that lasted from 1905 to 1919.

Causes of the rise of the Radicals

The growing discontent in the country was due to the expansion of the British dominions at an alarming pace.

Failure of the Early Nationalists The Early Nationalist leaders were unable to achieve anything substantial. They had also failed to secure any substantial political reforms from the government. The Radicals felt that the Early Nationalists' faith in the goodness of the British rulers was misplaced, and the need of the hour was a vigorous, all-out, uncompromising movement to achieve swaraj for the country.

Economic degradation The harsh economic programme of the British administration led to the worst famine in the country from 1896 to 1900. The government machinery was slow in providing relief to the people. Instead, a lot of money was spent on the silver jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. Plague followed in the wake of famine. The Indian peasants were impoverished, the traders and manufacturers were in no better position, and the country was starved of its own resources.

Ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa Though the Indians had helped the British to develop their colonies in South Africa, they were subject to racial discrimination. They were denied the right to vote, to travel in buses and coaches reserved for the whites and unfair taxes were levied on them.

Ideological climate The Radicals were inspired by the writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Vivekananda and Dayanand Saraswati who extolled upon the virtues of self-sacrifice and fighting for the country.

Influence of international events Events in other parts of the world also popularized assertive action. Russia's defeat by Japan, a tiny island country of Asia (1905), and the defeat of Italy in the hands of the Ethiopians (1896), showed that the Europeans were not invincible. Revolutionary movements in Turkey, Iran, Egypt and China convinced the Indians that if they were united and were willing to make sacrifices, they could defeat a country as powerful as England.

Repressive policies of Lord Curzon Viceroy Lord Curzon continued the policy of repression followed by Lord Lytton. He did not want to grant any kind of freedom to the Indians. His one-point agenda was to crush the growing demand for self-rule by the Indians.

Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal in 1905 which finally made the Radicals undertake stringent and bold measures that were needed to gain concessions from the British. The age of resolutions, petitions and prayers was over.

CASE STUDY OF PARTITION OF BENGAL – 1905

Bengal was considered too large an area to be administered efficiently by one person. On his appointment as the Governor General, Lord Curzon took up this matter. In 1903, he decided to constitute two provinces in Bengal to be in charge of Lieutenant Governors – one comprising West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar, and the other Assam, North Bengal and East Bengal.

Reasons behind the Partition

The official reason for the partition was that of administrative convenience. The veiled motive was to strike at the root of Indian nationalism in politically advanced Bengal, by driving a wedge between the Hindus and the Muslims. This policy of communal discrimination by Lord Curzon came to be accepted as a permanent strategy of the British, which culminated in the creation of Pakistan.

The Anti-partition Movement

The Indian nationalists could sense the real motive behind partition and declared it as unfair, unjust and unnecessary. It was seen as a hindrance to the social, moral and economic advancement of the people of Bengal. A resolution was adopted that called for a strong agitation until partition was annulled.

Initial stages The first two months that followed the partition proposals witnessed a large number of processions and protest meetings. A vigorous campaign was also launched by the press against the partition.

On 19 July 1905, the government announced its decision to partition Bengal. This was followed by a huge meeting at the Town Hall in Calcutta on 7 August 1905. Leaders, representatives from the districts, teachers, students and the common people, attended this meeting. Students carrying black flags and banners of 'United Bengal' and 'Unity is Strength' marched through the streets of the city, till they reached the Town Hall.

Four resolutions were adopted that day:

- Partition was denounced as being arbitrary.
- The manner in which partition had been brought into effect was criticized.
- The principle of boycott of British goods was adopted.
- Agitation would continue till the partition was annulled.

The day of the partition

The government announced that partition would become operative on 16 October 1905.

Leaders and their contribution

Surendranath Banerjea was acclaimed as the leader of the movement. He observed that the partition would never be accepted, and lawful agitation would continue.

K K Mitra urged people to boycott British goods and to observe the day of partition as national mourning.

Famous barrister LM Ghosh proposed the boycott of British goods, particularly cotton textiles.

Swadeshi and Boycott Movement

With the formal proclamation of the Swadeshi Movement on 7 August 1905, the anti-partition movement began. The impact of this movement in its initial stages was an economic one. The British were traders and their prime motive was to make profits. By boycotting the goods produced by them, the leaders sought to strike at the economic root of the British Empire. Swadeshi and boycott were complementary to each other. Boycott with its thrust on refusal to buy foreign goods led to the establishment of indigenous industries. The movement was launched with the following objectives:

- To promote Indian goods and industries.
- To boycott foreign goods.
- To provide employment to the native craftsmen.
- To strike at the root of the British economy.

