

Contents

NATURE OF PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA.....	2
Duverger's law	2
INTRODUCTION.....	3
NATURE OF PARTY SYSTEM - FIRST TWO DECADES AFTER INDEPENDENCE.....	3
Dominant Party System: Basic Characteristics	4
CHANGED SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE: DISLOCATION OF POLITICAL CENTRE.....	4
PARTY SYSTEM AFTER 1967	4
LOSS OF CENTRALITY OF CONGRESS AND EMERGING PARTY SYSTEM	4
CONTEMPORARY PARTY SYSTEM	5
Congress (I)	6
Congress' decline	7
The Bharatiya Janata Party	8
The Ideology.....	8
The Social Base.....	8
The Organization.....	8
Some analyses of the recent BJP win in assembly elections	8
RSS & BJP	9
The Left Parties	9
Performance of Left Front	10
Punjab's politics	11
IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY	12
ORIENTALISM.....	12
EVAGELICALISM	14
UTILITARIANISM.....	14
MODERN INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT: ISSUES & APPROACHES	16
Supporters of British Rule.....	16
RENAISSANCE AND SOCIAL REFORM	17
LIBERALISM: DIFFERENT STRANDS	18
SARVODAYA AND ANARCHISM.....	20
PERSPECTIVES OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT	21

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LIBERAL	21
Moderates & Economic Nationalism	22
Main Demands of Moderates	22
Achievements of Moderates.....	23
Assessment of Moderates policies	24
NATIONALISM	25
LIBERAL	26
SOCIALISM	30
SOCIALISM	31
Revolutionary Socialism.....	32
Marxist Socialism	32
Congress Socialism.....	33
Marxist Perspective	34
Radical Humanism	35
DALIT.....	35
CRIMINALIZATION OF POLITICS	37
Consequences of criminalization	38
Agents of change	38
DYANSTIC POLITICS.....	38
Kanchan Chandra.....	38
The paradox of political representation	40
The Third Way.....	42

NATURE OF PARTY SYSTEM IN INDIA

Duverger's law

- **Duverger's Law** holds that **simple majority electoral systems**, where the highest vote getter is the winner (such as the first-past-the-post method as is practised in India), tend to become two-party systems.
- A relative exception to this rule is India. Here, the party system is quite diverse. But the increasing tendency of parties to be part of two opposing and large coalitions has functionally brought India's case closer to Duverger's Law.
- States like **Uttar Pradesh** and **Bihar** used to buck the trend with a high number of effective political parties, but even these, especially Bihar, have moved closer to becoming a two-coalition system.

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INTRODUCTION

Party system in a democracy normally refers to the pattern of interaction and competition between political parties. Indian party system is unique. It does not fit in any kind of classification that is generally used to categorise the party systems. It is defined by the singular nature of Indian politics on the one hand and the nature of the state-society relationship on the other.

Enormous changes have taken place in the party system in recent years. These changes started taking place from 1967 onwards but these have become much more pronounced since the late eighties and early 1990s. The party system has moved away from a one party dominated system to a multi-party system.

The distinctive features that defined the party system of India in the first two decades after independence are no more to be seen at present. Those distinctive features are

1. **Dominant Party system** - The party system during the first two decades after independence was termed as the Single Dominant Party system. **Kothari** coined the term the '**Congress System**' and **Jones** called it a '**Congress Dominated System**'. Although a number of other political parties existed and operated politically, yet the central space of politics was occupied by the Indian National Congress only. **Morris-Jones** aptly described this phenomenon as 'dominance coexisting with competition but without a trace of alteration'.
2. **Politics of Broad Consensus** around the political values shared by all the political actors; Congress party playing the role of a great umbrella party - It had therefore assumed the character of a broad coalition. In the post-independence period, it continued to absorb the dominant social elements and balance different interests that helped it to maintain its unchallenged position of power. Through its accommodative and adaptive politics, it could curb the role and relevance of opposition.
3. **Continuity** between the politics of congress and that of the opposition parties – almost each of the party in opposition had been a part of the Congress at one time or the other
4. Role of opposition parties limited to putting pressure than the traditional role of opposition

What explains the dominance of Congress party in the initial decades of independence?

- The dominance of the Congress was determined by its immense organisational strength as well as its capability to capture large number of seats both in the Union Parliament and the state legislatures.

NATURE OF PARTY SYSTEM – FIRST TWO DECADES AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Rajni Kothari has argued in his '**Politics in India**' that the party system evolved from an **identifiable political centre**. This **political centre**, carved during the **nationalist movement**, was comprised of the political elite sharing common socio-economic background i.e. educated, urban, upper-caste people belonging mainly to middle and upper classes.

The **Indian National Congress** was the institutional manifestation of this political centre.

Dominant Party System: Basic Characteristics

CHANGED SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE: DISLOCATION OF POLITICAL CENTRE

Change in the nature of party system in the decades after 1960s' according to **Rajni Kothari**, was the consequence of the 'changed socio-economic and demographic profile of the polity'. This change was brought about by

1. **Political Mobilization of the masses** – as a logical consequence of the electoral politics based upon the principle of universal adult franchise. Also frequently held elections, helped in increasing the political consciousness of mass of Indians, especially those belonging to the backward and lower classes.
2. **Emergence of Political Classes** - was directly related to the rise of the proprietary peasant class in rural India in the backdrop of the land reforms who began to demand a share of political power.
3. **Assertion of lower castes & Dalits** – formation of parties like BSP, Samajwadi party & Janata Dal clearly reflected the interest of the Dalits and the backward castes

PARTY SYSTEM AFTER 1967

The nature of the Indian polity as well as the party system underwent a substantial change after **1967**.

1. **Decline of Dominant Party system** - According to **Kothari**, this was the beginning of the decline of the dominant party system.
→ While **Morris Jones** attributes this to the emergence of '**a market polity**' in which the number of opposition parties were brought 'fully into the market place, and competition that had previously occurred within the Congress, was now brought into the realm of inter-party conflict.
2. **Politics of Coalitions at the states**- The **Fourth General election** led to the beginning of the **politics of coalitions** especially at the state level. This election produced truncated majorities of the Congress party. Hence, coalitions were formed in many states with **Jana Sangh, SSP, CPI, CPI (M)**, and a number of **regional parties** joining the government.
3. **Decline of the consensual model of Indian Politics** – Due to organisational problems within Congress party - acute factionalism, centralization of power and lack of space for democratic dissent - and changing nature of state-society relationship with the arrival of new classes
4. **Consolidation of opposition parties against the congress at the centre** - With the split of the Congress, a '**Grand Alliance**' was formed between the Congress (O), SSP, Jana Sangh and the Swatantra. The **Janata Party** a coalition of five erstwhile parties, the Congress (O). The Jana Sangh, Socialist Party, the Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD), CFD was successful in breaking the continuity of the congress in power at the centre for the first time in 1977 (6th general elections).

LOSS OF CENTRALITY OF CONGRESS AND EMERGING PARTY SYSTEM

The following pattern of **bipolarization** was seen in the states for the general elections in the period from 1967-1989. In Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, the competition was between the Congress and the BJS/BJP. In Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal the competition has been between the Congress and Left. In Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Goa, Congress-regional

parties led alliance emerged, though the BJP also gained substantially. The 1967 elections resulted in the defeat of the congress in as many as 8/16 states in the Indian union.

The expansion of the BJP in recent times has been much more dramatic than the decline of the Congress. The expansion has mainly been due to

- The decline of the Congress,
- The aggressive mobilization strategy based around the ideology of Hindutva which it adopted from the late 1980s and
- Its strategy of alliance formation.

At the national level in the Lok Sabha, it increased its seats from a 2 in 1984 to 182 seats in the 1998 elections that catapulted it to the position of a ruling party.

It was in the period starting with the **1989 parliamentary elections** that the Congress was displaced from its position of centrality. Such displacement of Congress from the position of the centre has various implications:

1) Firstly, Congress has ceased to be the dominant political party. The central political space, dominated by the Congress party, is now being shared by a number of political parties.

Instead of single party majority governments, we have been having minority coalitions. In **1991**, the minority government of Congress was installed [which attained majority subsequently. The **1996 Parliamentary elections** led to the formation of a minority coalition of thirteen parties of the United Front, supported by **Congress** and the **Left Front**. This coalition was replaced in **1998** by another coalition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The **1999 Parliamentary elections** again resulted in the coalition government of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) with BJP as the largest member of the coalition.

CONTEMPORARY PARTY SYSTEM

Contemporary Party System - Party System at the Central Level

1. **Politics of alliance** - The kind of the party system that is available at present is **not hegemonic** but **competitive with sufficient scope for alternation**. However, due to the inability of any single party to attain majority, the alternation takes place not between the individual parties but between the groups of political parties who form an alliance.
2. Rather than the alliances formed after the election, now there is **almost the accepted practice of having pre-poll alliances**. Initially, alliances were amorphous with members having come together without any common objectives, except the one related to power. But of late, there has been some kind of effort at drawing some **common minimum programme** acceptable to all partners of the alliance.
3. **Non-ideological political fronts** - Acceptance of common programme among the alliance partners does not necessarily mean that the alliance partners share common ideology. What causes these ideologically dissimilar parties to form an alliance is the logic of political power. Otherwise, these are non-ideological political fronts.
4. **Polarization of parties** - Political parties, in the period after 1989 seemed to be organizing themselves around three poles, the one led by the Congress, the second led by the BJP and the

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Third, which was termed as the **Third Front/United Front**. The third pole was later weakened. Comprising of the Janata Dal, the Telugu Desam, the Left Parties and many other regional and state parties, it had been successful in forming the government in **1989** but it could not sustain either its unity or its political strength for long time. The way alliances have been formed in last few Parliamentary elections, there has emerged a **bipolarity**. The Congress and the BJP are the two parties around which varied political parties have been grouped in recent elections.

5. The contemporary party system is a reflection of the complexity and the heterogeneity that prevails with the Indian society. It is a representation of the diversity of political interests and opinions. It also reflects the wider reach of the participatory politics that has politicized diverse groups and articulated their political voice.
6. **Mainstreaming of Regional parties** - In the -past two decades, a number of regional parties with their focus on regional demands have emerged. The National parties have become regional in character and the regional parties are increasingly participatory in national politics and thereby acquiring national stature. The Congress and the BJP, the two national parties, for a long time now, have 'regional' rather than 'national' sphere of influence.

Party System at the State Level

Each of the state may be having its own **peculiarities**.

Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Punjab, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, are the states with a strong tradition for regional parties, while UP, Himachal Pradesh, MP, Karnataka, Orissa and Rajasthan have been the states where the competition has been taking place between the national parties. Regional parties have also made strong inroads in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

National parties can also be called as All-India Parties. Their programmes, policies, ideologies and strategies have a national focus.

