

5 MODERN INDIA



The history of our country can safely be divided into ancient, medieval and modern periods. The ancient period started long ago, as long as humans have lived on earth. In an earlier lesson you read about what happened in Medieval India i.e. from about the 8th century A.D. and lasted till the beginning of 18th century. Now, we shall read about the Modern period in History. During the last two periods you must have found the society, economy, polity and culture very different from each other. These differences which you may also call progress, developed, continued and increased at a very fast pace and had very much more deeper impact on our lives. You may recall that all those who came to India from outside such as the Turks, the Afghans, and the Mughals made India their home. But the British colonial rulers always remained foreigners to this land. Nonetheless they brought profound social, economic and political changes to suit their interests and in the process left deep imprints on many aspects of Indian culture. If you see the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi you can have a clear picture of the British impact on Indian architecture. You see the pattern repeated in many buildings in Kolkata, Mumbai and in several other parts of the country. All these have now become a part of our cultural heritage. Apart from these architectural remains, the colonial state also left behind a uniform system of government, a system of education based on Western ideas, science and philosophies. It would be very interesting for you to know that the social and religious reform movements begun in the nineteenth century helped to build a modern India as well. Modern literature in Indian languages were all deeply influenced by the spread of English education and through it India's intimate contact with the ideas and institutions of the West.

OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to:

- trace the events that were taking place in the West during the eighteenth century and their impact on India;
- describe the closing years of eighteenth century India;
- examine the social conditions of the Hindus and Muslims during this period;
- list the contributions of social and religious reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swamy Dayananda Saraswati and others;
- appreciate the role of press and newspapers in generating nationalism among the people; and
- appreciate India's struggle for independence.

5.1 RISE OF THE WEST AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIA

From 1450 onwards, three important developments had changed the shape of Europe: (i)

the invention of printing press, (ii) the beginning and the spread of the Renaissance and the Reformation movements and (iii) the discovery of new trade routes. Thereafter, Europe made great progress in the fields of science, exploration and gunnery. Soon, their armies and navies became the best in the world. Scientific education began to spread. Logic and reason thus became the touchstone on which the old dogmas and learning were tested. Among these European countries, the Portuguese and then the Dutch, the French and finally, the British entered into a race to control the trade from India. The British ultimately succeeded in not only controlling trade but also the country and for about two centuries India remained under her domination where her entire human resources were recklessly exploited and her wealth was drained away for the benefit of the ruling nation. To further their interest the British used the prevailing social and political situation in India. Where a large number of states had cropped up after the decline of the Mughal Empire.

The British took advantage of this situation and had one ruler fight against the other or supported a usurper to the throne. Though Tipu Sultan of Mysore tried to use the same principle as used by the British, that is making use of the rivalry between the French and the British, he could not match the superior diplomacy and fire power of the British. The British domination of India was built upon successive phases. The first phase consisted of taking hold of the Indian trade. They bought Indian goods at very low prices and sold them in the Western markets at very high prices, thereby making enormous profits without giving anything to the peasants. In this, they were helped by the Indian Seths and gomastas. In the second phase, the British took control of the production activities in a manner that would suit their export objectives. In the process they successfully destroyed the Indian industries. This was because India was a potential buyer of their goods.

The third phase was an intensified phase of British Imperialism and colonial exploitation when India was ruled by the British for fulfilling British economic interests. The Britishers came to India for making profits through trade. Slowly they gained political and economic control of the country. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757 A.D., they had become the real masters of Bengal. They used political control over Bengal to increase their trade and export of foreign goods. They eliminated the Indian as well as foreign rivals in trade so that there could be no competition. They monopolised the sale of raw cotton and made the Bengal weaver pay exorbitant prices. They imposed heavy duties on Indian goods entering Britain so as to protect their own industry. With the coming of the industrial revolution in Europe, the Indian industries were hit very hard. By 1813, the Indian handicrafts lost both the domestic as well as the foreign market. Indian goods could not compete with the British factory made products, where machines were used.

