



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

STUDY MATERIAL

PG : POLITICAL SCIENCE

PAPER – I

(English Version)

Modules : 1 – 4

**POST GRADUATE
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

(PGPS)



PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Post Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post Graduate course in Subjects introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analysis.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Co-operation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing and devising of a proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in invisible teaching. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great part of these efforts is still experimental—in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these do admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned.

Professor (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar
Vice-Chancellor

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POST-GRADUATE POLITICAL SCIENCE (PGPS)

(New syllabus (w.e.f. July, 2015))

Paper - I : Political Thought and Movements in Colonial India

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

PHYSICAL CHEMISTRY

PROBLEM SET

1. The following data were obtained for the reaction of hydrogen peroxide with iodide ion in acidic solution:

Time (min) [I⁻] (M) [H₂O₂] (M) [I₂] (M)

0 0.100 0.020 0.000

10 0.090 0.018 0.002

20 0.080 0.016 0.004

30 0.070 0.014 0.006

40 0.060 0.012 0.008

50 0.050 0.010 0.010

60 0.040 0.008 0.012

70 0.030 0.006 0.014

80 0.020 0.004 0.016

90 0.010 0.002 0.018

100 0.000 0.000 0.020

Calculate the rate constant for the reaction and the order with respect to each reactant.



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POST GRADUATE POLITICAL SCIENCE

PAPER - I

INTRODUCTION

'Modernity' is a cognate concept of 'Modernization'. Basically these two concepts stand for the mentality or approach to thoughts, style and methods of thinking, beliefs, religion, education, art, culture and creative faculties opposed to 'Tradition'. Something is called modern when it opposes the traditional. The concept of 'Tradition' is close to the concept of 'heritage' which stands for things and ideas which have historical value and importance and deserves to be preserved.

In human thinking every generation considers itself modern whereas ideas and thinking of the preceding generations are considered old and traditional. In course of time the ideas and beliefs of the modern generation is considered traditional by the next generation. The new generation often views its preceding generation as 'old' and therefore unacceptable. In all ages this pattern is found in every aspect of life-style and culture, namely, religious beliefs and rituals, literature, art and craft, education system, social and political thinking, even dresses, style of speaking and communication. There is no calender-based division between traditional and modern. The characteristics, attitudes and temper of one age become gradually assertive and do not follow any calender calculation.

Historians generally agree that the temper of the 'modern' age began to be noticed gradually in the post-Renaissance period in Europe. The typical 'modern' age in Europe was the product of two major revolutions, namely, Industrial Revolution and French Revolution, which occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. Subsequently, the ideas and thinking of the eighteenth century were challenged by Marxism in the second half of the nineteenth century. In a similar way, Marxism was challenged by neo-liberalism and global capitalism toward the end of the twentieth century.

Side by side, towards the end of the twentieth century new challenges to liberalism in ideas and thinking emerged as post-modernism, feminism, ecologism or environmentalism, and demands of the indigenous and tribal communities. Thus the main ideas of Enlightenment and sovereignty of reason

came to be challenged by post-modernism which equates 'modernism' with domination, control and suppression. But this ideology has not been universally shared. The Critical theorists and the Marxists straightway reject post-modernist ideology and profess to follow scientific and open thinking. Similarly, consumerism has been challenged by the ideology of sustainable development.

In post-colonial societies the latest buzzwords are development and good governance. These two concepts admit a new thinking in socio-economic and political thinking, and give birth to a creative imagination of a developed, prosperous and happy society. This new thinking does not blindly reject everything in the tradition of a community, nor does it uncritically accept everything connected with modernist passion. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, the proper attitude should be "ready to dissociate, ready to associate". That is, not to destroy everything traditional in an iconoclastic manner but to rediscover and renovate the best in the tradition and accommodate it with the needs of the modern.

The mentality of modernity has not grown in all countries at the same time. The modern era begins in a country only when its intellectual elites accept Reason as the guiding principle of life and take their decisions in an open mind. In other words, modernity arrives when the human mind begins accepting critically the beliefs and prejudices of the medieval life.