Congress (I)

In the year 1969 the Congress party split for the first time into a new Congress led by Indira Gandhi and an old Congress led by **S. Nijalingappa**. The new Congress led by Indira Gandhi swept the parliamentary elections of 1971 and assembly elections of 1972 in most of the states. The sixth general election in 1977 resulted in the defeat of the Congress Party and comfortable majority for the Janata Party. The defeat of the Congress party was seen as a rejection of Indira Gandhi's style of politics. After the defeat in 1977 election there was another split in the Congress Party. There emerged two Congresses - one led by Indira Gandhi and the other led by **Swaran Singh**. This is how the congress led by Indira Gandhi or the Congress (Indira) or the Congress (I) was born in 1978.

The Ideology

- The Congress Party has been committed to **socialism, secularism and democracy**.
- It subscribed to the idea of **democratic socialism** that is why economic policy of the Congress Party introduced state control of the commanding heights of the economy like basic industries, banking and insurance.

- The party stood for rural and urban land ceiling. It was against the monopolies and was for promotion of medium and small industries.
- At **Avadi session in 1956** Congress proclaimed its commitment to socialistic pattern of society.
- In 1971 election the Congress gave the slogan of ***Garibi Hatao*** (remove poverty). Even the **20 - point programme** under emergency had a strong socialistic component.
- In the 1980s Congress shifted to the right. The 1984 manifesto did not mention socialism or the need of curbing monopolies. The 1989 election manifesto emphasized the need to empower people through Panchayati Raj.
 - In 1999, the Congress election manifesto advocated the need of a capitalist economy integrated with world capitalist system.
 - It also favoured abolition of public monopolies except in the fields of defence, and encouragement to the private sector.

The Social Base

- Congress enjoyed the support among the rural and urban, educated and uneducated, upper caste and lower caste, rich and poor almost all over the country. The main support base of Congress has been the upper caste more particularly the Brahmins, Scheduled Castes and the Muslims.
- It was the **shift of the middle caste votes**, especially from the later half of the 1960s onwards, away from Congress that led to its losing elections in many states. In 1991 the Congress was virtually wiped out from Gangetic belt - UP and Bihar.
- The BSP and the Samajvadi Party in UP have snatched the Scheduled Caste and Muslim votes from the Congress.
- Similarly in Bihar the Muslims and lower castes have shifted to the RJD, while the upper caste votes in both these states have shifted to the BJP.

Congress' decline

Congress' route earlier - 1977 when PM Indira Gandhi was defeated

1999 when Sonia Gandhi took over (114 seats in LS)

Reasons for congress defeat in 16th LS - the party won just under 20% of votes

- Sad state of economy
- anti-incumbency
- indecision in leadership
- **Weak organizational strength** – from 1970s onwards the party became centralized and family centered
 - For the last 10 years, it has promoted rootless leaders and has not allowed strong regional leadership to grow and consolidate.
 - The Congress is a much depleted grassroots organization.
- **non-empowerment of regional leaders** - inability to allow able and popular leaders to rise from within; **preference for loyalists** – as a result the party is cutoff from grass root level

- Focus on secular nationalism + social welfare rather than economic development - There is a particular disconnect today between the new urban middle classes and the Congress' emphasis on welfare that has failed to resonate with younger Indians.
 - Ironically, even as the party has lost ground with the middle classes, it has also lost the support of Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims to regional parties.

The Bharatiya Janata Party

The Bharatiya Janta Party came into being in **1980** in the wake of split in the Janata Party. After leaving the Janata Party, the **Bharatiya Jana Sangh** constituent launched the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). 'The B J P is aptly seen as reincarnation of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. **Syama Prasad Mukherjee** founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951. The RSS founded by Keshav Baliram **Hedgewar** in 1925 has been an organisational backbone earlier for the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and then the Bharatiya Janata Party. In 1984 the first Lok Sabha election after its birth the BJP got only two seats but in 1989 it obtained 88 seats. In 1991 election this party secured 120 seats and emerged as the second largest party in the Parliament.

The Ideology

- Ideologically the BJP is committed to **five principles- nationalism and national integration, democracy, positive secularism, Gandhian socialism and value-based politics.**
- In 1999 at its Chennai meeting the BJP gave clear indication of leaving behind the agenda of aggressive Hinduism and swadeshi. The BJP has accepted the principle of justice to all by agreeing to reservation on caste lines. It promises 33% reservation to women in parliament and state assemblies.

The Social Base

BJP's traditional support base was among upper castes, small and medium traders and shopkeepers. Among **minorities** it gets votes largely from the **Sikhs**.

The Organization

At the national level the BJP has a Party President and the National Council and party plenary or special session. At the state level the party has a Council and the State Executive followed by Regional Committees, District Committees and Block Committees. The BJP also has front organisations like **Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha** and **Bharatiya Janata Mahila Morcha**. They function according to the guidelines of the National Executive.

Some analyses of the recent BJP win in assembly elections

Sanjaya Baru's analysis

When facts changed, as John Maynard Keynes famously put it, theory caught up.

Contemporary political analysis continues to use theoretical tools from inter-war Europe or statistical tools from post-war American political science to explain the rise of the BJP and the popularity of Narendra Modi. Given this crisis in political science, journalists have become political pundits — and political pundits have become journalists.

The Congress faces three very different, but inter-related challenges.

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1. First, it has no national leadership of any standing left: Sonia Gandhi's appeal has faded and Rahul Gandhi has been demonetised.
2. Second, the party's regional leaders and cadre in many states, including traditional bastions like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telengana, are a dispirited lot.
3. Third, the Congress has not been able to craft a new political platform even as Modi cherry-picks every good idea of the Congress and replays it as his own.

The BJP has come this far based on

- **the strength of its cadre** – thousands of volunteers from Sangh Parivar rallying for BJP
- **its regional leaders** – BJP is developing strong State party leaders that the Congress once had, while simultaneously having a strong national leader (comparable to Nehru)
- Its **appeal to a “new India”** – an **aspirational class**
- On top of this, Modi has been able to project himself as both a **strong nationalist** and a **pro-poor political leader.**
- It is also clear that the BJP has a long-term policy perspective on all fronts, including economic, foreign and social policy that it hopes will give it the same political longevity the Congress enjoyed after Independence.

Taken together, these very different trajectories of the two national parties constitute a paradigm shift in India's political economy and a power shift in politics.

RSS & BJP

- The RSS does not want to lose its best and brightest to the BJP.
- RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has issued public warnings to swayamsevaks to remember that they are first swayamsevaks and that politics is a very different vocation — and presumably the RSS's “character-building” is morally superior.

The Left Parties

- The main communist parties which exist in India are: the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or the CPI(M), and several Naxalite groups.
- The CPI was founded in Kanpur in 1925.
- At the time of Independence there emerged two political lines within the Communist Party of India about the nature of the Indian state, the freedom struggle and the question of how to bring revolution in India according to the tenets of Marxism and Leninism and the future course of action.
- Finally in **1964** the **CPI** split into Communist Party of India and Communist Party of India (Marxist). After 1964 the CPI was seen closer to the Communist Party of Soviet Union and the CPI(M) to the Communist Party of China.
- A group within the CPI(M) approving the path of armed revolution broke out from the CPI(M) in 1968. They were called **Naxalites** because they started their experiment of capturing power through armed revolution from a place called Naxalbari in Bengal. The Naxalites led by **Charu Mazumdar** formed another Communist Party known as Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist). Not all the Naxalite factions joined this party.

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- The CPI started participating in elections from the very first election held in 1952. The Communist Party of India continued getting around 9% of votes in general election. Even after the division in 1964 the two Communist Parties together continued to poll around the same percentage.

The Ideology

- The Indian communist parties believe that **only the establishment of a socialist society according to the revolutionary principles of Marxism and Leninism can enable the country to overcome the problems of backwardness, inequality, ignorance and poverty.** This goal can be achieved if the **working class** captures political power. They believed that to achieve this goal India needed an **anti-imperialist** and **anti-feudal** democratic revolution.
- In the light of this understanding **the CPI assessed the Nehru government and supported Indira Gandhi government even during emergency.**
- The electoral debacle in 1977 election made the Communist Party of India reassess its role in the Indian politics and its attitude towards the Congress Party
- In the 17th Congress of the CPI(M) held at Hyderabad in March 2002, the party has called for building the People's Front as a secular democratic alternative to the NDA at the centre. The CPI(M) has decided to co-operate with the Congress Party without having an alliance with it. The Party has also held that **minority fundamentalism** is not the correct response to majority fundamentalism.

Performance of Left Front

The Left Front's national vote share in 2014 has been the lowest ever (4.8 per cent), from the high of 10.6 per cent in 1989. The Left Front in the 14th Lok Sabha (2004-09) had a sizeable contingent of 62 MPs and that has declined to only 12 MPs in the current Lok Sabha.

The Left used to have **pockets of influence** in some states of eastern India (Bihar, Jharkhand and Orissa) and southern India (Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu) in earlier decades. In its traditional bastions of Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura, the decline in the Left Front's share is largely due to its abysmal performance in West Bengal.

The election returns also indicate that the Left has lost a substantial portion of its votes this time to the BJP.

Reasons for decline of the Left

- The Left has not produced a new idea in many years that has enthused the working class and poor. Its national politics is still mostly centred around the empty slogans of "neo-liberalism" and "anti-Americanism.
- The Left has always taken its cues from abroad. Its advocates never saw any true socialism in ancient Indian thinkers who preached the state's aim as **bahujana sukhaya, bahujana hitaya; Kautilya** never touched them even as they poured over Machiavelli.
- The Left's understanding of the political and economic forces shaping India came from Stalin's decision in the Communist International on the basis that what is good for Russia is good for India too. That explains many programmes launched by the CPI — the support it gave to Britain for its war efforts and backing the demand for Pakistan stand as events of eternal shame.

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Punjab's politics

Issues that have dominated politics in the State in the last few decades such as electoral influence of deras, the stranglehold of political dynasties, and the problem of drug trafficking will continue to shape political dynamics in future too.

Electoral significance of deras - Deras are religious organisations centred on a spiritual leader or a guru who provides guidance to the followers. While some deras maintain partisan preferences and commit their allegiance to a party, none of them do so explicitly.

Intricate network of dynasties - This sort of intricate network of relationship between deras and politicians has sustained the rule of a few families in Punjab politics. According to some estimates, Punjab has one of the highest proportions of MLAs with dynastic links. Six families — the Badals of Muktsar, the Patiala royal family, the Majithias of Amritsar, the Kairons of Tarn Taran, the Brars of Sarai Naga, and the Manns of Sangrur — have dominated the State political landscape for more than three decades.