On the other hand, the English merchants had accumulated a lot of wealth which they now invested in setting up industries and trade. The East India Company helped in financing and expanding their industrial base. During this time there was a class of manufacturers in England who benefitted more from manufacturing than trading. They were interested in having more raw materials from India as well as sending their finished goods back. Between 1793 and 1813, these British manufacturers launched a campaign against the company, its trade monopoly and the privileges it enjoyed. Ultimately in 1813, they succeeded in abolishing the East India Company's monopoly of Indian trade. With this India became an economic colony of industrial England.

As a result, Indian hand made goods faced extinction as British machine made goods were cheaper. These goods either had a free entry or paid very low tariff rates to enter India. Indians were to be modernized so that they could develop taste for western goods and buy them. The Indian industries suffered as a result of exploitation at the hands of the British, who did not at all care about Indian trade interests. They did not protect Indian trade nor did they introduce any advanced technology in the country during this period. Indian handicrafts suffered when foreign goods were given free entry. On the other hand, Indian handicrafts were taxed heavily when they entered Britain. Indian sugar mills paid duty three times its original price when sent to Britain. So the trade from India virtually came to a stop.

India had become an excellent consumer of British goods and a rich supplier of raw materials by the year 1813 A.D. Since England wanted to exploit India for commercial gains, that is, by buying raw materials

and selling finished goods, they introduced steam ships and railways in India. The railways opened a vast market to the British and facilitated export of Indian raw material abroad. Do you know that it was in 1853 that the first railway line running from Bombay to Thane was opened to public? The railways connected the raw material producing areas with the exporting ports. As a result British goods flooded the Indian market. Do you know that the railways played an important role in the national awakening of the country, too? They helped to bring people and ideas come closer together—something that the British had never anticipated. Isn't this ironical?

Do you know that it was again in 1853 that Dalhousie opened the first telegraph line from Calcutta to Agra and also introduced the postal service in India?

INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.1

1. Who succeeded in gaining political control over India?

2. Who among the Indian rulers tried to use the rivalry between the French and the British but could not succeed?

3. How many phases of the British domination in India can be seen?

5.2 INDIA IN THE 18TH CENTURY: ECONOMY, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Indian in the eighteenth century was a picture of many contrasts and contradictions. Economically agriculture was the main occupation of the people. Since the rulers were constantly at war, they did not have the time to improve agricultural conditions of the land. Foreign trade was flourishing under the Mughals. India imported pearls, raw silk, wool, dates, dried fruits from the Persian Gulf region; Coffee, gold, drugs and honey from Arabia; tea, porcelain and silk came into India from China; luxury goods were also brought in from Tibet, Singapore, Indonesian Islands, Africa and Europe.

Indian exported raw silk, silk fabrics, indigo, sugar, pepper and many other things. India's cotton textiles were famous all over the world. In spite of such a favourable balance of trade, India's economic condition could not improve because of constant warfare. Within the country, there were revolts of the Sikhs, Jats, Marathas and from outside, foreign invasions, like that of Nadir shah (1739 A.D.) and Ahmad Shah Abdali (1761), were common. By the eighteenth century European countries like France, England, Portugal and Spain were interested in trading with India. They helped in creating more political and economic instability in the country and ultimately they destroyed its economy. But, by this time, India's fame had spread all over the world as a land of beautiful handicrafts. Socially, there was no unity of pattern in the social and cultural life of the people. Whether they were Hindus or Muslims, there was division among them on the basis of region, tribe, language and caste. Caste rules were to be observed in matters of marriage, diet, inter dining as well as in choosing a profession. Any one found disobeying rules was most likely to be thrown out of the community. In the field of science that India, which was so advanced, had by now neglected her Mathematics and sciences. They remained ignorant of the advances made in the field of science by the West. Teacher were respected in society during those times. Education was steeped in tradition .

The students were taught reading and writing along with arithmetic. Girls seldom went to school. Education was not patronized by the State, but by local rulers, members of the aristocracy and benevolent contributors.

