

Background and Need

In the latter half of the 19th century, India was under British colonial rule, and the Indian populace was facing economic exploitation, racial discrimination, and political exclusion. There was a growing sense of dissatisfaction among educated Indians due to these factors:

1. Economic Exploitation:

- The British policies led to the deindustrialization of India, which heavily affected the local artisans and craftsmen.
- Heavy taxation and revenue policies impoverished farmers and led to frequent famines.

2. Racial Discrimination:

- Indians faced discrimination in public services, with higher positions reserved for Europeans.
- Social and racial segregation was widespread, with Europeans enjoying privileges denied to Indians.

3. Political Exclusion:

- Indians had minimal representation in legislative bodies.
- The British government was autocratic, with little regard for the aspirations and welfare of Indians.

Emergence of a Platform

There was a pressing need for a platform where educated Indians could voice their grievances and advocate for political reforms. Influenced by Western education and liberal ideas, Indian leaders felt the need to form a political organization to demand constitutional reforms and greater representation.

Founding Figures

1. A.O. Hume:

- A retired British civil servant, Allan Octavian Hume, played a crucial role in the formation of the INC. He envisioned the Congress as a "safety valve" to channel Indian discontent into constitutional methods.
- Hume's connections and experience in administration helped in organizing the first session of the INC.

2. Indian Leaders:

- **Dadabhai Naoroji:** An esteemed leader known for his economic critique of British rule, particularly the "Drain Theory," which highlighted the economic drain of India's wealth to Britain.
- **Surendranath Banerjee:** A prominent nationalist who advocated for civil rights and was a key figure in the Indian National Association.
- **Pherozeshah Mehta:** A lawyer and politician who emphasized constitutional methods for achieving political reforms.

The First Session

- The first session of the INC was held in Bombay (Mumbai) from December 28-31, 1885.
- **Attendance:** It was attended by 72 delegates from different regions of India, representing a diverse cross-section of Indian society.
- **President:** Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee was elected as the first president of the INC.
- **Objectives:** The initial objectives included creating a platform for civic and political dialogue, promoting national unity, and formulating a set of demands for constitutional reforms.

Early Nationalists (Moderates)

The initial phase of the INC, from 1885 to 1905, is known as the era of the Moderates. The Moderates aimed to achieve their objectives through constitutional and peaceful means.

Key Leaders

1. **Dadabhai Naoroji:**
 - Known as the "Grand Old Man of India," Naoroji was a prominent early nationalist who emphasized the economic exploitation of India by the British through his "Drain Theory."
 - He was the first Indian to be elected to the British Parliament, where he advocated for Indian interests.
2. **Gopal Krishna Gokhale:**
 - A respected leader and social reformer who emphasized the need for gradual political reform and the importance of education.
 - Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society to promote social and educational reforms.
3. **Surendranath Banerjee:**
 - An advocate for civil rights and political representation, Banerjee founded the Indian National Association, which later merged with the INC.
 - He was a vocal critic of the British policies and worked tirelessly for political reforms.

Objectives and Methods

1. **Constitutional Reforms:**
 - The Moderates aimed for greater Indian representation in legislative councils and other administrative bodies.
 - They sought reforms to make the Indian administration more accountable to Indian interests.
2. **Methods:**
 - The Moderates used petitions, resolutions, meetings, and delegations to articulate their demands.
 - They believed in the efficacy of dialogue and negotiation with the British authorities and adhered to constitutional methods.

Achievements

1. Indian Councils Act of 1892:

- The early efforts of the INC led to the Indian Councils Act of 1892, which expanded the powers of legislative councils and increased Indian representation.
- While the Act did not meet all their demands, it was a step forward in involving Indians in the administration.

2. Political Consciousness:

- The early nationalists played a crucial role in raising political consciousness among the Indian masses.
- They laid the foundation for a more vigorous national movement, highlighting the importance of political unity and constitutional reforms.

3. Public Awareness:

- The Moderates brought various social and economic issues to the forefront, such as the plight of Indian farmers, the drain of wealth, and the need for better educational facilities.
- Their advocacy helped in mobilizing public opinion and preparing the ground for future leaders and movements.

The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 marked a significant milestone in India's struggle for independence. The early nationalists, known as Moderates, played a vital role in the initial phase of this struggle. Their constitutional approach, emphasis on dialogue, and advocacy for political reforms laid the groundwork for future phases of the Indian freedom movement, eventually leading to independence in 1947.