→ These families are linked to each other through marriage.

Financing elections - Many social activists have said that the practice of widespread abuse of drugs in the State has been controlled and nurtured by the drug cartels which have close ties with some of these political dynasties.

→ The election campaigns of many politicians have been financed by these cartels.

→ There are also allegations that this network has close ties with certain deras and this facilitates smooth operation of this business across the State.

IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

Since the conquest of Ireland in the sixteenth century, the English gradually emerged as the "**new Romans**", charged with civilizing backward peoples" across the world, from Ireland to America and from India to Africa.

This imperial history of Britain is periodised into two phases,

1. The "first empire" stretching across the Atlantic towards America and the West Indies, and
2. The "second empire", starting from around 1783 (Peace of Paris) and swinging towards the East, i.e., Asia and Africa.

For several years, it is argued, the government of the East India Company functioned like an "Indian ruler", in the sense that

- it recognised the authority of the Mughal emperor,
- struck coins in his name,
- used Persian as the official language and administered Hindu and Muslim laws in the courts.

Lord Clive himself had recommended a system of "**double government**" as a matter of expediency, under which the criminal justice system would be left in the hands of nawabi officials, while civil and fiscal matters would be controlled by the Company.

This **policy of least intervention**, which had emanated from pure pragmatism to avoid civil disturbances, did not, however, wane rapidly

The Anglicisation of the structure of this administration began, but it progressed, as it seems, gradually.

ORIENTALISM

The early image of India in the West was that of past glory accompanied by an idea of degeneration. There was an urge to know Indian culture and tradition, as reflected in the endeavours of scholars like **Sir William Jones**, who studied the Indian languages to restore to the Indians their own forgotten culture and legal system-monopolised hitherto only by the learned pundits and rnaulvis (Hindu and Islamic learned men).

By establishing a linguistic connection between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin-all supposedly belonging to the same **Indo-European family of languages**- **Jones** privileged India with an antiquity equal to that of classical West.

This was the beginning of the **Orientalist tradition** that led to the founding of institutions like the **Calcutta Madrassa (1781)**, the **Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784)** and the **Sanskrit College in Banaras (1794)**, all of which were meant to promote the study of Indian languages and scriptures.

Orientalism in practice in its early phase could be seen in the policies of the Company's government under **Warren Hastings**. The fundamental principle of this tradition was that the conquered people were to be ruled by their own laws

It was with this political vision that **Fort William College** at Calcutta was established in 1800 to train civil servants in Indian languages and tradition.

The Orientalist discourse, however, had another political project, as **Thomas Trautmann** (1997) has argued. By giving currency to the idea of kinship between the British and the Indians dating back to the classical past, it was also morally binding the latter to colonial rule through a rhetoric of "love".

Hastings's policy was abandoned by **Lord Cornwallis**, who went for **greater Anglicisation of the administration** and the imposition of the Whig principles of the British government.

Lord Wellesley supported these moves, the aim of which was to limit government interference by abandoning the supposedly despotic aspects of Indian political tradition and ensuring a separation of powers between the judiciary and the executive.

The state's role would only be the protection of individual rights and private property.

The policy came from a consistent disdain for "**Oriental despotism**", from which Indians needed to be emancipated.

Replacing Oriental Despotism with British Paternalism/ authoritative paternalism

As **Eric Stokes** (1959) has shown, two distinct trends were gradually emerging in the Indian administration of the East India Company, although they were not totally unrelated.

There was, on the one hand, the **Cornwallis system**, centred in **Bengal**, and based primarily on the **Permanent Settlement**.

Lord Cornwallis introduced Permanent Settlement with the hope that the **rule of law** and **private property rights** would liberate individual enterprise from the shackles of custom and tradition, and would bring in modernisation to the economy and society.

But **Thomas Munro** in **Madras**, and his disciples in western and northern India, such as Mountstuart **Elphinstone**, **John Malcolm** and **Charles Metcalfe**, thought that the Cornwallis system did not pay heed to Indian tradition and experience. Not that they were averse to the rule of law or separation of powers; but such reforms, they thought, had to be modified to suit the Indian context. The role of the Company's government would be protective, rather than intrusive, regulative or innovative.

So Munro went on to introduce his **Ryotwari Settlement**, with the intention of preserving India's village communities. But ultimately his aim was to consolidate the Company's state in the south by expanding its revenue base

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Respect and **paternalism**, therefore, remained the two complementing ideologies of the early British empire in India.

It was **Evangelicalism** and **Utilitarianism**, which brought about a fundamental change in the nature of the Company's administration in India.

EVAGELICALISM

Evangelicalism started its crusade against Indian barbarism and advocated the permanence of British rule with a mission to change the very "nature of Hindostan". In India the spokespersons of this idea were the missionaries located at Srirampur near Calcutta; but at home its chief exponent was **Charles Grant**. The principal problem of India, he argued in 1792, was the religious ideas that perpetuated the ignorance of Indian people. This could be effectively changed through the dissemination of Christian light, and in this lay the noble mission of British rule in India.

His ideas were given greater publicity by **William Wilberforce** in the Parliament before the passage of the **Charter Act of 1813**, which allowed Christian missionaries to enter India without restrictions.

Fundamentally, there was no major difference between the Evangelist and the free trade merchant positions as regards the policy of assimilation and Anglicisation. Indeed, it was the **Evangelist Charles Grant** who presided over the passage of the **Charter Act of 1833**, which took away the Company's monopoly rights over India trade.

UTILITARIANISM

This was also the **age of British liberalism**. **Thomas Macaulay's liberal vision** that the British administrators' task was to civilize rather than conquer, set a liberal agenda for the emancipation of India through active governance. "

"Trained by us to happiness and independence, and endowed with our learning and political institutions, India will remain the proudest monument of British benevolence", visualised C.E.

Trevalyan, another liberal in 1838.

It was in this atmosphere of British liberalism that Utilitarianism, with all its distinctive authoritarian tendencies, was born.

Jeremy Bentham preached that the ideal of human civilisation was to achieve the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Good laws, efficient and enlightened administration, he argued, were the most effective agents of change; and the idea of **rule of law** was a necessary precondition for improvement.

With the coming of the **Utilitarian James Mill** to the East India Company's London office, India policies came to be guided by such doctrines. Mill, as it has been contended, was responsible for transforming Utilitarianism into a "militant faith". In ***The History of British India***, published in 1817, he first exploded the myth of India's economic and cultural riches, perpetuated by the "susceptible imagination" of men like Sir William Jones. What India needed for her improvement, he argued in a

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Benthamite line, was an **effective schoolmaster**, i.e., a wise government promulgating good legislation.

It was largely due to his efforts that a **Law Commission** was appointed in **1833** under **Lord Macaulay** and it drew up an **Indian Penal Code in 1835** on the Benthamite model of a centrally, logically and coherently formulated code, evolving from "disinterested philosophic intelligence" .

The Utilitarians differed from the liberals in significant ways, especially with regard to the **question of Anglicisation**.

This was the time that witnessed the **Orientalist-Anglicist debate** on the nature of education to be introduced in India.

While the **liberal Lord Macaulay** in his famous **Education Minute of 1835** presented a strong case for the introduction of English education, **Utilitarians** like **Mill** still favoured vernacular education as more suited to Indian needs.

In other words, **dilemmas** in imperial attitudes towards India persisted in the first half of the nineteenth century and the epitome of this dilemma was **Lord Bentinck**, himself.

An ardent follower of **Mill**, he abolished **sati** and **child infanticide** through legislation. He believed in the Utilitarian philosophy that legislation was an effective agent of change; and the concept of rule of law was a necessary precondition for improvement.

But at the same time, he retained his faith in Indian traditions and nurtured a desire to give bade to the Indians their true religion. The official discourse on the proposed reform of sati was, therefore, grounded in a scriptural logic that its abolition was warranted by ancient Hindu texts.

The **Indian Penal Code** drafted in 1835 could not become an act until 1860. The dilemmas definitely persisted in the mid-nineteenth century, in spite of **Lord Dalhousie's** determination to take forward Mill's vision of aggressive advancement of Britain's mission in India.

It was **Victorian liberalism** in post-1857 India that certainly made **paternalism** the dominant ideology of the Raj (superiority of the conquering race). The traumatic experience of the revolt convinced many in England and in India that reform was "pointless as well as dangerous"²¹ and that Indians could never be trained to become like Englishmen. **Liberal optimism**, as expressed in Lord Macaulay's ambition to transform the indolent Indian into a brown sahib, European in taste and intellect but not quite a European; he would be "more brown than sahib", to use **Ashis Nandy's** cryptic expression. It was this optimism that was shattered by the rude shock of 1857.

Bentinck's dithering attitudes were now replaced by the **authoritarian liberalism** of **James Fitzjames Stephen**, who succeeded Macaulay as the new law member in the viceroy's council. He not only emphasised India's difference, but also asserted India's inferiority.

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Such ideas in the nineteenth century were further strengthened by the **rise of racial sciences** in Victorian England, which privileged physical features over languages as the chief markers of racial identity => RACIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

MODERN INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT: ISSUES & APPROACHES

Supporters of British Rule

Ram Mohan Roy, it has been mentioned earlier, had considered British rule as a blessing and held that this conversion would yield future benefits. His sharp critique of many degrading aspects of Indian society was probably what made him appreciate the advantages of being ruled by and associated with an enlightened nation like the British.

Keshab Chandra Sen too held that British rule which appeared at a time of grave social and moral crisis was a divine dispensation and not a mere accident.

Rabindranath Tagore, Dada Bhai Naoroji, GK Gokhale, M.G. Ranade, as well as CR Das and Moti Lal Nehru-all spoke, in varying degrees of the benefits that British rule had brought to India.

- Said **Gokhale** in 1905: "The country enjoys now uninterrupted peace and order....".
- **Naoroji** noted that no educated native will prefer any other rule to English rule.

In the face of colonial repression and exploitation, this conception of colonial rule i.e. of the British rule being beneficial, could not last for long.

Despite the appreciation for certain **English values and institutions**, all the stream of **anti-colonial nationalist thought** commonly held that colonial rule was dehumanizing and exploitative.

- **Naoroji** had laid the blame of 'material treatment it received at the hands of British rulers.'
- **Gokhale** blamed the British rule for 'steady dwarfing of a race in consequence of it's exclusion from power' which he considered an 'enormous evil'.
- 'The 20th century liberals, without refuting the '**civilizing' role of colonial rule**, pleaded for the transfer of power.