Hindu-Muslim Relations

Friendly relations existed between the people of the two religions. Religious tolerance was practiced. The wars were political and fought for selfish reasons rather than for religion. Members of both the communities participated in each others festivals. Many Hindus had faith in Muslim saints while many Muslims showed an equal respect for Hindu gods and saints. In fact, the upper class Hindus and Muslims had many more things in common with each other than with the lower classes of their own community. Besides, the Muslims had adopted the Indian style and culture so well that it was difficult to distinguish one from the

other.

5.3 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

By the turn of the century, the condition of women had little to be happy about. The birth of a girl child was considered to be unfortunate. Girls were married off in their childhood. Polygamy was permitted. Women had no right to property or divorce. Perpetual widowhood was the injunction of the society, especially amongst the upper castes. These widows could not wear coloured clothes, or attend marriages since their presence was considered inauspicious. As child marriages were common in such occasions sometimes even the infant girls became widows and were condemned to perpetual widowhood. Inter-caste marriages were not allowed. Even the prevailing social system did not permit a person from a lower caste to eat with a person of a higher caste. The condition of muslim women was much the same. They faced immense hardship due to the practice of purdah, polygamy, lack of education and rights to property.

5.4 SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORMERS

Christian priests came to India along with the employees of the East India Company to perform their religious rituals at the time of baptism, marriage, burials and church service. But these priests soon started preaching Christianity to the non-Christian employees of the Company as well. Slowly they started opening schools that were attended by the Indian children. It were these missionaries, who also started the printing press and magazines for disseminating Christian precepts and literature.

Along with Christian propaganda, English education was introduced which had a great impact on the society and economy of India. Though the purpose of introducing English education was to fulfil British political and administrative needs, it opened the windows for Indians to the West. They imbibed new ideas of liberalism, rationalism, democracy, equality and freedom. Soon English language also became the lingua franca of the English educated Indians and acted as a cementing force.

Ram Mohan Roy

Ram Mohan Roy is known as the harbinger of the modern age in India. He mastered several languages including Greek and Latin. His role in reforming the Hindu society and the reawakening of India is important. As a large number of social practices prevalent amongst the Hindus at that time claimed to have religious sanctions. Raja Ram Mohan Roy cited extensively from the religious texts to show that this was not true. The foremost in the list was *sati*. Sati was immolation by a widow on the funeral pyre of her dead husband which had become a self practice in different parts of Bengal and Rajasthan. Ram Mohan Roy took up cudgels against it and ultimately got it banned. He founded the Brahma Samaj, which carried his message of rationalism and the principle of social equality. His followers believed in the worship of one supreme god (monotheism) and opposed idol worship, polytheism and ritualism. Debendra Nath Tagore (1817-1905) succeeded Raja Ram Mohan Roy as the leader of the Brahma Samaj. He tried to put new life into the Samaj and propagated Raja Ram Mohan Roy's ideas. Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) took over the leadership from Tagore. All this time the Samaj laid emphasis on individual freedom, national unity, solidarity, democratization of all social institutions and of social relations. The Brahma Samaj became the first organized vehicle for the expression of national awakening in India.

Prarthana Samaj and Ranade

The Prarthana Samaj was established in Bombay by Dr. Atma Ram Pandurang in 1867. They tried to introduce social reforms like inter-caste dining, inter-caste marriage, widow remarriage and improvement of the lot of women and depressed classes. According to Ranade, rigidity in religion would not permit success in social, economic and political spheres. He believed in the unity of God and de-emphasized idol worship as well as caste system.

Ramakrishna Paramhansa

Ramakrishan Mission was founded by Swami Vivekananda to regenerate Indian society. He was a disciple of Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya, later known as Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Vivekananda gave final shape to the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He advocated liberty, free thinking and equality. He emphasised oneness of all religions. He promoted the vedanta philosophy, which he considered to be the most rational system of thought.

Theosophical Society and Annie Besant

The reform movement was also strengthened by the Theosophical Society founded by Madame H.P. Blavatsky (1837-91) and Colonel H.S. Olcott along with others. Annie Besant promoted studies of ancient Indian religions, philosophies and doctrine. She also established the Central Hindu School to encourage education.