Establishment of the Indian National Congress (1885)

Objectives of the Indian National Congress

When the Indian National Congress (INC) was established in 1885, it aimed to address the issues faced by Indians under British colonial rule. The objectives of the INC can be summarized as follows:

1. Promoting National Unity:

- Foster a sense of unity and nationalism among Indians from different regions and communities.
- Overcome regional, religious, and linguistic differences to build a unified national identity.

2. Creating a Platform for Political Dialogue:

- Provide a platform for educated Indians to discuss and debate political issues and express their views.
- Formulate common demands and present them to the British government.

3. Securing Greater Representation:

- Advocate for increased Indian representation in legislative councils and other administrative bodies.
- Demand the inclusion of Indians in higher administrative positions.

4. **Influencing British Policy:**

- Influence British policy in India by highlighting the grievances and aspirations of the Indian people.
- Seek constitutional reforms and the extension of democratic rights to Indians.

5. **Addressing Socio-Economic Issues:**

- Highlight the economic exploitation and social injustices faced by Indians under British rule.
- Advocate for policies that would improve the socio-economic conditions of the Indian population.

6. **Educating and Mobilizing Public Opinion:**

- Raise political awareness among the Indian masses and educate them about their rights.
- Mobilize public opinion in favor of political and social reforms.

Early Leaders of the Indian National Congress

The early leaders of the Indian National Congress, also known as Moderates, played a crucial role in shaping the initial phase of the INC and its objectives. Some of the prominent early leaders included:

1. **Allan Octavian Hume:**

- A retired British civil servant, Hume is considered one of the founding fathers of the INC.
- He played a key role in organizing the first session of the Congress and believed that the INC would provide a "safety valve" for Indian grievances.

2. **Dadabhai Naoroji:**

- Known as the "Grand Old Man of India," Naoroji was a prominent leader and economic thinker.
- He highlighted the economic exploitation of India by the British through his "Drain Theory" and advocated for greater Indian representation in governance.

3. **Womesh Chunder Bonnerjee:**

- Elected as the first president of the INC, Bonnerjee was a respected lawyer and nationalist leader.
- He presided over the first session of the Congress in Bombay (Mumbai) in 1885.

4. **Surendranath Banerjee:**

- A key figure in the Indian National Association, which later merged with the INC.
- Banerjee was a vocal advocate for civil rights and political representation and worked tirelessly for political reforms.

5. **Pherozeshah Mehta:**

- A lawyer and politician, Mehta was known for his emphasis on constitutional methods to achieve political reforms.
- He played a significant role in articulating the demands of the INC and advocating for greater Indian participation in governance.

6. **Gopal Krishna Gokhale:**

- A respected social reformer and political leader, Gokhale emphasized the need for gradual political reform and the importance of education.

- He founded the Servants of India Society to promote social and educational reforms and was a mentor to many future leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi.

The establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 marked a significant step in the Indian struggle for independence. With its objectives focused on promoting national unity, securing greater representation, and addressing socio-economic issues, the INC provided a platform for political dialogue and advocacy. The early leaders, known as Moderates, played a crucial role in shaping the initial phase of the Congress and laying the groundwork for future phases of the Indian freedom movement.

Methods of Political Work: Petitions and Resolutions

In the early years of the Indian National Congress (INC), the primary methods of political work employed by the Moderates were petitions and resolutions. These methods reflected their belief in constitutional and peaceful means to achieve political reforms and express the aspirations of the Indian people.

Petitions

Definition and Purpose:

- Petitions were formal written requests submitted to the British authorities, including the Viceroy, the British Parliament, and other administrative bodies.
- The purpose of petitions was to articulate grievances, demand specific reforms, and seek redressal of issues affecting the Indian populace.

Process:

- Petitions were usually drafted by educated Indian leaders who had a deep understanding of the issues and legal knowledge.
- These petitions were signed by prominent leaders and representatives from different regions and communities.
- Once drafted and signed, the petitions were submitted to the relevant British authorities through official channels.

Content of Petitions:

- Economic Grievances: Petitions often highlighted the economic exploitation of India, including issues such as high taxation, the drain of wealth, and the plight of farmers and artisans.
- Political Reforms: Demands for increased representation of Indians in legislative councils and other administrative bodies were common in petitions.
- Social Issues: Petitions also addressed social issues, such as racial discrimination and the need for better educational facilities.

Examples:

- The Indian Councils Act of 1892: Petitions and representations by the INC played a role in the enactment of this Act, which expanded the powers of legislative councils and increased Indian representation.
- Drain Theory: Dadabhai Naoroji and other leaders used petitions to highlight the economic drain of India's wealth to Britain, advocating for economic reforms.