In any social order, modernity begins only after the feudal bondage is broken and man learns the art of earning livelihood in professions other than agriculture. At this point, the urge for freedom of thought and action is felt and new wealth creation becomes possible first with expansion of trade and commerce and then building of industry. Generally speaking, this is the precondition of the beginning of modern thinking in religion as well as socio-economic and political aspects of human living. On this point, the urge and necessity of loyalty to the established religious order and to the monarchy are weakened. In Europe, modernity arrived at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In India, this condition gradually came with the fall of the Mughals and the arrival of the European traders and clergymen at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Modern political thinking in India could be found in the minds of the elites since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Generally speaking, three sources of modern Indian political thought can

be identified. The first source was definitely the impact of European, especially English, political thought. The British colonizers basically intended to transform the Indian society and its leaders in the image of the Western culture. The spread of English language among the elites decidedly had an enduring impact on the aspiration and thinking of the Indian elites. The British political authority firmly established itself after the Great Uprising of 1857. Till then the ruling power was the East India Company which for about hundred years (1757-1857) intended to make maximum profits for the Company and only tangentially tinkered with the social and political reforms as demanded by the emerging intelligentsia of India. The ideas of the Renaissance and the Reformation, the French Revolution and more immediately the thoughts of Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Thomas Carlyle, Samuel Coleridge, Walter Scott, Thomas Paine, John Locke ignited the trends of modernity in Indian political thinking.

All these were possible mainly because the core of the new Indian intelligentsia voluntarily adopted the system of modern education introduced by the British rulers. The elites became conscious of the modern politics and modern ideologies like liberty, equality, fraternity, democracy and the rule of law. The new professional classes like lawyers, educationists, journalists, teachers, medical doctors gradually emerged since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and in course of time, began shaping Indian public opinion. Indeed the emergence of the educated middle class had enormously contributed to the growth of modernity in Indian mind. In due course, the entire liberal school of India, developed under the intellectual leadership of Dadabhai Naoroji, Madhab Govind Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjea and others.

The second source of influence was the German philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Herder, Fichte and Schelling. The ideas of *Volk* (folk), community, individualism, nationalism, political obligation and rights captured the imagination of the Indian intelligentsia and the emerging political elites. A section of them, rejected all efforts of the Englishmen to modernise the Indian society in the British fashion. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Swami Vivekananda exercised significant influence on the development of Indian nationalism and promoting the social values of Indian culture. Their intellectual leadership finally led to the emergence of the unique political thinking of Aurobindo Ghosh who completed the politico-cultural mission

started by Bankim and Vivekananda. These three great political modernisers made the Indians conscious of their national unity and generated in them a sense of India having a superior civilization and a message for the humanity as a whole. To some extent, the poet-philosopher Rabindranath Tagore also greatly contributed to the growth of modernity in India. But all this was 'modernity' with a difference from the meaning the word has for the western societies.

The third source was, of course, the traditional Indian thought. Intensive study and research made by Sir William Jones and Max Mueller revealed to the world of learning the rich tradition of Indian philosophy and culture. The richness of Indian culture was also wonderfully underlined by Sri Aurobindo. These scholars were highly impressed by the *Gita's* philosophy as stated in the great epic the *Mahabharata*. There are many elements of modernity, especially the doctrine of selfless duty, which created a mental revolution in the minds of the youth of India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The individual-society relation was understood in a new way, which promoted intense patriotism and sacrificing one's self-interest for the benefit of one's country. Bankimchandra, Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Subhas Chandra Bose carried this message to the people at large. The modern mind-set was fully developed in Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Chandra Bose and their ilk.

Notably, the modernity of Indian political thought in the twentieth century was linked with the ideas of Vivekananda in many ways. Again, Gandhi's political thought was unique as it raised the issue of ethics in political thinking and practice as well as in strategy of political movements. Marxism influenced a significant area of Indian political thinking and movements in the twentieth century. Marxism as well as Gandhism were re-interpreted by some political thinkers and practitioners. Side by side, a new kind of politics of protest emerged in the politics of the marginalised sections of population.

It will be fair to conclude that Indian political thought of the colonial period owes its origin and modernist character to the western ideas, and its varieties and richness owed much to India's traditional values and culture.

Module 1 contains discussion on the theme of modernity in Indian political thought. It will be studied in four units. Unit 1 discusses Rammohun Roy; Unit 2 discusses Bankim Chandna Chattopadhyay; Unit 3 discusses Syed Ahmed Khan; and Unit 4 discusses Rabindranath Tagore.