Aims and programme of Swadeshi and Boycott movement

The movement was aimed at economic self-reliance for the Indians.

This movement threw up new techniques of mass mobilization.

All forms of mass mobilization aimed at boycott and burning of foreign goods, picketing of shops selling foreign goods and urging people to use goods manufactured in India.

Gradually, the Swadeshi Movement spread beyond Bengal into towns and districts of Bombay, Madras, Punjab, UP and MP.

The boycott included boycott of government schools and colleges, titles and government services. The issue was no longer the boycott of British goods but the boycott of British rule. The goal of the Congress was ‘the attainment of swaraj’.

Reaction of the government

Stern measures were taken by the government to quell the movement.

No less than five Acts were passed to curtail the ordinary rights of the citizens.

- Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act (1907)
- Explosive Substance Act (1908)
- Newspaper Act (1908)
- Criminal Law Amendment Act (1908)
- Indian Press Act (1910)

As a result of these acts, various newspaper editors and leaders were persecuted on charges of sedition.

Significance of the movement

Stimulus to indigenous goods The Swadeshi Movement emphasized the ideal of self-reliance or *atmashakti* among the people.

Reduction in the import of foreign goods Indians realized that the import of British goods was one of the primary reasons for the economic distress in the country. So, imports reduced considerably.

Establishment of national educational institutions It was decided that in Bengal, education in all branches of the arts, sciences and technical subjects was to be imparted in Bengali but English was to be included as a compulsory subject.

Literary and cultural activity The spirit of swadeshi was kept alive through literature.

Transformation of swadeshi into a national movement

The Early Nationalist–Radicals split This movement saw the great division in the Indian National Congress.

Objectives

The main objective of the Radicals was the attainment of swaraj or self-government. This meant complete independence, unlike the early nationalist demand of self-governing institutions within the framework of the British rule. To emphasize the assertive nationalist/radicals objective, Tilak said, 'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it.' Lala Lajpat Rai also maintained that the Indians would not accept any politics except 'the politics of freedom'.

Methods of struggle

The Radicals introduced direct action and resistance to unjust acts as necessary methods to ensure that the government took them seriously. New concepts like, 'passive resistance', 'non-cooperation' and 'self-reliance' were adopted as a means for their struggle.

Swadeshi This was a potent weapon that aimed at making India produce everything that was required for economic security. In no way was the country to be obliged to the British for its requirements.

Boycott Anyone found buying or selling foreign goods was subjected to social boycott, i.e. the Radicals would have no dealings with them.

National education Education was the only means of awakening political consciousness and bringing about an all round improvement.

Passive resistance The policy of non-violent resistance and concerted political action was adopted by the Radicals to achieve their objective.

Revivalism The religious sentiments of the people were stirred by the Radicals to d instil in them self-confidence and pride about India's glorious past.

THE PROMINENT RADICALS

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856–1920)

His political beliefs Tilak was instrumental in changing the nature of the Congress from being a 'pleader to a demander'. Swadeshi and boycott became the mantra of the nationalists. His assertive demand of Swaraj infused a new life to the spirit of the Indian national movement.

His programme of work Tilak believed that if changes were to be made in the country, words were insufficient. He emphasized action and action alone. He demanded that political rights be granted to the Indians. Tilak's popularity alarmed the government. He was charged with seditious writing and deported to Mandalay prison in Burma.

As a nationalist leader Tilak became the leader of the radical wing of the Congress after the Surat split. He transformed the anti-partition movement which began in Bengal into a national movement for swaraj.

He was instrumental in establishing the Home Rule Movement along with Annie Besant in 1916. This movement added new vigour to the nationalist spirit in the country. What Tilak preached during this period was later reflected in Gandhi's ideals. The stress on swadeshi, boycott and non-cooperation continued.

Gandhi paid tribute to him in these words, 'Let us erect for the only Lokmanya of India an imperishable monument by weaving into our lives his bravery, his simplicity, his wonderful industry and his love of his country.'

Bipin Chandra Pal (1858–1932)

As a nationalist Bipin Chandra Pal joined the Brahmo Samaj and worked for social reforms. Thereafter he joined the Indian National Congress in 1886 and established himself as a brilliant orator. Along with Tilak and Lajpat Rai, he formed the trio who expounded the ideals of swaraj, swadeshi, boycott and national education. He drifted away from the Early Nationalists due to their passive approach towards the British, as he stood for stronger methods of agitation.

As an economist According to him:

- Indigenous industries were to be developed.
- The rich had to be taxed heavily .
- Work hours had to be fixed at forty-eight per week.
- Wages had to be increased.
- Swadeshi and boycott had to be followed if freedom was desired.