Narayana Guru

Narayana Guru was a great saint of South India. He was born in Kerala in September 1854. He underwent preliminary education under the guidance of a local teacher. He became well versed in Malayalam, Sanskrit and Tamil. He had set his heart on the path of renunciation right from his adolescent days. After his parents died he set out on his journey in quest of true knowledge. He came in contact with Chattambi Swamikal. They became great associates. They spent their time serving holy men, meditating in solitude and making pilgrimages.

Both Swamikal and Narayana realised that the all round progress of Kerala depended on the goodwill and co-operation among the Nayar and the Ezhava communities, in which they were born respectively. The conflict between these two communities threatened to ruin Kerala. They decided to work to bring the two communities together. Narayana Guru was a social as well as religious reformer. He lived a life of an ascetic and did much to improve the spiritual as well as the social life of the people of Kerala.

Muslim Reform Movement

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was the most prominent social reformer among the Muslims. He realized that Muslims could only make progress if they took to modern education. Syed Ahmad Khan was against religious intolerance, ignorance and irrationalism. He denounced purdah, polygamy and easy divorce. Syed Ahmad Khan started the Aligarh movement. He established the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh. It was meant to be a centre for spreading Sciences and Culture. It later grew into Aligarh Muslim University.

The Aligarh Movement helped in the Muslim revival. It gave them a common language— Urdu. A Muslim press was also developed for the compilation of works in Urdu. Unfortunately, in his later years Syed Ahmad Khan encouraged the Indian Muslims not to join the National Movement. He felt that education and not politics was needed by them. In a way he encouraged the forces of communalism and separatism at this stage.

Social Reform

Do you know that nearly all religious reformers contributed to the social reform movement too? This was because the backward features of Indian Society, such as casteism and inequality of sexes, had religious sanctions in the past. There were two main objectives of the social reform movements. These were:

- (a) emancipation of women and giving them equality with men,
- (b) removal of caste rigidities, especially the abolition of untouchability and the upliftment of the depressed classes.

Emancipation of Women

The most striking change in the Indian social life of today is that in the position of women. Attempts have been made by the State and reformers to do away with the practice of early marriage by legislation. The women themselves have been zealous in making attempts to improve their lot in all

possible ways, like better facilities regarding education and social abuses. There is now a growth of political consciousness among women. In 1930 the Sharda Act was passed fixing the minimum age for marriage for boys at 18 and girls at 14. Do you know that Maharishi Karve was awarded the Bharat Ratna for his great work in the field of women's education? He started schools for girls, as well as working houses for widows and destitute. Soon this movement gained momentum and many schools and colleges were opened for women.

Struggle against Caste System

Immense work has been done in this field by the Ramakrishn Mission and the Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj especially has contributed a lot towards it by their Shuddhi Movement, that is, a form of purification by which those Hindus who had converted to Islam or Christianity could come back to their own religion. Champions of the backward classes were B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi. Ambedkar opened many schools and colleges for their benefit. Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, championed the cause of untouchables whom he called Harijans. He asked for temples to be thrown open to them as well as for equal treatment to them. Even the Constitution of Free India has given the legal and constitutional support to this movement. Untouchability was declared a punishable offence. But we still have a long way to go to achieve our cherished goal of a society based on complete equality and equity, a society where all the members—men or women coming from any social or economic background—are happy and their needs fulfilled. And we will all have to work together to bring about such a situation.

Swami Dayanand

Swami Dayanand's greatest asset was his mastery over the Sanskrit language and the *Vedas*. He felt that the myriad social and religious evils which had crept into the Hindu society over the centuries were due to the lack of true knowledge of the Vedas. Therefore, he challenged the Hindu society on the issues of idolatry and women education.

In 1875, he founded the Arya Samaj. Its main aim was to propagate the true knowledge of the *Vedas* and discard all evils that had crept into the Hindu society later in its name. He opposed untouchability. He was similarly opposed to polytheism, *avataravada* and ritualism. His slogan was 'go back to the Vedas' whose authority he accepted. For the first time in the history of India, the *Vedas* were printed in India under his patronage.