MODULE - 1

MODERNITY

Unit - 1 : □ Rammohun Roy (1772-1833)

Structure

- 1.01 Historical Context and Significance
- 1.02 Life and Times
- 1.03 Inaugurator of Indian Renaissance
- 1.04 Liberty and Democracy
- 1.05 Press Freedom and Political Rights
- 1.06 Concluding Remarks
- 1.07 Suggested Readings and Sample Questions

Objectives

This unit would acquaint the learner with :

- The historical conditions in which Rammohun Roy emerged as a force to reckon with ;
- The meaning attached to the expression Indian Renaissance and Roy as its pathfinder ;
- The advocacy of Roy in defence of liberty and democracy in a colonial set-up ; and
- The overall contribution of Roy as an usherer of modernity.

1.01 Historical Context and Significance

Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) was born at a time when India was passing through political decay, economic regression and social degeneration. With the death of Aurangzeb, the last powerful Mughal Emperor, in 1707 India fast entered into a long period of political decay. Agriculture, industry, trade and commerce began experiencing a decline in production. In social and cultural field, religious superstitions and extreme sectarianism dominated. That was the time when in social practices, politics, religion, art India entered the zone of uncreative habit, decadent tradition, low human values and

stagnant education and culture. Rammohun Roy grew up in an ambience of political disintegration and low level of culture. After he settled in Calcutta, which was then the main seat of politics and government under the East India Company, Rammohun started revitalizing Indian society and politics by his creative endeavour, challenged the medieval ideas, habits and customs of the people, and brought in the fresh air of modernity in many aspects of Indian politics and socio-economic system. As Rabindranath Tagore has emphasized, Rammohun initiated India into the modern era of world-wide cooperation of humanity.

Rammohun heralded a new era of social and religious reforms, persuading his fellowmen to fight against age-old, cruel and evil socio-religious practices and superstitions and to revive the true spirit of enlightened Hinduism as taught in the Vedas and the Upanishads. He also spearheaded the popular agitation for constitutional reforms without challenging the East India Company's legal right to rule India of his time.

At that time the West knew very little about India. It was Rammohun who lived and worked as a link between the East and the West. Jeremy Bentham, the celebrated English political philosopher and legal expert, greeted Rammohun as "an intensely admired and dearly beloved collaborator in the service of mankind."

Rammohun had to face the hostility of orthodox Hinduism, on the one hand, and aggressive Christian missionaries, on the other. The orthodox Hindus ridiculed him as a dangerous innovator of ideas and reforms while the Christian missionaries were instinctively distrustful of anyone endeavouring to bring enlightenment to a demoralised subjugated people. For a long time, the value of Rammohun's contributions to politics and social reforms was not dispassionately assessed. However, as an extremely courageous intellectual and determined reformer, Rammohun refused to be brow-beaten by the ruling British authority of the East India Company and also by his orthodox, dogmatic and mean-minded fellow Indians. As Max Mueller in his *Biographical Essays* pointed out, Rammohun never attempted to make his reforms more palatable by toning down his rejection of the tradition. He would have no playing with words, no shifting of responsibility. He was the first socio-religious reformer in India, who had clearly grasped the extent to which passivity and dogmatism had paralysed the Indian mind. He had a clear vision of the future direction which Indian socio-religious and political thought was bound to follow, if it meant to survive the varieties of

challenges coming in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Rabindranath Tagore quite justifiably called him "the inaugurator of the modern Age in India." Brajendranath Seal, the great philosopher, in his book *Rammohun Roy: The Universal Man (1933)*, assessed him as the "Prophet of humanity." The moot point is that Rammohun fully satisfied the criterion of modernity by his thought and deeds. He was a champion of free thinking and open mind. He was a realist who could read the writing on the wall and clearly diagnosed the ills of India's socio-religious and political life in the early nineteenth century. He was uncompromising in his zeal for liberty as a great principle necessary for leading a dignified life. He refused to be bound by the unreasonable social customs and was courageous enough to stand up against threat coming from his own society and from a non-indigenous political authority of his time.

1.02 Life and Times

Fifteen years after the Battle of Plassey (1757), Rammohun was born on 22 May 1772 in Khanakul area of a village called Radhanagar in Hooghly district of Bengal. He belonged to an orthodox Brahmin family and his father Ramakanta Roy was a big landlord under the Maharaja of Burdwan.