Various strands of anti-colonialism thoughts

- **Revolutionary nationalists** being led by **SC Bose** and **Jawaharlal Nehru**
- The **Communist Party of India** came into existence with the inspiration and help of **Communist International**.
 - It's conception of colonial rule has based on Lenin's theory of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism and Marx's articles on India in New York Tribune (1853).

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- **M.N. Roy's** "India in Transition" and **Rajni Palme Dutt's** "India Today", both stressed the integration of Indian resources and economy with the British colonial economy to exploit India's raw materials.
 - **M.N. Roy**, official ideologue of the Indian Communists in 1920s, emphasized the linking of anticolonialism with the campaign against world capitalism.
- The process of radicalization of Congress led to the emergence of **radical nationalism** in the form of **Congress Socialist Party** in 1934. The Congress socialist thinkers, particularly **Jaya Prakash Narayan** and **Acharya Narendra Dev**, made an attempt to synthesize socialism with nationalism and to press socialism in the service of nationalism, i.e. in the anti-colonial struggle.

RENAISSANCE AND SOCIAL REFORM

The Indian Renaissance and Social Reform movement challenged age-old traditions and customs.

Rational Critique of Religion and Society

- Early thinkers of modern India were pre-occupied mainly with social and religious issues. The political questions were paid little or no attention.
- **Ram Mohan Roy's** first published work, **Tuffat-ul-Muwahiddin (A Gift to Deists)** (18034) is a rational critique of religious systems in general and the role of vested interests in religion.
 - Ram Mohan in his later writings exposed the irrationality of Hindu religious rituals and dogmas, and social evils such as sati, child marriage etc.
 - He considered religious reform most essential for both social reform and political modernisation.
 - Roy pleaded for rational explanation and empirical verification as the only basis for truth.
 - Contributed to the development of the idea of **religious universalism** and a universal outlook based on the unit of Godhead and **monotheism**.
 - According to Keshub Chandra Sen, Fatherhood of God implied brotherhood of man
- Thus, the beginning of modern Indian thinking is marked by a critique of the existing social order. This critique was carried forward by successors with a view to create a 'modern' society.
- **Akshay Kumar Dutt** rejected religious supernaturalism and maintained that everything could be explained on the basis of reason and rationality.
- Naturally, therefore **Brahmo Samaj** and other streams of the reform movement in Bengal fought for widespread reforms in Hindu Society.
- **Syed Ahmed Khan, Ranade** and other thinkers too stood for a rational critique of Indian society.
- **Jyotiba Phule** challenged the legitimacy of the Hindu Social order based on caste-hierarchy and pleaded for social transformation on egalitarian grounds.

Religious Revivalism

- Religious revivalism was a trend within the reform movements which sought to reform religion, but differed in one important respect. It sought to reform by an appeal to the past-the **Golden Age**, as it were.

- It sought to restore the glory of ancient religion. Mainly emerging from within the womb of Hindu Society, they tried to dexterously combine pristine religious purity with many modern values like individual liberty and democracy.
- Among the major religious reform movements of **19th century India**, like **Brahmo Samaj**, **Prarthana Samaj**, **Arya Samaj** and **Ramakrishna Mission**, it was the latter two that really represented this appeal to the past.
- **The Arya Samaj** with its slogan of '**Back to the Vedas**' and the **Ramakrishna Mission** with its attempt to resurrect **Vedantic Hinduism**, though substantially different in their approaches to religion had the same essential purpose of reforming religion in terms with changing times.
- They sought to establish to some degree, the freedom of individual, break the stranglehold of Brahmanism and reform the caste system which had birth as its solid determinant of status.
- Thus, **Arya Samaj** and its chief architect **Swami Dayanand Saraswati** repudiated the authority of the Brahmins and fought against the very idea of intermediaries between God and his devotees. To that extent, they freed the individual from the tyranny of Brahmin priesthood.
 - It opposed polytheism and associated meaningless rituals and superstitions which split the people into innumerable sects.
- The **Ramakrishna Mission** which drew inspiration from saints like **Chandidas** and **Chaitanya** and was initiated by the rustic saint Ramakrishna, on the other hand idealized Hinduism, its polytheism and idol worship.
 - **Swami Vivekananda**, its chief propagandist, was chiefly concerned that Indian nationalism which he said must fight the corrupting 'materialist influences' of the west.
 - Unification and reform of Hindu society were a prerequisite to this end.

There was thus an essential unity in the religious revivalist movements, in terms of the objectives. The **Arya Samaj** fought against the rigid, hereditary caste system and argued for the inclusion of **guna (character)**, **Karma (action)** and **Swabhava (nature)** as criteria for the basis of caste. Even Shudras, according to it, could study the vedas. It was this appeal of religious revivalism that drew hundreds of nationalist towards it and it thus signalled a component of India's national awakening.

LIBERALISM: DIFFERENT STRANDS

The liberal critique of Indian society and colonial state began with **Renaissance**. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Devendra Nath Tagore, Akshay Kumar Dutt, Jyotiba Phule, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, M.G. Ranade, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Banerjee, Pherozshah Mehta, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and others tried to set a liberal model for transforming Indian society and polity.

The Indian liberal looked upon the colonial rulers to lead and guide the socio-political transformation. The English liberals like **J.S. Mill** and many others pleaded for the continuation of colonial rule as it was essential for 'civilizing' the native and putting them 'on the path of progress.'

The conception of colonial rule by various stands of Indian liberals was not very different from their European counterparts.

Even those who understood the exploitative character of colonialism did not go to the extent of denouncing it and were concerned only with the question of impoverishment and pauperization of Indian masses due to the colonial drain of country's wealth. The liberals like **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**, **Dadabhai Naoroji** and others

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exhorted the colonial rulers, through petitions for Redressal. But even this concern eventually boiled down to the problems of the members of the educated middle class who had not found appropriate place in the administration.

Similar conception of colonial rule found expression in the writings of Sir **Syed Ahmed Khan** who projected the colonial rule as 'emancipatory', 'democratic' and 'progressive'. Its continuance was desired to safeguard and enhance the interests of the Muslim community as Islam did not come into conflict with progress and reason symbolized by British rule.

The nascent Indian capitalist class and the new intelligentsia, which drew from the traditional social elite of Indian society became, the main vehicle of liberal political ideas. The **Bhadraloks of Bengal**, the **Brahmins of Madras** and the **Chitpavan Brahmins in Bombay presidency** were among the earliest to be affected by the spread of liberal ideas.

M.G. Ranade

- Ranade, a representative of the dominant liberal thinkers, articulated the interests of the rising Indian capitalist class.
- The central part of his argument was that the Indian economy should follow a capitalist path of development, if it is to solve her problems.
- He argued that the state must play an active role in economic development. He disagreed with the laissez-faire concept of state.
- He believed that India could get rid of its phenomenal poverty and dependence on agriculture through industrialization and commercialization of agriculture, and the state must play an active role in such transformative process.
 - Ranade pointed out the immense progress of agriculture in France, Germany and Russia after the liquidation of feudal agriculture and introduction of capitalist relations and peasant proprietorship.
- Ranade was a believer in Individual Freedom, however, Ranade's individual liberty was a concept that derived from his metaphysical ideas which based themselves on the upanishads. In his view God resides in everything in this universe, and therefore, in each human being. Thus the freedom of conscience is the real freedom and the rights of conscience must take precedence over all other considerations.
- Ranade, for the above-mentioned reasons, was also a critic of the caste system which imposes external restrictions on human behavior. He supported the Bhakti movement because he thought the saints asserted the dignity of the human soul irrespective of birth.

Jyotiba Phule and B.R. Ambedkar

- In contrast, Jyotiba Phule (1827-90) and B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) presented the other pole of liberal thought.
- The predominant influence of Phule was the revolutionary liberalism of **Thomas Paine**. He maintained that all men and women are born free and equal. God had made them so and no one should suppress anybody else. They should therefore, have equality before law and equality of opportunity for entry into the civil service or municipal administration.

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- Phule's main preoccupation on the other hand was liberating the downtrodden castes-the Shudras and Adi-Shudras from the grip of caste-slavery. Whatever improvement was evident in the conditions of these people was the result of British rule. Unlike Ranade, Phule therefore, was a votary of mass education and criticized the British for diverting funds to higher education which was to him of secondary importance.

SARVODAYA AND ANARCHISM

The political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi as it developed during the course of his political activities maintained an essential continuity with earlier strands of thought. The essentially Indian spiritual approach to politics, developed by **Vivekananda** and **Aurobindo Ghosh** found its continued expression in **Gandhi**. In 1909, in **Hind Swaraj**, he accepted the basic distinctions made between society and state and India and the west. He extolled the spirituality of India and juxtaposed it to the violent, politically corrupt nature of the European state. His comments were reserved for the English parliamentary system; he described all western political power as brute force. His participation in politics was therefore apologetic. "If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircles us today like the coil of a snake I wish, therefore, to wrestle with the snake."

This being the attitude to politics, logically to Gandhi, the state was by definition abhorrent. It is in this sense, that from a totally different perspective, **Gandhism** and his **Sarvodaya** shared its most essential political trait with anarchist ideology.

Gandhi, like Vivekananda believed that if individuals are allowed freedom to express and pursue their interests, then as part of their spiritual unity, they will gradually discover their identity of interests. This he believed gave rise to a human nature that was essentially accommodative and compromising. To this end, he saw like his **anarchist** counterparts-**Kropotkin** and **Tolstoy**-the state as a major obstacle in the realization of individual freedom and social harmony. "**The state represents violence in a concentrated form.**" He saw it as a **soulless machine** that can never be weaned away from violence. In his **ideal society**, therefore, there is no state-political power. Since he saw in the state an essential centralizing tendency that curbs individuality he held that, "if India is to evolve along nonviolent lines, it will have to decentralize."

Following Gandhi, **Vinobha Bhave** articulated this position as a leading exponent of Sarvodaya ideology. Vinobha visualized a **total revolution** transforming all aspects of life. The goal for him was to mould a new man to change human life and create a new world. The departure of the British had not brought Indian society any closer to Sarvodaya, the main obstacle to which was the centralized government. "Sarvodaya", according to him, "does not mean good government or majority rule, it means freedom from government, it means decentralization of power."

Central to Vinoba's conceptualization of politics and power is his distinction between **rajniti**, the politics of power, and **lok-niti**, the ethics of democracy. Lok-niti strives to use the "potential powers of the citizen" and would abandon political parties and elections, arrive at decisions through consensus, and forge an identity of interest that would ensure continuing social harmony."

