

## **Growth of Indian Nationalism in India**

### **Factors responsible for the growth of Indian Nationalism**

The British conquest of India was followed by the establishment of a centralized government which brought about political and administrative unification. In the pre-colonial India the people were not socially and economically integrated in the absence of a unified national economy and efficient and extensive means of communication. Common subjection, common institutions common laws began to unite India in a common bond. In the words of Edwyn Bevan (British Philosopher), "the British Raj was like a steel-frame which held the injured body of India together till the gradual process of internal growth had joined the dislocated bones, knit up the torn fibers and enabled the patient to regain inner coherence and unity". Thus, establishment of political unity, uniform system of administration, uniform reign of law and a uniform currency system generated the idea of India as a nation. Development of Means of Communication and Transport Administrative convenience, military defense and economic exploitation were the factors that urged the British government to have planned development of modern means of transport. The British constructed a modern postal system and electric telegraph all over the country. In the words of Edwin Arnold, "Railways may do for India what dynasties have never done what the genius of Akbar the Magnificent could not affect by government, not the cruelty of Tipu Sahib by violence, they have made India a nation." The modern means of communications and transport enabled people living in different parts of the country to maintain regular contacts with one

another which provided them not only a sense of unity but also the facility to organize an all-India movement.

### **Impact of Western Education**

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the British rule to the growth of India nationalism was the introduction of western education in India. It brought about a profound intellectual transformation in India. Western education brought the Indians into touch with the works of great European thinkers and writers like Milton, Thomas Paine, Burke, J.S. Mill, Spencer, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau and Mazzini and helped them imbibe the ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, democracy and national freedom. The pioneers of Indian nationalism were moved by the aspirations for self-government, for political power and representative institutions. The study of English language not only helped build up a democratic and national outlook, it also did a great service to the cause of Indian nationalism by providing a medium of communication for the educated Indians throughout India to exchange views on a national scale. It cut across personal barriers and served as a lingua franca. Educated Indians began to meet and discuss common problems through the medium of English and to meet on a common platform to devise plans for independence of the country.

### **Economic Exploitation of India**

The British economic policy in India led to impoverishment of the country. The main object of British policies was a systematic destruction of traditional Indian economy. The Indian reaction to the discriminatory

economic policy of the British government was the rise of economic nationalism in India. India became a supplier of raw materials to the British industries, a market for the sale of British goods and a place for investment of British capital. Indian economy was sacrificed for British economic interests. Economic exploitation by the British was increasing India's poverty. The British Indian administration was extremely costly. Systematic attempts were made to destroy the indigenous industries of India to make room for manufactured goods from England. Gradually the people realized that it was drain of wealth from India which made India poor. As all classes suffered economically because of the British rule, they realized the necessity of uprooting the British rule from India. It gave a great impetus to the spirit of nationalism. Socio- Religious Reform Movements. The socio-religious reform movements also known as the Indian Renaissance were the first.

### **Expression of national awakening**

They represented attempts to revise the old religion in the spirit of the new principles of nationalism and democracy. To quote or Zacharias; "The Indian national movement was a part of the Indian Renaissance of India which manifested in the form of a general reform movement and produced striking religious and social reforms long before it issued in a movement for political emancipation" The Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Theosophical Society in their own respective ways, revived the glory of ancient India, generated faith in Indian culture and religion and tried to strengthen them by removing the evils. Similarly, revivalism among the Muslims was provided by the

Wahabi Movement on the one side and by the personality of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan on the other. These movements breathed a new life into the degenerated Hindu and Muslim communities. They created self-confidence and inculcated a sense of self-respect which in its turn brought dissatisfaction against the British rule. They preached love for India and everything Indian. It promoted pa-Indian feelings and spirit of nationalism.

### **Emergence of Modern Press and Nationalist Literature**

Indian press played an equally important role in building and developing Indian nationalism. It is through press that the Indian nationalists spread the message of patriotism and modern economic, social and political ideas among the people. The Indian press has played a notable role in mobilizing public opinion, organizing political movements and promoting nationalism. Despite government restrictions newspapers like the Indian mirror, Amrit Bazar Patrika, the Pioneer, The Hindu, the Maratha, Kesari, Bombay Samachar, Samachar Darpan, Andhra Prakasika etc. became a powerful instrument of political education for the middle class and stimulated the growth of national feeling by making public the grievances of the people and also by exposing the failings and deficiencies of the foreign rule. B.B. Majumdar has rightly remarked, "Western education and the Indian press were the two of the most important agencies destined to infuse into the people of India the spirit of national unity and to inspire them to achieve independence without bloodshed." Nationalist literature in the form of novels, essays and patriotic poetry played an important role in creating national consciousness.

Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath Tagore, Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, Subramanyam Bharati and Altaf Hussain Hali were some of the writers who infused the spirit of patriotism in the minds of the common people.

### **Denial of Higher Jobs to deserving Indians**

The charter Act of 1833 laid down that fitness was to be the criterion of eligibility for jobs. It was again reiterated in the Queen's proclamation of 1858. But deliberate attempts were made by the British to debar Indians from higher posts specially the Indian Civil Service. S.N. Banerjee, Aurobindo Ghosh etc. were denied entry into Indian Civil Service on flimsy grounds. In 1877 the entrance age to ICS was reduced from 21 to 19 just to reduce the prospects of Indian candidates from the Indian Civil Service. This decision led to a countrywide agitation and marked the beginning of the unity of action and solidarity of purpose. S.N. Banerjee started an all-India campaign for restoring the entrance age of 21 and for simultaneous ICS examination in India. It helped the educated Indians to unite for promoting their interests.

### **Reactionary Regime of Lytton and the Ilbert Bill Controversy**

The regime of Lord Lytton as Governor General (1876-80) was full of reactionary measures. Lytton held an Imperial Durbar at Delhi in 1877 to announce Queen Victoria as the Empress of India at a time when a large part of the country was in the grip of a severe famine. He put on the statute book two obnoxious measures the vernacular press Act and the Indian Arms Act. While the press Act intended to restrict the freedom of the vernacular press, the Arms Act aimed to disarm the Indian people.

Another discriminatory measure was the reducing of the import cotton duties by five percent to appease the Lancashire mill-owners. Then he reduced the entrance age to ICS from 21 to 19 which antagonized the educated Indians. The Ilbert Bill controversy during the period of Lord Ripon exposed the racial bitterness of the British and united the Indians. Ripon tried to abolish judicial disqualification based on race.

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the growth of political consciousness and the rise of national movement during this period various political associations were founded in various parts of india. Although they were local organisations yet they played an important role in national awakening and laid the foundation of Indian National Congress.

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