Resolutions

Definition and Purpose:

- Resolutions were formal statements or decisions adopted by the INC during its annual sessions.
- The purpose of resolutions was to formulate and articulate the collective demands and viewpoints of the Congress on various political, economic, and social issues.

Process:

- During the annual sessions of the INC, various resolutions were proposed by members.
- These resolutions were discussed and debated by the delegates attending the session.
- After thorough discussion, resolutions were adopted by consensus or majority vote and recorded in the proceedings of the session.

Content of Resolutions:

- Political Demands: Resolutions often called for political reforms, such as the introduction of representative institutions, separation of judicial and executive powers, and more significant Indian involvement in administration.
- Economic Issues: Resolutions addressed economic grievances, including demands for reduced land revenue, support for indigenous industries, and fair trade policies.
- Social Reforms: Resolutions also focused on social issues like education, public health, and the abolition of discriminatory practices.

Examples:

- Resolution on Swaraj: In the early 20th century, the demand for Swaraj (self-rule) became a significant resolution adopted by the INC, reflecting the growing aspiration for complete independence.
- Economic Resolutions: Resolutions were passed advocating for the promotion of indigenous industries, reduction of land revenue, and addressing the economic hardships faced by farmers and workers.

Impact and Significance

Impact on British Policy:

- While the petitions and resolutions of the early INC did not immediately lead to significant political changes, they gradually influenced British policy in India.
- They brought Indian issues to the attention of British authorities and the British public, creating awareness and pressure for reforms.

Raising Political Consciousness:

- These methods helped in raising political consciousness among the Indian masses and educated them about their rights and the importance of political participation.
- They fostered a sense of unity and collective identity among Indians, laying the foundation for a more vigorous national movement.

Foundation for Future Movements:

- The constitutional methods of the Moderates, including petitions and resolutions, set the stage for more radical phases of the Indian freedom movement.
- They provided a framework for future leaders and movements to build upon, eventually leading to the demand for complete independence.

The methods of political work employed by the early Indian National Congress, particularly petitions and resolutions, played a crucial role in articulating the grievances and aspirations of the Indian people. These methods reflected the Moderates' belief in constitutional and peaceful means to achieve political reforms. While their immediate impact was limited, they laid the groundwork for future phases of the Indian freedom movement and significantly contributed to raising political consciousness and fostering national unity among Indians.

- Moderates vs. Extremists Moderates: Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji

Moderates vs. Extremists

The Indian National Congress (INC) saw an ideological split between the Moderates and the Extremists in the early 20th century. These two groups had different approaches and strategies for achieving their goals of political reform and independence from British rule.

Moderates

The Moderates, active primarily between 1885 and 1905, believed in constitutional methods and gradual reforms. They aimed to achieve their objectives through dialogue, petitions, and resolutions, emphasizing the need for patience and steady progress.

Key Leaders:

- **Gopal Krishna Gokhale:** Known for his moderate and reformist views, Gokhale emphasized the importance of education, social reform, and gradual political change. He founded the Servants of India Society to promote social and educational reform and was a mentor to Mahatma Gandhi.
- **Dadabhai Naoroji:** Often called the "Grand Old Man of India," Naoroji was a key figure in the Moderate faction. He highlighted the economic exploitation of India by the British through his "Drain Theory" and advocated for greater Indian representation in governance. He was also the first Indian elected to the British Parliament.

Objectives:

- Achieve self-government within the British Empire.
- Increase Indian representation in legislative councils and administrative bodies.
- Promote social reforms and improve the socio-economic conditions of Indians.
- Advocate for constitutional and legal changes through peaceful means.

Methods:

- **Petitions:** Submitting formal requests to British authorities to address grievances and demand reforms.
- **Resolutions:** Passing formal statements during INC sessions to articulate the collective demands and viewpoints.
- **Delegations:** Sending representatives to Britain to present Indian issues directly to British officials and Parliament.
- **Dialogue and Negotiation:** Engaging in discussions with British authorities to seek concessions and reforms.

Extremists

The Extremists, active mainly from 1905 onwards, believed that the Moderates' methods were too slow and ineffective. They advocated for more direct and assertive action to achieve self-rule and independence.