Subsequently, Jayaprakash Narayan carried forward the Gandhian-Sarvodaya conception of politics. J.P. as a national leader remained primarily concerned with the abuse of political power in India, and thus found

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himself perpetually in opposition to the Congress. He, too, was a strong advocate of decentralisation of power and expanded and propagated the concept of **partyless democracy**.

PERSPECTIVES OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

LIBERAL

Partha Chatterjee would argue that nationalism in India, which was assigned a privileged position by its Western educated political leadership, was a "different", but a "derivative discourse" from the West.

Early nationalist school focused primarily on the supremacy of a nationalist ideology and a national consciousness to which all other forms of consciousness were assumed to have been subordinated.

Congress politics during the first twenty years of its history is roughly referred to as moderate politics.

Inspiration for the moderates

The moderates were primarily influenced by **Utilitarian theories**, as **Edmund Burke**, **John Stuart Mill** and **John Morley** had left a mark on their thoughts and actions.

- The government should be guided by **expediency**, they believed, and not by any moral or ethical laws.
- And the **constitution** was to be considered inviolable and hence repeatedly they appealed to the British parliament complaining about the Government of India subverting the constitution.

Some characteristics of Moderates Nationalism

- **Faith in British Rule** - British rule to most of them seemed to be an **act of providence** destined to bring in **modernisation**.
 - Indians needed some time to prepare themselves for self-government; in the meanwhile, absolute faith could be placed in British parliament and the people.
 - Their complaint was only against "**un-British rule**" in India perpetrated by the viceroy, his executive council and the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy- an imperfection that could be reformed or rectified through gentle persuasion.
 - As Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the early stalwarts of this politics put it in 1871: "In my belief a greater calamity would not befall India than for England to go away and leave her to herself."
- **Limited goals and methods** - Their politics, in other words, was very limited in terms of goals and methods.
 - The Moderates used prayers, petitions, resolutions, meetings, leaflets and pamphlets, memorandum and delegations to present their demands.
 - They confined their political activities to the educated classes only.

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- Their aim was to attain political rights and self-government stage by stage. Moderates wanted only limited self-government within the imperial framework.
- **Economic Nationalism** – Moderates provided economic critique of Colonial rule

Moderates & Economic Nationalism

- The leading figures during the first phase of the National Movement were A.O. Hume, W.C. Banerjee, **Surendranath 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 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

Main Demands of Moderates

- Expansion and reform of legislative councils-
 - They wanted first of all the abolition of the India Council which prevented the secretary of state from initiating liberal policies in India.
 - They also wanted to broaden Indian participation in legislatures through an expansion of the central and provincial legislatures by introducing 50 per cent elected representation from local bodies, chambers of commerce, universities etc.
 - The budget should be referred to the legislature, which should have the right to discuss and vote on it and also the right of interpellation.
- There should also be a right to appeal to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons against the Government of India. Greater opportunities for Indians in higher posts by holding the ICS examination simultaneously in England and in India and raising the age limit for appearing in such examinations from nineteen to twenty-three.
 - **Indianisation of civil service** would be
 - more responsive to the Indian needs
 - It would stop the drainage of money, which was annually expatriated through the payment of salary and pension of the European officers.
 - More significantly, this reform was being advocated as a measure against racism.
- Reduction of Military expenditure
 - The British Indian army was being used in imperial wars in all parts of the world, particularly in Africa and Asia.
 - These and the Indian frontier wars of the 1890s put a very heavy burden on the Indian finances. The moderates demanded that
 - this military expenditure should be evenly shared by the British government;
 - Indians should be taken into the army as volunteers; and
 - More and more of them should be appointed in higher ranks.

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- Repeal of arms act
- Complaint against over-assessment of land revenue and demand for the extension of Permanent settlement
- 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.
- Freedom of speech and expression and freedom to form associations

What the moderates got in return

- What they received in return, however, was **Lord Cross's Act** or **the Indian Councils Amendment Act of 1892**, which only provided for
 - Marginal expansion of the legislative councils both at the centre and the provinces.
 - These councils were actually to be constituted through **selection rather than election**:
 - The **budget** was to be discussed in the legislatures, but not to be voted on.
 - The opposition could not bring in any resolution, nor demand a vote on any resolution proposed by the government.
 - The Government of India was given the power to legislate without even referring to the legislatures, whose functions would be at best recommendatory and not mandatory.
- Very few of the constitutional demands of the moderates, it seems, were fulfilled by this act.

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. They popularized the ideas of democracy, civil liberties and representative institutions.
2. **Economic critique of Colonialism** - They explained how the British were exploiting Indians. Particularly, **Dadabhai Naoroji** in his famous book ***Poverty and UnBritish 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.
 - a. R.C. Dutt, a retired JCS officer, who published *The Economic History of India* in two volumes (1901-3).
 - b. The above economic critique, to a large extent influenced the economic policies of the Congress government in independent India.
3. Some Moderates like Ranade and Gokhale favoured social reforms. They protested against child marriage and widowhood.

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

Assessment of Moderates policies

Positives

- This economic theory by linking Indian poverty to colonialism was trying to corrode the moral authority of colonial rule, and also perhaps by implication challenging the whole concept of paternalistic imperialism or British benevolence.
- In this way the moderate politicians generated anger against British rule, though because of their own weaknesses, they themselves could not convert it into an effective agitation for its overthrow.

Criticisms & shortcomings

- Extremists criticized moderates' methods as political mendicancy
- The failure of moderate politics was quite palpable by the end of the nineteenth century and their future was doomed as the less sympathetic **Tories** returned to power in Britain at the turn of the century.
- Contradictions in moderate politics – majority of congress delegates being landlords and professionals with landed interests, they could not take a logical stand on peasant questions.
 - Opposition to the Punjab Land Alienation Bill in 1899 also betrayed their pro landlord sympathies. Punjab Land Alienation Act, imposed regulations on sale and mortgage of land and revenue demands and prevented farmers losing their land;
 - The small pro-tenant lobby within the Congress led by R.C. Dutt was soon outmanoeuvred by the Zamindar lobby who wanted to dilute the Bengal tenancy Act 1885 (which protected the rights of tenants)
- Representation of the commercial classes among its members also prevented Congress from taking a pro-working class position. They were opposed to factory reforms like the Mining Bill, which proposed to improve the living condition of women and children and restrict their employment under certain age.
- Social orthodoxy of Moderates/Early Congress - Social reforms questions were not to be raised in the Congress sessions till 1907 owing to majority of members being Upper caste Hindus. There was an element of social orthodoxy
 - The crucial silence of the Congress during the cow-killing riots of 1893 added further to such misgivings of Muslims
 - Muslim participation in Congress sessions began to decline rather dramatically after 1893.
- **Absence of competition** - The Congress politicians suffered from a sense of complacency as no rival Muslim political organisation worth its name developed until 1906.

It was the pro-landlord and pro-bourgeois policies of the early Congress politicians that allowed the colonial government to project itself as the real protector of the poor.

The moderate politics thus remained quite limited in nature, in terms of its goals, programmes, achievements and participation. **Lord Dufferin**, therefore, could easily get away with his remark at the St. Andrew's Day

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dinner at Calcutta in November 1888 that Congress represented only a "**microscopic minority**" of the Indian people.

With a brief interval between 1906 & 1916 when extremist-militant leadership sought 'Swaraj' and some revolutionaries sought independence, the liberal perspective of the Indian National Movement continued during the Gandhian era of the movement. During the initial period of his leadership, Gandhi did not raise his voice beyond "Swaraj"- until 1929 when the Purna Swaraj resolution was passed in the Lahore session of the congress. Gandhi's **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22)** was more a protest against the tyrannical laws than a resolution of the country's independence. His Civil Disobedience Movement (1930-34) was a protest against the non-performance of the promises made than the overthrow of the British Colonial rule.

Congress's liberal perspective is reflected in the **Nehru report (1928)** for ex, which sought Fundamental rights including equal rights for women, right to form unions, universal adult franchise, and dissociation of the state from religion, besides seeking the dominant status.

The congress's liberal perspective was further evident in the **Karachi resolution of the Congress** in which the basic civil rights of free speech, free press, free assembly, equality before law, election on the basis of universal suffrage, provision for free and compulsory education, better conditions for workers, state ownership of key industries, cultural freedom of the minorities.

NATIONALISM

The development of the nationalist idea right from the early days went through an intricate course. Veneration of the British empire was so strikingly articulated by Dadabhai Naoroji in 1885 at the first session of the IN Congress in the following words: "What makes us proud to be British subjects, that attaches us to this foreign rule with deeper loyalty is the fact that Britain is the parent of free and representative government". As mentioned, this was a dominant idea, in varying degrees among the intellectuals and leaders of early nationalism. They realized the economic ruin and immiseration of Indian people as a result of British rule. Indian economy according to Dadabhai Naoroji was subjected to heavy 'drain' of resources.

Indian Nationalism comprised of innumerable streams of thought.

1. The first assertions of nationalism in India were mixed with a strong sense of **religious revivalism**-an appeal to the past, a fervent call to revive the pristine glory of the Hindu Golden Age.
2. This was preceded by the **moderate nationalists** whose main critique of colonialism was, as we have seen, against either the economic impact of British rule, or against the "bureaucratic aspects" of it. The methods of this school of moderate nationalists were **constitutionalist**, limited primarily to issuing **appeals** and **petitions**.
3. The **militant nationalists**, on the other hand, grasped fully the contradiction between the Indian people and colonial rule, and therefore advocated a more decisive break with colonial rule. They were however, thoroughly imbued with religion, which made use religious ceremonies for mobilizations. The student religiosity of such nationalism alienated the Muslims from the nationalist movement. The militant nationalists also drew great inspiration from the **life of Mazzini** and the history of the Italian **risorgimento**.
4. The third stream of nationalists, i.e the **revolutionary nationalists** were also for the most part ideologically revivalist who believed in Swaraj, and sought to achieve it through any means, including

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revolutionary violence. Their chief source of inspiration ranged from the Russian **Narodinka** to Mazzini.

Finally, the various streams of socialism comprised the radical arm of Indian nationalism, of which you will read in next section.

LIBERAL

Moderates like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, M. G. Ranade, were uncritical admirers of **Western political values**. They held the concept of equality before, law, of freedom of speech and press and the principle of representative government as inherently superior to their traditional Hindu polity which they defined as '**Asiatic despotism**'. So emphatic was their faith in the British rule that they hailed its introduction in India as 'a - providential mission' capable of eradicating the 'misrule' of the past. Given the reluctance of the Crown to introduce representative institutions in India, Dadabhai Naoroji lamented that the British government in India was 'more Raj and less British'. What he meant was that though the British rule fulfilled the basic functions of Hindu kingship in preserving law and order in India, its reluctance to introduce the principle of representative government was most disappointing. So, despite their appreciation of British liberalism their admiration hardly influenced the Raj in changing the basic nature of its rule in India.