Personally, his most important work was *Satyartha Prakasha* (The Light of Truth). In 1883, Swami Dayanand left his body after an eventful life. His followers started a Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) School and College in Lahore (now in Pakistan) in 1886. This DAV movement has carried forward his work since then and now has over 750 institutions under one umbrella.

As a result of the works of these two pioneers and other equally well-known personalities and organizations like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Radhakanta Deb, the Theosophical Society and the Arya Samaj, a large number of people in eastern and north-eastern India were substantially awakened and many of the social evils were banned with the help of the Britishers.

Jyotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-90)

Known popularly as 'Jyotiba', Jyotirao Govindrao Phule was born in Pune (1827) in a lower caste family of malis. According to him the only way to improve the lot of the lower castes and women was through education. So he opened a school especially for the lower castes and also started the Satya Shodhak Samaj in 1873. His main aim was to seek social justice for the people belonging to the so-called untouchable and backward classes. Recognition for this work came to him in later years and he was elected to the Poona Municipality as a member.

Pandita Rama Bai (1858-1922)

One of the most important names among women social reformers of this time in India and more so, in Maharashtra, is that of Pandita Rama Bai. After her parents died, she along with her brother continued to travel from place to place, giving discourses on the *Puranas*.

Consequently, her reputation as a scholar and religious speaker spread far and wide that the pundits of Kolkata also invited her to address the people of the city. Everyone was astounded by her knowledge and elocution. So people began calling her *pandita*, a title bestowed on the learned women. In 1882, Rama Bai moved back to Pune. Naturally, she was drawn to the Prarthana Samaj, a reformation society which was propagating the message of the Brahmo Samaj in Maharashtra. Here, she also concentrated on improving the condition of women. In 1890, she started Sharda Sadan, a home for widows. Mahadev Govind Ranade, R.G. Bhadarkar, Dadabhai Naoroji, Behramji Malbari were other well known personalities, who worked for social reforms in Western India.

5.5 PRESS AND THE GROWTH OF MODERN INDIAN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

In 1798, lithography was invented. It used the specially prepared surface of a stone for printing a script, a picture, or drawing. A large number of copies of the same text could be printed in this way. From about 1820 onwards, hundreds of pamphlets and books were printed, which catered to the needs of the growing literate population of India. It was the biggest boon which the West had conferred on India. As a result, by the end of the nineteenth century, the press had become a powerful tool for influencing public opinion.

Since the new printing presses were not costly, their number grew at a fast pace. This, in turn, encouraged a large number of writers to produce literature in different Indian languages. Their original works as well as translations and adaptations of old Indian and Western classics helped enrich our cultural heritage. This helped to bring about an awakening of the Indians.

Weeklies, fortnightly journals and daily newspapers were published almost in every language. Although the total number of readers of newspapers was small as compared to their number in the European countries, a whole new set of national literature in the form of novels, essays and poems played a significant role in generating nationalism. Bankim Chandra's *Anandamatha*, Dinabandhu Mitra's *Neeldarpan*, Bhartendu Harish Chandra's *Bharat Durdasha*, Lakshminath Bezbarua's works in Assamese, Subramaniam Bharti's writing in Tamil and Altaf Hussain's works in Urdu stirred the minds of the Indians.

Role of Newspapers

Thus by the end of the nineteenth century the press in India had become a powerful and an important instrument for creating, spreading, influencing and sharpening public opinion. Consequently, the newspapers played a significant role in the dissemination of anti-British feelings by discussing, criticizing and commenting on government policies and on major social and economic issues. This helped in promoting a pan-Indian consciousness and in giving important political education to the people of India. Some important Newspapers

Bengal *The Hindoo Patriot* (English)

The Amrita Bazar Patrika (English)

Bombay *Maharatha* (English), *Kesari* (Marathi)

Madras *The Hindu* (English), *Swadeshmitran* (Tamil)

Punjab *The Tribune* (English)

Kohinoor, Akhbar Am (Urdu)