Personal beliefs Bipin Chandra Pal believed that hardship was the price to be paid for freedom. Bipin Chandra Pal believed that education of women would bring about moral and social regeneration. He was against the caste system. He was deeply influenced by Vedantic philosophy. He opposed the principle of non-cooperation, and so quietly distanced himself from active politics.

Lala Lajpat Rai (1865–1928)

As an educationist and a writer Lala Lajpat Rai was closely associated with the Arya Samaj. He also opened orphanages, hospitals and schools. He worked tirelessly for the welfare of the oppressed and downtrodden. He was a prolific writer. He wrote biographies of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Dayanand Saraswati among others. While in America, he started a monthly magazine called Young India to spread the message of swaraj.

As a nationalist Lala Lajpat Rai was a part of the Congress since its inception. He was greatly disturbed by the partition of Bengal. He took a keen interest in the anti-partition movement and encouraged the masses to fight repression whole-heartedly. Lala Lajpat Rai also presided over the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1920. The resolution for non-cooperation was adopted in this session. Though he believed in a tougher stand, yet he decided to support Gandhi's proposal for the greater good of the country and spread this message around the country. After the suspension of the Non-cooperation Movement, he joined Motilal Nehru and his Swaraj Party, which he left at a later date. He was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly on more than one occasion.

As an activist On 30 October 1928, while leading an anti-Simon demonstration in Lahore, a British sergeant assaulted Lajpat Rai. He sustained fatal injuries and died on 17 November. His courage earned him the epithet, 'Sher-e-Punjab', i.e. the Lion of Punjab. Lala Lajpat Rai was a true embodiment of the spirit of selfless sacrifice and was fondly referred to as 'Punjab Kesari'. He dreamt of an India that would be self-reliant and progressive.

Emergence of the revolutionary movement

Revolutionary activity in India The beginning of the twentieth century saw the growth of a revolutionary movement, especially in Bengal, Punjab and Maharashtra. Young revolutionaries advocated the use of force to overthrow the British rule.

There were two broad divisions within the revolutionary movement – one believed in armed conflict against the British with the help of Indian soldiers, and the other believed in violent action like murdering unpopular British officials to paralyze the government. As a result, a number of secret societies were formed.

The **Anushilan Samiti** was the first revolutionary organization in Bengal spearheaded by a small band of young men, led by Barindra Ghosh, Aurobindo Ghosh and Chittaranjan Das. The revolutionary activity in Maharashtra during this period centered around Vinayak Damodar Savarkar or Veer Savarkar. In 1900, he started an association in Nasik called **Mitra Mela** to gain independence through armed revolt. In Poona, Abhinava Bharata was founded in 1904. Within a short time, branches of this association were set up all over Maharashtra. In Punjab, arrangements were made for collecting arms, manufacturing bombs and distributing revolutionary publications.

Revolutionary activity outside India Some Indian revolutionaries operated from Europe and America. They were in contact with the revolutionary organizations in other parts of the world. Another revolutionary organization was the **Ghadar Party** which was formed by the Punjabi workers settled in Canada and USA. They were treated with disrespect and yearned for freedom, which resulted in the formation of an organized party. The aim was to end the imperialist rule in India, which they believed could be achieved through an armed revolution. The revolutionaries dreamt of setting up a free India through violent uprising, but they could not succeed. However, the patriotic fervour they created and the political consciousness they spread across the country made them heroes inspiring generations of Indians.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE EARLY NATIONALISTS AND THE RADICALS

The Early Nationalists and the Radicals were fundamentally different so far as their views about the British rule in India were concerned.

SPLIT IN THE CONGRESS

The years 1905–1907 saw a gradual deterioration in the relationship between the Early Nationalists and the Radicals. Matters worsened at the Calcutta session of Congress in 1906 over the question of presidentship. The redeeming feature of the session was the reference to swaraj as the goal of India. Resolutions in support of swadeshi and boycott as well as national education were also passed.

The Surat session (1907)

When the Indian National Congress met at Surat in 1907, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the rest of the Early Nationalists wanted to cooperate with the British government for bringing about reform. This made the Radicals angry and they left the Congress. This division in the Congress is known as the Surat Split. The British government now took the opportunity to put down the Radicals.

To placate the Radicals and sharpen the divide, the British government introduced the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, which aimed at increasing the number of elected members in the Imperial Legislative Council and Provincial Councils. However, the reforms barely fulfilled the dream of 'Swaraj' for the Indians. As Congress was emerging as a new dynamic body, the government also becoming wary of its activities. The only way to weaken the growing strength of Congress was to weaken it by sowing seeds of communalism, which it did with complete thoroughness.