Thomas Macaulay's liberal vision that the British administrators' task was to civilize rather than conquer, set a liberal agenda for the emancipation of India through active governance. "Trained by us to happiness and independence, and endowed with our learning and political institutions, India will remain the proudest monument of British benevolence", visualised **C.E. Trevelyan**, another liberal in 1838.

The moderate politicians never visualised a clinical separation from the British empire; what they wanted was only limited self-government within the imperial framework. They wanted first of all the abolition of the India Council which prevented the secretary of state from initiating liberal policies in India. They also wanted to broaden Indian participation in legislatures through an expansion of the central and provincial legislatures by introducing 50 per cent elected representation from local bodies, chambers of commerce, universities etc.

The budget should be referred to the legislature, which should have the right to discuss and vote on it and also the right of interpellation. There should also be a right to appeal to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons against the Government of India. Thus their immediate demand was not for full self government or democracy; they demanded democratic rights only for the educated members of the Indian society who would substitute for the masses.

The expectation of the moderate politicians was that full political freedom would come gradually and India would be ultimately given the self-governing right like those enjoyed by the other colonies as Canada or Australia.

What they received in return, however, was **Lord Cross's Act** or **the Indian Councils Amendment Act of 1892**, which only provided for marginal expansion of the legislative councils both at the centre and the provinces.

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- These councils were actually to be constituted through **selection rather than election**: the local bodies would send their nominees from among whom the viceroy at the centre and the governors at the provinces would select the members of the legislative councils.
- The budget was to be discussed in the legislatures, but not to be voted on.
- The opposition could not bring in any resolution, nor demand a vote on any resolution proposed by the government.
- The Government of India was given the power to legislate without even referring to the legislatures, whose functions would be at best recommendatory and not mandatory. Very few of the constitutional demands of the moderates, it seems, were fulfilled by this act. 2

Other demands of Moderates/Liberals

Reform of Bureaucracy/administrative system – **Indianisation of the services** - An Indianised civil service would be more responsive to the Indian needs, they argued. It would stop the drainage of money, which was annually expatriated through the payment of salary and pension of the European officers. It would also overcome Racism

- Simultaneous civil service examination both in India and London and the raising of the age limit for appearing in such examinations from nineteen to twenty-three.

Military expenditure - British Indian army was being used in imperial wars in all parts of the world, particularly in Africa and Asia. These and the Indian frontier wars of the 1890s put a very heavy burden on the Indian finances. The moderates demanded that this military expenditure should be evenly shared by the British government; Indians should be taken into the army as volunteers; and more and more of them should be appointed in higher ranks. All of these demands were however rejected.

The other administrative demands of the moderates included the extension of trial by jury, repeal of the arms act, complaint against over-assessment of land revenue and demand for the extension of the Permanent Settlement, demand for the abolition of salt tax and a campaign against the exploitation of the indentured labour at the Assam tea gardens. All these demands represented a **plea for racial equality** and a **concern for civil rights** and also perhaps reflected a concern for the lower orders, though of a very limited nature. But it is needless to mention that none of the demands were even considered by the colonial administration.

The moderate philosophy was most eloquently articulated by **Surendranath Banerjee (1848 - 1925)** in his 1895 presidential address to the Congress. In appreciation of the British rule, Banerjee thus argued: 'we appeal to England gradually to change character of her rule in India, to liberalize it, to adapt it to the newly developed environments of the country and the people, to that in the fullness of time India may find itself in the great confederacy of free state, English in their origin, English in their character, English in their institutions, rejoicing in their permanent and indissoluble union with England'.

Banerjee appears to have echoed the idea of **Dadabhai Naoroji**, (1825-1917) who in his 1893 Poona address, underlined the importance of 'loyalty to the British' in protecting India's future.

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Despite his 'loyalist' attitude, Naoroji was perhaps the first Congressman who argued strongly for a political role for the Congress that so far was identified as a non-political platform.

The moderates believed that the continuity of the British rule was *sinequa- non* of India's progress as 'a civilised nation'. In other words, the introduction of the British rule was a boon in disguise simply because Hindus and Muslims in India, argued Ranade, 'lacked the virtues represented by the love of order and regulated authority'.

Ranade defended a strong British state in India to ensure equality of wealth and opportunity for all. By justifying state intervention in India's socio-economic life, he differed substantially from the basic tenets of liberalism that clearly restricts the role of the state to well-defined domain.

Here the Moderates performed a historical role by underlining the relative superiority of a state, drawn on the philosophy of enlightenment, in comparison with the decadent feudal rule of the past.

Underlying the Moderate arguments defending the British rule in India lay its 'disciplining' function in comparison with the division and disorder of the eighteenth century.

However, despite all these setbacks, the most significant historical contribution of the moderates was that they offered an economic critique of colonialism. This **economic nationalism**, as it is often referred to, became a major theme that developed further during the subsequent period of the nationalist movement and to a large extent influenced the economic policies of the Congress government in independent India. Three names are important to remember in this respect: Dadabhai Naoroji, a successful businessman, justice M.G. Ranade and R.C. Dutt, a retired JCS officer, who published *The Economic History of India* in two volumes (1901-3).

The main thrust of this economic nationalism was on Indian poverty created by the application of the classical economic theory of free trade. Their main argument was that British colonialism had transformed itself in the nineteenth century by jettisoning the older and direct modes of extraction through plunder, tribute and mercantilism, in favour of more sophisticated and less visible methods of exploitation through free trade and foreign capital investment. This turned India into a supplier of agricultural raw materials and foodstuffs to and a consumer of manufactured goods from the mother country. India was thus reduced to the status of a dependent agrarian economy and a field for British capital investment.

The key to India's development was Industrialisation with Indian capital, while investment of foreign capital meant drainage of wealth through expatriation of profit.

To quote Dadabhai Naoroji again, "materially" British rule caused only "impoverishment"; it was like "the knife of sugar. That is to say there is no oppression, it is all smooth and sweet, but it is the knife, notwithstanding. "

So, to rectify this situation what the moderates wanted was a change in economic policies. Their recommendations included reduction of expenditure and taxes, a reallocation of military charges, a protectionist policy to protect Indian industries, reduction of land revenue assessment, extension of Permanent Settlement to ryotwari and mahalwari areas, and encouragement of cottage industries and handicrafts. But none of these demands were fulfilled.

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This economic theory by linking Indian poverty to colonialism was trying to corrode the moral authority of colonial rule, and also perhaps by implication challenging the whole concept of paternalistic imperialism or British benevolence. In this way the moderate politicians generated anger against British rule, though because of their own weaknesses, they themselves could not convert it into an effective agitation for its overthrow.

The moderate politicians could not or did not organise an agitation against British rule, because most of them still shared an intrinsic faith in the English democratic liberal political tradition.

- So their appeal was to the liberal political opinion in England; their method was to send prayers and petitions, to make speeches and publish articles. By using these **tools of colonial modern public life** they tried to prepare a convincing "logical case" aimed at persuading the liberal political opinion in England in favour of granting self-government to India, But this political strategy, which the more extremist elements in the Congress later described as the **strategy of mendicancy**, failed to achieve its goals.

The failure of moderate politics was quite palpable by the end of the nineteenth century and their future was doomed as the less sympathetic Tories returned to power in Britain at the turn of the century. Nevertheless, the moderates created a political context within which such an agitation was to develop later on.

There were also other contradictions in moderate politics, which made it more limited and alienated from the greater mass of the Indian population. This was related to the social background of the moderate politicians who mostly belonged to the **propertied classes**.

The Congress, therefore, could not dispense with landed aristocrats and could not consequently take a logical stand on peasant questions.

They demanded extension of the Permanent Settlement only in the interest of the zamindars

The small **pro-tenant lobby** within the Congress led by **R.C. Dutt** was soon outmanoeuvred, as their opposition in 1898 to the pro-zamindar amendment to the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 put them in a difficult situation. Opposition to the Punjab Land Alienation Bill in 1899 also betrayed their pro-landlord sympathies. Representation of the commercial classes among its members also prevented Congress from taking a pro-working class position. They were opposed to factory reforms like the **Mining Bill**, which proposed to improve the living condition of women and children and restrict their employment under certain age. They also opposed similar labour reforms in Bombay on the plea that they were prompted by Lancashire interests. However, they supported labour reforms for Assam tea gardens, as capitalist interest involved there was of foreign origin," happily forgetting that the Indian mill owners in Bombay exploited their labourers in no less flagrant ways.

Finally, their advocacy of indigenous capitalism as a panacea for Indian poverty revealed their true colours.

It was the pro-landlord and pro bourgeois policies of the early Congress politicians that allowed the colonial government to project itself as the real protector of the poor.

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These early moderate politicians were also mainly Hindus, barring the notable exception of the Bombay politician, Badruddin Tyabji. Between 1892 and 1909, nearly 90 per cent of the delegates who attended the Congress sessions were Hindus and only 6.5 per cent were Muslims and among the Hindus again nearly 40 per cent were Brahmans and the rest were upper-caste Hindus. 8 This social composition inevitably resulted in social orthodoxy, as social questions were not to be raised in the Congress sessions till 1907.

Crucial silence of the Congress during the cow-killing riots of 1893 added further to such misgivings

Muslim participation in Congress sessions began to decline rather dramatically after 1893. Yet there was no major Congress endeavor to bring the Muslims back into its fold. The Congress politicians suffered from a sense of complacency as no rival Muslim political organisation worth its name developed until 1906.

Lord Dufferin said in 1888 that Congress represented a microscopic minority

1. What are the distinctive features of Moderate and Extremist philosophy?
2. What are the factors that contributed to the growth of Extremists in Indian nationalism?
3. How do you account for the split between the Moderates and Extremists?
4. In what ways, Dadabhai Naoroji was an epitome of Moderate politics?
5. How did Tilak differ from the Moderates? How did he articulate swadeshi, boycott and strike?
6. In what ways, the 1907 Surat split was a watershed in Indian struggle for independence?
7. What are the contributions of the Moderates and Extremists to the Indian struggle for freedom?

SOCIALISM

The post non-cooperation period witnessed a rapid growth of socialist ideas and emergence of numerous Socialist and Communist groups. There were two factors responsible for the development of radical politics in the twenties.