5.6 INDIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Independent India can rightly be proud of her achievements too. One of the most important achievements of post-independent India is the laying of a sound foundation for a secular and democratic republic. The

parliamentary system of governance adopted since independence has stood the test of time and India is the largest parliamentary democracy in the world today. Integration of the erstwhile princely states into the Indian union is

another major achievement. The reorganization of the states is still an ongoing process and new states and union territories are being formed as per needs and desire of the people. Economic planning has been introduced after independence to ensure the country's economic growth with social justice. As a result, India has made considerable progress in the sphere of economic development, particularly in the field of agriculture and agro based industries. India has also made commendable progress in the fields of science and technology. In the high technology areas also she is fast catching up with the highly developed countries. India's voice is now heard with respect in international meetings because of her political and economic stability and diplomatic stature in the region. The issue of India becoming a permanent member of the UN security council is similarly gaining wide acceptance today.

5.6.1 Nationalist Movement—The Beginning

British imperialistic colonialism was the chief cause of India's backwardness in every sphere. Indians were now coming to realize this truth. The peasants and the workers were the worst victims of British greed and apathy. The industrialists and the capitalists were also not satisfied with the British rule. The intelligentsia at this time played a significant role. They were the first ones to realize the true nature of British rule in India.

Their initial hope that the British would be benevolent rulers was shattered. Now they could see that the British were greedy and selfish, guided by sheer personal self-interest and that of Britain in general. By the 19th century all Indians were united in that, they had all realized they had a common enemy—the Britishers, who were out to destroy India for their own benefit. The Britishers did help in bringing about administrative and economic unification of the country.

They introduced the communication systems of railway, telegraph and post as well as developed roads and motor transport, which contributed to this unification. Western thought and education, that came to India with the British, helped in arousing the consciousness of the Indian people. Modern ideas of democracy, humanism, nationalism and sovereignty of the people started guiding Indians towards nationalism. The press and literature played an equally important role in spreading nationalistic feelings. There were many patriotic writers who inspired the people with their writings. During the 19th century also came a revival of the ancient glory of India. It was spearheaded by some enlightened Europeans, who studied India's past and brought out its depth and glory. Some eminent educated Indians also contributed in this revival by spreading the awareness of it in the country. The racial arrogance and discrimination on the part of the British rulers in

India, the agitation of the Britishers against the Ilbert Bill, Lord Lytton's anti-India measures and the holding of the lavish British King's Durbar in India when many Indians were dying due to famine—all led to the intensification of anti-British feelings among Indians. All these became the reasons for the spread of nationalistic feelings in the country during the 19th century. These feelings took the form of a nationalistic movement with the advent of the Indian National Congress, started by A.O. Hume in 1885. The history of the Indian National Congress became the history of the nationalist movement in India. The Congress did not achieve much politically during this period, that is, in the first 20 years of its inception. But it did succeed in creating political awareness and a feeling of unity. This phase can be called an era of moderates in the national movement. The formation of the Muslim League is considered to be the first fruit of the British master strategy of 'Divide and Rule'. The British were happy that they had succeeded in separating the 62 million Muslims from the Hindus. Thus arose the evil monster of communalism in our country.

The Home Rule Movement

The First World War broke out in 1914. The Congress decided to support the British. It was believed, especially by the Moderates, that the British would be obliged to grant freedom to India after the war. But it was soon realised that this hope would not be fulfilled as the war was being fought to retain colonies. Consequently, two Home Rule Leagues were set up during 1915-16. One was started by Tilak at Poona and

the other by Annie Besant at Madras. These Leagues aimed at the achievement of Swaraj or self-government. They gave the Indian nationalists a definite goal to achieve. The movement avoided violent or revolutionary methods. The Home Rule Leagues worked as auxiliary units of the Congress.