EARLY NATIONALISTS

1. The Early Nationalists had faith in the British sense of justice and fair play.
2. The Early Nationalists idealized British institutions and culture. They believed that the benefits of the foreign rule were numerous.
3. The Early Nationalists aimed at 'swaraj' within the framework of the British rule.
4. They used constitutional methods of prayers, petitions and resolutions and worked within the framework of law.
5. The Early Nationalists were supported by the western educated Indians, but they could not connect with the masses.
6. The prominent Early Nationalist leaders were Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjea who were willing to accept a slower pace of reforms.

RADICALS

1. The Radicals were suspicious of the intentions of the British. They disliked and questioned them.
2. They believed that Indian culture and traditions were superior and drew inspiration from India's past glory.
3. The Radicals demanded nothing less than 'absolute' swaraj or complete independence as the goal for India.
4. The Radicals believed in an aggressive approach. They used the tools of swadeshi, boycott, passive resistance and non-cooperation to gain their demands.
5. The Radicals broadened their base to include the masses. The ordinary man on the street as well as the housewife at home were encouraged to defy the might of the British rule, by simply boycotting foreign sugar, salt and soap.
6. Radical leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh did not compromise with the British.

To Remember

The Assertive Nationalists or Radicals – Did not believe in prayers and petitions, believed in active resistance, advocated boycott of goods and services, otherwise called aggressive nationalists because of their methods of protests.

Causes for the rise of Radicals – Failure of the Early Nationalists, economic degradation in the country, ill-treatment of Indians in South Africa, influence of international events, repressive policies of Lord Curzon, partition of Bengal.

Reasons behind the Partition – Partition necessary for administrative convenience, Bengal too large to be governed by one authority, real reason to drive a wedge between the Hindus and Muslims and destroy the growth of nationalism in Bengal.

Anti-Partition Movement – Partition declared as unfair and unjust, demonstrations in Bengal, protests on the streets of Calcutta, meeting held in the Town Hall on 7 August, *Bande Mataram* adopted as the anti-partition slogan, day observed as a day of unity, raksha bandhan celebrated, a day of mourning as well.

Leaders and their contribution – Notable leaders during this period: Surendranath Banerjea, Aurobindo Ghosh, KK Mitra and Rabindranath Tagore among others.

The Swadeshi and Boycott Movement – They were the two sides of the same coin, complemented each other, swadeshi means of one's own country, boycott means not to purchase any British goods, it also means giving up British titles and services, aimed at teaching self-reliance, swadeshi shops set up, bonfires of foreign goods lit up as protest, movement spread rapidly and merged with the national movement.

Reaction of the government – Stern measures adopted, anti-partition protestors beaten up, students expelled, government officials taking part were dismissed from service, acts were passed to curtail the rights of the citizens, editors of newspapers were prosecuted.

Significance of the Movement – Gave a stimulus to indigenous industries, reduction in the import of foreign goods, establishment of national educational institutions, literary and cultural activity, transformation of swadeshi into a national movement.

Objectives and methods of struggle – Attainment of swaraj by using weapons of swadeshi, boycott, national education, passive resistance, revivalism.

Differences between the Early Nationalists and the Radicals – The differences related to basic beliefs about the British, their ultimate goal, their methods of struggle, the group of leaders.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak – Born in 1856, called the father of assertive nationalism, founded the Deccan Education Society, brought out two weeklies, *Mahratta* and *Kesari*, began the celebration of the Ganapati festival, revived the Shivaji festival, organized *akharas* and *lathi* clubs, he played a crucial role in the reconciliation between the two wings of the Congress, established the Home Rule Movement along with Annie Besant in 1916, authored books like *Geeta Rahasya* and *Arctic Home in the Vedas*, fondly called 'Lokmanya'.

Bipin Chandra Pal – Born in 1858, called the 'father of revolutionary thought in India', drifted away from the Early Nationalists and joined the Assertive Nationalists, opposed caste system.

Lala Lajpat Rai – Born in 1865, a legal practitioner, closely associated with the Arya Samaj, worked for the expansion of the DAV College at Lahore, set up the Servants of the People's Society, brought out a magazine called 'Young India', wrote books named *The Call to Young India*, *England's Debt to India*, *The Political Future of India*, presided over the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1920, died of fatal injuries during a demonstration against the Simon Commission, fondly referred to as 'Sher-e-Punjab' and 'The Punjab Kesari'.

The split in the Congress – Temporary reconciliation between the Early Nationalists and the Radicals in the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906, in the Surat session of 1907, the Congress split was final.

Thank You