1. **Mahatma Gandhi's** insistence on non-violence in the face of brutal repression by the colonial government as witnessed in the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre** or his withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement in the wake of the **Chauri-Chaura** episode when a mob of peasants burned down a police-station manned entirely by the British led to **large-scale disillusionment**. Increasingly, it was being felt that nonviolent methods will not do. Search for alternative forms thus became imperative.
2. This search was decisively influenced by another factor: the victory of the **Russian Revolution** and the establishment of a **socialist state**. The first socialist weekly, **The Socialist**, was started by **S.A. Dange** in 1923 in Bombay.

Revolutionary or Radical Socialists like Chandra Shekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh & His **Hindustan Socialist Republic Association (HSRA)** propagated the ideal of equality, removal of poverty and equitable distribution of wealth. Trade unions & peasant movements grew rapidly throughout the 1920s.

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Jawaharlal Nehru & Subhah Chandra Bose toured the country attacking imperialism, capitalism, landlordism and preached the ideals of socialism.

Congress Socialism - Disenchanted with the Gandhian strategy and leadership and attracted by the socialist ideology, the **Congress Socialist Party** emerged at Bombay in Oct 1934 under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan & Acharya Narendra Dev.

Both these leaders were profoundly influenced by **Marxism** and believed that socialism could be achieved only with the socialization of the means of production. Both were for a drastic reorganization of the agrarian economy and land to the tiller.

However, what distinguished both **Narendra Dev** and **Jaya Prakash Narayan** from the Communists was that they advocated a **cooperative agriculture** with a marked emphasis on **decentralization**. Both believed in socialism but sought to combine it with a humanist ethics.

Ram Manohar Lohia, another member of this group pleaded for

- Greater, incorporation of Gandhian ideas in socialist thought.
- A decentralised economy based on a resuscitation of cottage industries. In this sense, his socialism was that of the petty producer.

Lohia believed that the interface of caste and class is the key to the understanding of historical dynamics of India. In his view, all human history has been an internal movement between castes and classes-castes loosen into classes and classes crystallize into castes. Thus, he tried to understand the caste/class dynamics-an issue that has generally been ignored in Indian politics.

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Earlier **M.N. Roy**, a revolutionary nationalist, who had left India in search of arms, reached USA and became converted to socialism. Thereafter, in 1921, he along with a band of **Mohajirs** formed in **Tashkent**, the **Communist Party of India** which was affiliated to the **communist International**.

The Mohajirs were those who left the country on hijrat i.e. self-imposed exile-a concept of Islamic faith. In 1924, a number of people, including Dange and Muzaffar Ahmed, were arrested under the Kanpur conspiracy case. Workers and Peasant Parties were formed in Bombay, Bengal and Punjab.

Side by side, the development of revolutionary terrorism into socialism took place. **Bhagat Singh** and his **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association** typified such developments.

Revolutionary Socialism

In 1926, a political forum by the name of **Naujawan Bharat Sabha** was created with the idea of educating young people in social matters, popularizing swadeshi and developing a sense of brotherhood. Apart from this it sought to cultivate a secular outlook, even atheism among the youth. This organization was a forerunner of the **Hindustan Republic Association**, which aimed at overthrowing the British rule by insurrection. It had an elaborate organization to carry on its clandestine activities. The Sabha propagated the ideal of equality, removal of poverty and equitable redistribution of wealth.

This Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) subsequently changed its name to **Hindustan Socialist Republic Association (HSRA)**.

When the British Government, in its bid to suppress the working class movement, sought to introduce the **Public Safety Bill** and the **Trade Disputes Bill**, the HSRA decided to protest by bombing the Assembly when the bills were placed-the action was carried out by **Bhagat Singh** and **Batukeswar Dutta**.

While many such activities carried on by the HSRA seem, on the face of it, to be conventional terrorist activities and the **Naujawan Bharat Sabha** functioned with a much broader perspective. **Bhagat Singh** clarified in his trial that revolution to him was not the cult of the bomb and pistol but a total change of society culminating in the overthrow of both Indian and foreign capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The assembly bombs were meant to be purely demonstrative to make the authorities see reason.

In a sense the activities of the HSRA exemplified the transition from terrorism to radical socialist politics, as it did for finding the appropriate methods of political agitation.

Marxist Socialism

As we have mentioned earlier, the first beginnings of Marxist Socialism in India were made by small groups in the Bengal, Bombay and Punjab. These groups then organized the Workers and Peasants' Parties in these states, started work in the Trade Unions and also started organizing the peasantry. Parallel to this development was the formation in Tashkent of the Communist Party of India.

The CPI's critique of colonialism was based on its understanding that imperialism was plundering India's raw materials. Behind the utter misery and destitution of the Indian peasantry, the communists saw the exploitation by foreign and Indian capital side by side with antiquated feudal forms of exploitation.

The communists, therefore derided the nationalist leadership for their implicit faith in the British rulers and their hesitation to raise the demand for complete Independence. They were also severely critical of the nationalist leaders for their use of religion in political mobilization.

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However, the communists themselves could not really join the mainstream of the national movement till the mid-1930s.

M.N. Roy in his famous debate with Lenin in the Third Congress of the Communist International had held that the leadership of the Indian national movement was reactionary and therefore the Communists should have no truce with it. The implication of such a strategy would have been to isolate the communist movement from the mainstream of Indian politics. Lenin, on the other hand, had advocated a **united front** against imperialism. After the Seventh Congress of the Comintern adopted the United front policy in 1935, two British leaders **R.P. Dutt** and **Ben Bradley** prepared a statement for Indian Communists. This document, known as the "**Dutt Bradley Thesis**" constitutes a landmark, in Indian Communist history, since it brought the CPI into the mainstream of the anti-imperialist struggle. The document helped the CPI to reforge its links with the national movement. Following this, in January 1936, the **Congress Socialist Party**, on the recommendation of its general secretary, Jaya Prakash Narayan, decided to admit communists to its membership. Many Communists joined the CSP. From then on, till the eve of World War II, the Communists and the Congress Socialists, despite differences worked together for radicalizing the Congress from within.

An important aspect of Communist thinking has been in relation to its assessment of the leadership of the Indian National Congress, its class character, and subsequently, the class character of the Indian State. They regarded the Congress as an organization of Indian capitalists and landlords which Gandhi had transformed from an elite assembly to a mass movement. Gandhi, though he initiated the process of turning Congress into a mass movement, was in their view a compromiser determined to stem the rising militancy of national struggle. They also disapproved Gandhi's non-violent methods of struggle and the use of religious for political mobilization.

Congress Socialism

As mentioned the decade of the 'twenties saw a radicalization of Indian youth and their gradual turning away from the Congress fold towards socialist ideas. Disenchantment with Gandhian non-violent methods, impact of the Russian Revolution and the need to evolve the masses of Indian people in the anti-colonial struggle increasingly led to this radicalization.

As a parallel development, sections of **young congressmen** increasingly adopted the socialist ideal and from within the Congress sought to influence it in a Leftward direction. They formed the **Congress Socialist Party** in **1934**. Prominent among these were **Acharya Narendra Dev** and **Jaya Prakash Narayan**. Both these leaders were profoundly influenced by **Marxism** and believed that socialism could be achieved only with the socialization of the means of production. Both were for a drastic reorganization of the agrarian economy and land to the tiller.

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Marxist Perspective

The communist movement in India has its intellectual and ideological roots in the philosophy of Marxism.

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The ban on the CPI by the Britishers in India was lifted during the 2nd world war when the Soviet Union joined the Allied forces. The CPI did not support the 1942 Quit India Movement.

During the War, the communists cleverly established their control over the All India Trade Union Congress also.

The communists were divided over the question of independence of the country which was only a couple of months away, especially after the formation of the interim government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru. They were plagued by questions such as: Was the country really free? Was the transfer of power notional or real?

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Should the CPI support Nehru's Congress? In the debate within the CPI, P C Joshi thought that the transfer of power and independence were real and that the Nehru Government should be supported. On the other hand, B T Ranadive and Dr. Adhikari held the view that independence was not real and that real independence could be achieved only under the leadership of the CPI and that the CPI, instead of supporting the Nehru Congress Government, should fight against it.

Radical Humanism

Developments during and after the war convinced Roy that communism had degenerated into nationalism in the Soviet Union. Under Stalin the communist party had become authoritarian. It suppressed all forms of dissent. The actions of Soviet leaders in foreign affairs such as setting of communist dictatorships in East Europe, opposition to the Marshall Plan and so on, led him to believe that they were aspiring to be a super power.

Roy contended that neither socialism nor communism but freedom should be the ideal of a civilized society. Describing Radical Humanism in this context he said, "We place man in the centre of scheme of things: others would sacrifice him on the altar of the collective ego".

Roy's theory of a new model of politics aims at the rejection of Spiritualism, Nationalism, Communism and stands for the acceptance of materialism. According to MN Roy the latter is the only possible philosophy since it represents the knowledge of nature as it really exists.

The basic elements of New Humanism are three: **Rationality, Morality and Freedom.**

As a rational creature man is involved in a struggle for material existence. This struggle takes two forms – at the savage plane it signifies the satisfaction of his mundane wants and at the higher plane, it signifies his struggle for freedom. Freedom is a process and not a complete idea. In the quest for freedom, argues Roy, man as a rational being is driven to bring the nature under his control.

DALIT

The Dalit perspective of Indian National Movement rose as a reaction to the Brahminical hegemony. It reflects the anti-caste and anti-class phenomena. Segregated socially, the Dalit movement dismissed the premise of the mainstream nationalist movement that India was a nation. Dr Ambedkar, for example, condemned the notion of a nation in a caste society and described each caste, a nation itself. **Jyotiba Phule** used to say, '...unless all the people in India including Shudras, ati-shudras, Bhil, Koli became educated and are able to think, and unite, they cannot constitute a nation'. **Dr Ambedkar wrote, "I am of the opinion that in believing that we are a nation, we are cherishing a great delusion".** How could people, he questioned, divided into several thousands of castes be a nation? The INC, Ambedkar said represented the Indian bourgeoisie's drive to obtain overall economic and political control.

However Ambedkar's entry into Nehru's cabinet in 1946 shifted his Dalit perspective in the background. The Dalit movement, before 1947, did not support the freedom movement. In fact, the Dalit leaders found the colonial rule congenial to their interests. They favoured the alien rule to the oppressive Brahmin supremacy, though they soon realized that ultimately, the colonial rule would go against the Dalits.

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The Dalits, during pre-independence days, would seek favours from the colonial British Rule. It was with this view that in 1919 Ambedkar demanded separate electorates, seeking reservation seats. He sought these concessions at the 1st Round table conference in January 1931 and got them confirmed in the 2nd RTC in sep 1931, through the Poona pact, the provision for joint electorate was offered so as to neutralize the Dalit's separate electorate demands.