5.6.2 1905-1918 Period

The period between 1905 and 1918 in our national movement is called the Era of Extremists. The Extremists criticized the Moderates on these grounds—failure to define India's political goals, using mild and ineffective methods and failure to make the movement a mass movement. The Extremists believed in direct political action and in demanding Swaraj or self-rule instead of constitutional reforms. The radical faction of extremists was led by the trio popularly known as - Lal, Bal, Pal i.e. Lala Laj Pat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Bipin Chandra Pal, Bankim Chandra, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda Saraswari and Aurobindo Ghosh inspired the extremist philosophy by their ideas and preachings. Curzon's repressive policies in India, which culminated in the partition of Bengal on communal lines in order to 'Divide and Rule', became the immediate cause of agitation. There was an agitation against the partition of Bengal. The means adopted were 'Boycott' of foreign goods and adoption of 'Swadeshi' or indigenously produced goods. The 'Boycott' and 'Swadeshi' soon spread and became countrywide movements. All sections of the society including students and women became active in the agitation. It became a mass movement. The British government used all kinds of violent repressive measures to suppress it.

5.6.3 1919-1934 Period

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms introduced Dyarchy in the provinces with the Government of Indian Act, 1919. The Moderates welcomed these reforms, while the Extremists rejected them. The Rowlatt Act was also passed in 1919 to suppress political violence. At this juncture appeared a new face in the political arena of India's freedom movement. This was Gandhi, who filled the vacuum created in the top leadership of the Congress. Gandhi had led the movement against discrimination meted out to Indians in South Africa. He had used the political weapon called Satyagraha (Truth force, or Love force, or Soul force). His first triumph in India was the Champaran Satyagraha. This was the beginning of the third phase of the freedom struggle which can be called the Gandhian Era. A movement against the Rowlatt Act was launched.

But Gandhi took it back because violence erupted. He was strictly against violence. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre took place in Amritsar on April 13, 1919. More than 1000 people were massacred on the orders of General Dyer. The Khilafat Movement started in November, 1919. The aim was to pressurise the government to set right the wrongs done to the Muslims on the issue of Turkey. The Khilafat Movement merged with the non co-operation movement under Gandhi's leadership. He issued a manifesto on 10th March, 1920 spelling out his philosophy of non-violent, non co-operation. He laid down an elaborate programme of boycott of anything British including jobs, courts, schools, colleges, functions and goods.

A constructive programme included promotion of Swadeshi, removal of untouchability and promotion of Hindu-Muslim unity. C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru planned to break the system from within the councils under the banner of 'Swaraj Party'. But it failed within three years. Revolutionary activities were revived in 1922 and went on till 1934 sporadically. Prominent revolutionaries included the names of Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Bismil, Ashfaqullah and many others. There were revolutionary communists like M.N. Roy, Dange, and Muzaffar. Some communists were given long term sentences in the Meerut conspiracy case. The Simon Commission was constituted in 1928 and sent to India for reviewing the political situation. It had to face non-violence but bitter protest demonstrations everywhere it went, as no Indian was included in the Commission. Lala Lajpat Rai died of injuries he received in a lathi charge while leading a peaceful demonstration at Lahore. An outline of a constitution for India was drawn as Nehru Report in 1928.

In the Lahore Session of the Congress in 1929, the slogan of Purna Swaraj as the goal was adopted; 26th January, 1930 was celebrated as independence day. Gandhi undertook Salt Satyagraha, popularly known as

Dandi March, on 6th April, 1930. The Civil Disobedience Movement went on till 1934. In between there was the Round Table conference. But the Movement had to be suspended. Gandhi retired from the Congress in October 1934. Gandhi took up the cause of the 'Depressed Classes' and the 'Untouchables', whom he called 'Harijans'. The Harijans Sewak Sangh was established.

5.6.4 Achievement of Independence

In 1935, Government of India Act was passed. It evolved a concept of All India Federation. Provincial Autonomy was introduced. Only 14 per cent of the population could vote. Separate electorates were provided for Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans, among others. The Act discouraged the emergence of national unity, encouraging separation and communalism. The Congress condemned the Act, but it decided to take part in the elections. Elections were held in 1937. Congress Ministers were formed in seven out of the eleven provinces. This brought relief to the people in various ways. Socialist ideas grew both within the Congress as well as outside it. Prominent Congress leaders like

Nehru and Bose were also influenced by socialist ideas. The British policy of divide and rule led to communalism. The British rulers started playing one community against another. They tried to stem the rising nationalism by appeasing the Muslims and inducing them to ask for privileges as 'minority rights'. Communal electorates were aimed at the same target of dividing Indians and weakening the national unity. As a result of communalism, the two-nation theory was evolved in 1938 and clearly spelt out by Jinnah in 1940.