After completing his school education, he was sent to Patna, then a prominent seat of Islamic learning, where he studied Arabic and Persian. He also studied there the Quran and Islamic theology, and also what could be had through Arabic translations of Euclid and Aristotle. He was impressed by the democratic teachings of the Quran and the development of logic in Arabic thought. Rationality in some Islamic schools of thought as well as the Sufi philosophy impressed him.

On his return to Bengal, Rammohun wrote a book wherein he questioned the validity of Hindu idolatry and superstitions. This view angered his father who asked Rammohun to leave the paternal house and deprived him of any legal right to inherit paternal property. Rammohun accordingly left his home as he was not prepared to go against his own religious convictions. After some time of wandering from place to place, Rammohun landed in Varanasi (Benaras), the ancient holy city of the Hindus, where he studied Sanskrit. Here he studied the religious texts of the Hindus, particularly the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*. Soon he became well-versed enough to enter into polemic debates

with the orthodox Hindu pundits. At the age of twentyfour, he started learning English language.

After the death of his father in 1803, Rammohun went to Murshidabad and renewed his Arabic studies. The same year he published a monograph *Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhiden* (a Gift to the Monotheists) in Persian with an Introduction in Arabic. Here he showed the general unity of thought among mankind regarding the existence of one Supreme Being. Differences of views arise only when people attach different attributes to that Supreme Being. He concluded that faith in the unity of Reality and recognition of human values are the cardinal principles of all religions. This point of the fundamental unity of all religions became in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a leading feature in the preachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore.

Between 1804 and 1814 Rammohun was employed in the service of the East India Company. He spent five years (1809-1814) at Rangpur in North Bengal serving the Company as the *Sheristadar* to the District Collector Mr. John Digby, a covenanted servant of the East India Company. During this period Rammohun learnt English seriously and kept himself acquainted with international political affairs by reading the English journals available in Digby's library. He developed good friendship with Mr. Digby.

In 1814 Rammohun left the Company's service and permanently settled in Calcutta, then an important city of political and business interests. From this time till his death in 1833 was the most eventful and fruitful period of Rammohun's life. During this period he was systematically and assiduously propagating his religious views which finally took the shape of 'Brahmaism' as a protestant view of Hinduism. He preached the theme of unity of God, assailed the prevalent Hindu belief in many gods and goddesses and in the elaborate ritualistic worship of their images. He insisted that true Hinduism of the Upanishads consisted in the recognition of the formless Supreme entity or the *Brahma*, to whom worship should be rendered. This view of Rammohun roused a storm of opposition from the orthodox section of the Hindu community as well as hostile opposition of the Muhammedans and the Christian missionaries. Backed by his courage of conviction, Rammohun refused to yield. He never denied that he was a Hindu. He only wanted to reform Hinduism by remaining within its fold.

Rammohun established two socio-religious organizations, first, *Atmiyasabha* and later *Brahmasabha*. Through these bodies, he continued his religious debate.

In India in 1818-19 the East India Company had no political and administrative opponents. The Mughal empire was definitively in decline, because the last generation Mughal emperors exercised no effective political powers and the dynasty's existence was purely nominal. Rammohun did rightly foresee that it was the Britishers and their Company administrators who would govern the country in the foreseeable future. So he concentrated on reforming the decadent orthodox Hinduism by reasoning out his point of view. Soon he published two weekly journals—*Sambad Kaumudi* (1821) in Bengali and *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* (1822) in Persian—as the intellectual vehicle for critically examining the contemporary social, religious and political problems of the Indian society and suggesting new paths for solving those problems.

In 1829 he took the brief for Mughal Emperor Akbar II and went to England to submit the Emperor's petition to the British monarch. This job required that the petitioner must have a royal identity in order to enable him to petition the monarch. So the Mughal Emperor formally bestowed the title of 'Raja' on Rammohun. Since then he was popularly known as Raja Rammohun Roy. He stayed in England for three years. During this time, he established intellectual acquaintance with the eminent English philosopher and jurist Jeremy Bentham and the socialist thinker Robert Owen. In 1832 he visited France for a brief period when he came to intellectual contact with some leading French thinkers.