Dr Ambedkar's Labour Party of India in 1933 helped the Dalits to elect the 22 members to the Bombay Legislative council.

In 1941, another political party, the **Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF)** was launched by Ambedkar with the aim of highlighting the grievances of the SCs and fighting for their rights. SCF remained active for nearly 16 years before it was abolished by Dr Ambedkar.

In 1956, he had established the Republican Party of India (RPI).

KEERTHI PUJAR

CRIMINALIZATION OF POLITICS

Milan Vaishnav in his book “**When Crime pays**” argues that there is something akin to a **marketplace for criminals** in Indian politics.

On the **supply side**, there is a growing willingness of political parties to field candidates with criminal records. The costs of elections have burgeoned in recent years. Parties are on the lookout not only for self-financing candidates but those who can also fill the parties’ coffers to help other candidates

But why do criminals want to contest elections in the first place?

Previously, criminals and thugs did the bidding of parties in order to secure political protection. Over the years, especially as elections got more competitive from 1967 onwards, they have worked out that it was better for them to contest directly and ensure the requisite political cover.

Then again, why do people elect criminals to office?

In analysing this **demand side**, Vaishnav demolishes claims about the ignorance of voters. On the contrary, he argues, people vote for candidates with criminal reputations precisely because of this reputation.

→ For one thing, the **weakness of the Indian state** in upholding the rule of law and in delivering public services compels constituents to turn to **local tough-men** for ameliorating their problems.

Context - He argues that by the late 1960s there was a combination of institutional decay, primarily within the Congress party, and a spurt in popular participation and consequent demands on the state. It was in this context that criminals came to acquire salience in politics.

The criminalisation of politics is ubiquitous and is present in all States despite different levels of literacy, development, GDP or urbanisation.

Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, on the other hand, are better developed States, with higher rates of literacy, but have a higher proportion of MPs with criminal charges (Gujarat 42 per cent, Tamil Nadu 26 per cent and Maharashtra 54 per cent).

The northeastern States fare better than most others.

The level of education does not appear to reduce criminality among the candidates or the elected representatives. 53 out of the 76 MPs in the current Lok Sabha facing serious criminal charges are graduates and above.

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Consequences of criminalization

The primary sacrifice at the altar of criminalisation is that of governance, along with transparency and accountability. Expensive election campaigning favours candidates with strong financial background. Such candidates, when elected, seek to recover their expenses besides securing a corpus for the future election as quickly as possible, especially in the era of coalition governments with tenuous stability.

Agents of change

The Supreme Court and the Election Commission of India (ECI) have undertaken some commendable steps for reforming the electoral process. But these two constitutional bodies are also bound by the laws enacted by the elected legislative body.

The **ECI** has achieved considerable success in containing the role of muscle power through measures such as the effective implementation of the **model code of conduct** and the setting up of the **expense monitoring cell**. **Mandatory declaration of assets** and **existing criminal charges** in **self-sworn affidavits** to the ECI prior to elections has brought in some **transparency**.

Supreme Court judgments disqualifying convicted MPs and MLAs (Lily Thomas vs. Union of India, 2013), barring those in jail from contesting (Chief Election Commissioner vs. Jan Chowkidar, 2013), directing the EC to bring the issue of election related freebies under the ambit of the Code of Conduct, the **Allahabad High Court** banning caste and religion based political rallies are all attempts to change the system.

However, implementation of these judgements has faced unequivocal opposition from all the political parties. When the Supreme Court in its recent intervention (Lily Thomas vs. Union of India, 2013) sought to prevent convicted MPs from continuing in office, the legislators promptly geared up to nullify the judgment through an ordinance.

While the Supreme Court should be commended for taking long strides, judicial reforms targeting speedy disposal of cases could go a longer way in decriminalising the Parliament.

The Supreme Court's recent order setting a deadline for the lower courts to complete trial in cases involving lawmakers within a year of framing of charges is a welcome step in this direction.

Further steps that can be taken

- Deeper research into **state-funding of elections** and devising a metric to quantitatively measure the performance of individual MPs are areas of far-reaching consequences to the criminalisation of politics.
- Fast track courts and Independent prosecutors

DYANSTIC POLITICS

Kanchan Chandra

In the 2014 Lok Sabha, 22 percent of MPs have a dynastic background.

Congress - 48 percent of its current MPs have a dynastic background

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BJP - only 15 percent of its current MPs are dynastic

Chandra has drawn some interesting conclusions that political dynasties are both exclusive and undemocratic, and at the same time inclusive in certain ways.

How is it exclusive?

First, dynasty amplifies the dominance of the **‘forward’ castes** in **representative institutions**.

The representation of dalit and backward caste groups in legislatures has also gone up in the past few years. And yet you find **upper castes still remaining a dominant force in the legislature**, around 43 per cent in 2009, and around the same in 2014, despite the change in parties in power.

In 2014, 53 per cent of all political dynasties represented in Parliament came from the forward castes.

There is, therefore, an **amplification of dominance**. This is one way of looking at dynasties as being **exclusionary**.

How is it then inclusive?

It has provided a channel for representation for members of social categories — women, backward castes, Muslims, and youth — which do not find, or have not found, a space in politics through normal channels.

In an **unequal polity** in which there are already high barriers to the entry of new groups into politics, dynastic politics has become an informal, second-best means of overcoming some of them. In fact, in the absence of dynastic ties, the level of representation of these groups may have been even lower.

Why political parties favour dynasties?

Parties favour dynasties because family ties act as an informal substitute for loyalty. Parties do not have formal criteria for candidate selection or formal procedures for preventing defections in their local units. So parties are overwhelmingly concerned with loyalty within the ranks at the local level. The use of dynasties allows parties, in this weakly organised environment, to ensure some loyalty in their local units.

In Congress the system of using family ties to ensure loyalty is particularly prevalent. In the BJP, where there are other institutional ways of ensuring loyalty, this tendency is lower. [Of] Congress MPs, in the 2014 Parliament, 43 per cent are dynastic, and in the BJP the percentage is 15 per cent.

When it comes to **dynasticism among Dalit MPs, it is lower than several other castes**. In 2014, around 8 per cent of Dalit MPs were dynastic, but the majority of the dynasts were from mainline parties like the Congress or the BJP.

Dynasties require parties to succeed in India. They are encased within parties. They cannot just win by themselves.

Also, in India, the number of independents who fight elections is going up, but those winning is decreasing. Therefore, however weak a party structure may appear, it remains important... The paradox therefore is that in India, parties are so weakly organised, but they remain so important.

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Why Political dynasties succeed in India?

1. One argument is that they are a product of **India's unique cultural values**. The former BBC journalist Mark Tully, for example, has argued that "It is **India's strong family traditions**, so different to the nuclear families in the West, that justify dynasts in the eyes of voters. In India, it's widely thought to be natural and acceptable for a father or a mother who has any form of power to want to hand it over to a son or a daughter."
 - a. But dynastic politics is hardly unique to India - at one extreme by the Philippines, in which 50 percent of all congresspersons in 2007 followed a relative into elected office, and at the other by Canada, in which 3 percent of the House of Commons in 2011 was dynastic.
2. dynasties exist in Indian politics because **voters prefer them**. conducted by the scholars **Milan Vaishnav, Devesh Kapur** and Neelanjan Sircar in the 2014 elections, found that 46 percent of voters preferred candidates from political families.
3. Role played by political parties - India's political parties habitually give dynastic contenders a leg-up in the ticket allocation process. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, for example, all parties, taken together, renominated 75 percent of their dynastic MPs,
 - a. Parties favour dynastic candidates as a way to **ensure loyalty**. They have few formal measures they can rely on to ensure cohesiveness in their local units.
 - b. When parties use dynasty as the principle of ticket allocation, the likelihood of rebellion is not eliminated, but it is reduced.

The paradox of political representation

POLITICAL representation faces a paradox in contemporary India. This **deepening of representative democracy** coexists, on the other hand, with a thinning of the very idea of representation (reduction in the mismatch between the social profile of the representatives and those who are represented)

The broadening of the base of political representatives, thanks to the inauguration of the constitutionally protected third tier of democracy.

Progress on '**Who is the representative?**' is accompanied by a step back in '**What does the representative do?**'

- The rise of political leaders from lower social order in recent times has rarely been accompanied by any substantial policy measures or use of governmental power for the benefit of the lower social order. More often than not, as in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in the 1990s, a steep rise in the political representation of the 'backward' castes has been characterized by a period of governmental mess and non-performance. No wonder, this perspective draws attention to the severe deficits of representation.

The second form that the paradox of participation takes is the simultaneous advance and retreat in the political representation of the lower social order.

- The rise in political representation of some backward communities has not led to a corresponding rise in the representation of many other communities that would be a part of the 'lower social order'. There is little awareness about or willingness to engage with the severe under-representation of the 'lower' OBCs or the **most backward castes** cutting across the North-South divide.
- Similarly there is little attention to an equally severe under-representation of the '**maha dalits**', the dalit communities at the bottom of the Scheduled Castes.
- **The Sachar Committee report** has served to bring some attention to the gross under-representation of the Muslims in the Parliament and state assemblies, but the issue is yet to acquire national salience necessary for any remedial action.
- There is little improvement in the political representation of marginalised social groups like women and the poor that do not possess a self-conscious political identity.

Women reservation bill is pending

Proposals of one form or another for state funding of elections have been lying before Parliament for the last two decades but a cartel of big parties and rich politicians has ensured a silence on this question.

What the representative do?

1. The passage of the anti-defection law in its second incarnation has left little discretion with an MP or an MLA who does not wish to risk losing her or his seat.
2. The rise of political families or the party supremo with a coterie, which complicates much of the routine discussion about the nature of political representation
3. The issue of political representation itself is declining in salience due to a shift in the locus of decision-making from the legislature and executive to independent bodies and the judiciary. Simultaneously, the media has emerged as the key and not-so-neutral mediator in how any political issue is represented to the public and thus sets limits to the political agenda.

The Third Way

In the age of late and reflexive modernity and post scarcity economy, the political science is being transformed. **Giddens** notes that there is a possibility that "**life politics**" (the **politics of self-actualisation**) may become more visible than "**emancipatory politics**" (the **politics of inequality**); that **new social movements** may lead to more social change than political parties; and that the reflexive project of the self and **changes in gender and sexual relations** may lead the way, via the "**democratisation of democracy**", to a new era of **Habermasian "dialogic democracy"** in which differences are settled, and practices ordered, through discourse rather than violence or the commands of authority.

Giddens discards the possibility of a single, comprehensive, all-connecting ideology or political programme. Instead he advocates **going after the 'small pictures'**, ones people can directly affect at their home, workplace or local community.

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