Key Leaders:

- **Bal Gangadhar Tilak:** Known as the "Father of Indian Unrest," Tilak was a prominent leader of the Extremist faction. He believed in the slogan "Swaraj is my birthright, and I shall have it" and advocated for immediate self-rule.
- **Bipin Chandra Pal:** A fierce advocate for Swadeshi (self-reliance) and boycott of British goods, Pal emphasized the need for economic self-sufficiency and national pride.
- **Lala Lajpat Rai:** Known as the "Lion of Punjab," Lajpat Rai was a key figure in the Extremist movement. He called for more radical measures, including civil disobedience and mass mobilization, to achieve independence.

Objectives:

- Achieve complete independence (Swaraj) from British rule.
- Promote national pride and self-reliance (Swadeshi).
- Mobilize the masses for direct action against British policies.

Methods:

- **Boycott and Swadeshi:** Encouraging Indians to boycott British goods and promote indigenous industries.
- **Public Demonstrations:** Organizing protests, rallies, and public meetings to mobilize public opinion and pressure the British authorities.
- **Civil Disobedience:** Advocating for non-cooperation with the British government and refusal to obey unjust laws.
- **Mass Mobilization:** Engaging and involving a broader section of the Indian population in the struggle for independence.

The split between the Moderates and Extremists in the Indian National Congress reflected differing ideologies and approaches to achieving the common goal of political reform and independence. The Moderates, led by figures like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Dadabhai Naoroji, believed in constitutional methods and gradual reforms. In contrast, the Extremists, led by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai, advocated for more direct and assertive actions, including boycotts, civil disobedience, and mass mobilization. Despite their differences, both factions contributed significantly to India's struggle for independence, laying the groundwork for future movements and leaders.

➤ Extremists: Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai

Moderates vs. Extremists

The Indian National Congress (INC) experienced an ideological division between the Moderates and the Extremists in the early 20th century. These two groups had different philosophies, objectives, and methods for achieving political reforms and independence from British rule.

Moderates

Key Leaders:

1. **Gopal Krishna Gokhale:**
 - Gokhale was a respected leader known for his moderate and reformist approach.
 - He emphasized the importance of education, social reform, and gradual political change.
 - He founded the Servants of India Society to promote social and educational reforms.
 - Gokhale was a mentor to Mahatma Gandhi and influenced many future leaders.

2. Dadabhai Naoroji:

- Known as the "Grand Old Man of India," Naoroji was a prominent Moderate leader.
- He is famous for his "Drain Theory," which highlighted the economic exploitation of India by the British.
- Naoroji was the first Indian elected to the British Parliament, where he advocated for Indian interests.
- He played a key role in articulating the economic grievances of India.

Objectives:

- Achieve self-government within the British Empire.
- Secure greater representation for Indians in legislative councils and administrative bodies.
- Promote social and economic reforms to improve the conditions of Indians.
- Use constitutional and peaceful means to attain political objectives.

Methods:

- **Petitions:** Drafting formal written requests to British authorities to seek redressal of grievances and demand reforms.
- **Resolutions:** Adopting formal statements during INC sessions to articulate collective demands and viewpoints.
- **Delegations:** Sending representatives to Britain to present Indian issues directly to British officials and Parliament.
- **Dialogue and Negotiation:** Engaging in discussions with British authorities to seek concessions and reforms through peaceful means.

Extremists

The Extremists emerged as a more radical faction within the INC around the early 20th century. They were dissatisfied with the Moderates' methods and believed in more direct and assertive action to achieve independence.

Key Leaders:

1. Bal Gangadhar Tilak:

- Known as the "Father of Indian Unrest," Tilak was a prominent leader of the Extremist faction.
- He believed in the slogan "Swaraj is my birthright, and I shall have it," advocating for immediate self-rule.
- Tilak emphasized the need for mass mobilization and direct action against British rule.
- He promoted Swadeshi (self-reliance) and boycotts of British goods.

2. Bipin Chandra Pal:

- Pal was a fierce advocate for Swadeshi and economic self-sufficiency.

- He emphasized the importance of national pride and self-reliance.
- Pal supported boycotts of British goods and public demonstrations against British policies.
- He played a significant role in promoting the Extremist ideology through his writings and speeches.

3. Lala Lajpat Rai:

- Known as the "Lion of Punjab," Lajpat Rai was a key figure in the Extremist movement.
- He called for more radical measures, including civil disobedience and non-cooperation with the British government.
- Rai advocated for mass mobilization and public protests to exert pressure on the British authorities.
- He was a staunch supporter of the Swadeshi movement and boycotts of British goods.