Non-Muslim communalism never assumed such serious dimensions as the Muslim communalism. It was rather a reaction to the latter. A session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held at Benaras in 1933. The Arya Samaj established by Swami Dayanand and the Shuddhi Movement under the auspices of the Samaj were important movements for strengthening and purifying the Hindu community. Dr. Hedgewar founded the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (RSS). This was aimed at awakening and organising the Hindu people as well as imbuing in them an intense spirit of nationalism. The 'Shakha' technique was evolved for this purpose. When the Second World War started in 1939, the Congress demanded complete independence. The Cripps Mission, in 1942 offered 'Dominion Status' to India at the end of the war. The Congress rejected the offer. The Quit India Movement for complete independence was launched by Gandhi and the Congress in August, 1942.

Movement under the leadership of Jai Prakash Narain were also active during this period. The movement—both violent as well as non-violent—failed, but the British realized that they will have to quit soon. Subhash Chandra Bose and Rash Behari Bose launched the Indian Independence League and the Indian National Army (INA), also called Azad Hind Fauj, at Singapore in 1943. With the help of the Japanese, the INA reached the Indian borders and captured Kohima. But there was a reversal and Japan was defeated by the British Army. The INA Movement also collapsed while Subhash Chandra Bose was reported killed in an air crash in August, 1945. After the end of the war, elections were held in India in the beginning of 1946. The Congress won most of the seats. The Cabinet Mission came to India in March, 1946 to speed up the transfer of power to Indians. It published its recommendations on May 16. The Cabinet Mission Plan was an elaborate one for the ultimate transfer of power.

There was disagreement on the Plan between the Congress and the Muslim League. In the course of events, the Viceroy invited the Congress under Nehru to form an Interim Government. The Muslim League was furious and it resulted in communal riots and a lot of bloodshed. The Interim Government could not do anything as the League did not co-operate and stuck to their demand for a separate Muslim country—Pakistan. British Prime Minister Attlee announced in February, the Plan for the transfer of Power by June 1948. Lord Mountbatten was sent as Viceroy to India in March to make arrangements for the same. The Congress had to accept the partition of India due to many pressures, especially because of the widespread communal bloodshed and the uncompromising attitude of the League and Jinnah. India became free on 15th August, 1947 after partition. At the stroke of midnight (14th-15th August) transfer of power took place.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.2

1. What is the method of printing done with the help of a specially prepared surface of a stone to print a script called?
2. Who is the author of *Anandamatha*?
3. Who gave the slogan “back to the Vedas”?
4. When did Jyotiba Phule start the Satya Shodhak Samaj?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- The events like invention of the printing press, the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe led to the spread of learning, which encouraged people to question dogmas.
- India’s contact with the West had positive effects, as this led to a number of religious and social reforms that challenged social evils such as the *sati* system, child marriage, denial of widow remarriage, illiteracy, female infanticide and the caste system.
- The followers of Swami Dayanand, a great Vedic scholar, founded the Arya Samaj in 1875 and fought against untouchability, polytheism, and idolatry and pleaded for equal status for women.
- The invention of lithography in 1798 was a milestone as it helped the Indians to set up printing presses in many cities and start newspapers and journals. It also led to a tremendous growth of the modern Indian languages.

TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Describe the impact of Renaissance and Reformation Movement in Europe on India?
2. Examine the role of Arya Samaj in the reform movement.
3. What was the contribution of Dayanand Saraswati in the field of education?
4. What is lithography? How has it been helpful in the growth of Indian languages?
5. Examine the role of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the awakening of Indians.
6. Write an essay on India’s struggle for freedom.

ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

5.1

1. England
2. Tipu Sultan of Mysore
3. Three phases

5.2

1. Lithography
2. Bankin Chandra
3. Swami Dayanand
4. 1873