Objectives:

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Methods:

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The ideological split between the Moderates and Extremists in the Indian National Congress reflected differing approaches to achieving the common goal of political reform and independence. The Moderates, led by figures like Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Dadabhai Naoroji, believed in constitutional methods and gradual reforms, while the Extremists, led by leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai, advocated for more direct and assertive actions, including boycotts, civil disobedience, and mass mobilization. Despite their differences, both factions played crucial roles in India's struggle for independence, contributing to the eventual success of the freedom movement.

➤ Swadeshi Movement and Partition of Bengal (1905-1911)

Swadeshi Movement and Partition of Bengal (1905-1911)

The Swadeshi Movement and the Partition of Bengal are significant events in the Indian freedom struggle, marking a period of intense nationalist activity and widespread protest against British colonial policies.

Partition of Bengal (1905)

Background:

- In 1905, Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India, announced the partition of Bengal.
- Bengal was divided into two provinces: East Bengal and Assam with a Muslim majority, and West Bengal with a Hindu majority.
- The official reason given was administrative efficiency, as Bengal was considered too large to govern effectively.

Reaction and Controversy:

- The partition was perceived by many Indians as an attempt to divide and rule by creating religious and social divisions.
- It was widely believed that the partition aimed to weaken the growing nationalist movement in Bengal by dividing the Hindu and Muslim communities.
- The partition sparked widespread outrage and protests among Indians, particularly in Bengal.

Swadeshi Movement

Definition and Objectives:

- The Swadeshi Movement, which began as a response to the Partition of Bengal, aimed to promote Indian goods and boycott British products.
- The term "Swadeshi" means "of one's own country," reflecting the movement's emphasis on self-reliance and national pride.
- The primary objectives were to protest the partition, promote Indian industries, and foster a sense of national unity and self-respect.

Methods and Activities:

- **Boycott of British Goods:** Indians were urged to boycott British products and use Indian-made goods instead. This included textiles, salt, sugar, and other daily necessities.
- **Promotion of Indigenous Industries:** Efforts were made to revive and promote traditional Indian industries, crafts, and enterprises.
- **Public Demonstrations and Protests:** Rallies, public meetings, and demonstrations were organized to mobilize public opinion against the partition and British rule.
- **Nationalist Literature and Songs:** Nationalist leaders and writers produced literature, songs, and pamphlets to inspire and educate people about the importance of Swadeshi and the fight for freedom.

- **Educational and Social Reforms:** Establishing national schools and colleges to provide education free from British influence and promoting social reforms to uplift the masses.

Key Figures:

- **Bal Gangadhar Tilak:** Tilak was a prominent leader of the Swadeshi Movement, advocating for the boycott of British goods and self-reliance.
- **Bipin Chandra Pal:** Pal emphasized the importance of economic self-sufficiency and national pride, playing a key role in promoting the Swadeshi Movement through his writings and speeches.
- **Lala Lajpat Rai:** Rai was an ardent supporter of the Swadeshi Movement, advocating for mass mobilization and public protests against British policies.
- **Aurobindo Ghosh:** Aurobindo was a prominent leader in Bengal, advocating for revolutionary methods alongside Swadeshi principles.

Impact of the Swadeshi Movement:

- The Swadeshi Movement led to a significant decline in the import of British goods, particularly textiles, as Indians increasingly turned to indigenous products.
- The movement gave a substantial boost to Indian industries and small-scale enterprises, fostering economic self-reliance.
- It played a crucial role in uniting Indians across different regions and communities in a common cause, strengthening the nationalist movement.
- The Swadeshi Movement also marked the emergence of more radical methods of protest and activism, laying the groundwork for future movements and leaders.

Annulment of the Partition (1911)

Background:

- The widespread and sustained protests against the partition, along with the Swadeshi Movement, put immense pressure on the British government.
- In 1911, the British government announced the reversal of the partition, reuniting East and West Bengal.

Significance:

- The annulment of the partition was seen as a significant victory for the Indian nationalist movement, demonstrating the power of united and sustained protest.
- It marked a major milestone in the struggle for independence, inspiring confidence and hope among Indians.

The Partition of Bengal and the Swadeshi Movement were pivotal events in the Indian freedom struggle. The partition, perceived as an attempt to divide and rule, sparked widespread protests and led to the emergence of the Swadeshi Movement, which emphasized economic self-reliance and national unity. The movement played a crucial role in fostering a sense of national pride and

self-respect among Indians and demonstrated the power of united and sustained protest. The eventual annulment of the partition in 1911 marked a significant victory for the nationalist movement and set the stage for future phases of the struggle for independence.