Rammohun breathed his last in Bristol city in southern England (Wales) on 27 September 1833. He was, in fact, an ambassador of the Mughal Emperor and for that matter, the first ambassador of a New India to England and the western world. In his intellectual conversations with leading public figures and intellectuals in England and France, Rammohun ably represented the views and aspirations of a New India. He was warmly received by the elites in both the countries.

1.03 Inaugurator of Indian Renaissance

Rammohun Roy was the inaugurator and leader of Indian Renaissance which started in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It is true that any intellectual movement can never be the creation of one individual. Such movements are always the end-product of a joint or cooperative movement of a number of people or leaders, whose intense desire for a cultural change and determined resolution for curving a new path of progress bring such

movements to fruition. At the same time, it is true that movements like renaissance or cultural regeneration do have a few distinctive persons as leaders whose intellectual prowess and a new vision inspire the whole group and also the mass of the people. Such a critical personality was Rammohun Roy who could clearly diagnose the ills of the decadent social and political system of his contemporary India and confidently showed the path of progress to the Indian people in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Rammohun was a multidimensional genius and active in a number of fields of activity. Rabindranath Tagore quite justifiably described him as "Bharat Pathik" (The Indian Pilgrim). In fact, he was 'Viswa Pathik' (The Universal Pilgrim), a world citizen trying to unite the cultural bindings of humanity. His Persian journal *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* used to have reasonably wide circulation in India and also good reception in distant Persia (presentday Iran). His thinking was mature and based on reason and logic. He later developed quite wide interest in western science and technology and also in western culture and value system. His deep and sincere studies in Hindu and Islamic religious thought with an open and critical mind enabled him to appreciate India's cultural value system in a dispassionate philosophical manner.

In his considered opinion on religio-cultural issues is found his wonderful intellectual capacity of assimilating the eastern and western value systems. This feature of his open mind initiated in him the universalism of a world citizen.

Later, while he started to come in contact with the ideas of western science and technology, he had already developed his value judgement in respect of his proposed reforms of the Indian way of life. He had assimilated the essence of both Hindu and Islamic religions and culture, which helped him to adopt a completely non-communal philosophy of life. When he came in contact with the western influences, his philosophy of life became truly modern and universal. He wonderfully assimilated the thought systems of the East and the West.

Rammohun found the British rule as a blessing of God for the nineteenth century Indian society. He could identify a number of positive dimensions of western thinking. He was quite clear in his mind that the British can give birth to a logical bent of mind to the Indians. Hence he underlined the urgent need of introducing western education in India, because he was sure that this kind of open and scientific education can liberate the Indian mind from the influence of blind religious doctrines and social prejudices. Not that he had

no idea of the exploitative nature of the Company's rule, but he could see the potential benefits of western culture and education in the modernisation of Indian culture and education by creating a logical bent of mind. He saw in this new education the seed of Indian renaissance, which appeared to him to open the path of mental and intellectual liberation of the Indian mindset. This assimilation of eastern and western cultural values in Rammohun has sometimes created difficulties for his critics to do justice to him. Rammohun had the foresight to see that the British rule in India would be beneficial for the people in many respects. The most important of these benefits would be the import of logic in shaping the minds of Indians. Hence he favoured and tried his best to introduce English education system in India. He played some important role in establishing the Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817 (later converted into Presidency College in 1857). The English education system that included teaching of English literature, western science, European cultural heritage, history and modern philosophy, social and medical sciences vastly widened the vision of the new generation of Indian youth. He strongly pleaded for this change in education system, because he believed that this new system would enable the young generation to come in touch with an advanced civilization and usher in the Renaissance in India, and bring in new mental energy.

His attitude and vision of a new India was the most instrumental factor in building a new conception of the modern state in India. He welcomed the western education and culture in order to discover anew the reality of Indian life and society. He was very much conscious of the rich treasures in India's own culture and civilization, but he wished to assimilate the good and noble values of Europe into the tradition and culture of ancient and medieval India. On this point, he differed from Dirozio and Macauley. Hence, in order to meet the needs of his contemporary India, he endeavoured for building the Indian state on the western model and untiringly worked for social and political reforms. This was not his long-time solution for India's multifarious problem. It was his immediate prescription, as he believed that the succeeding generations of Indians would take an appropriate decision on a model of modern polity. He could realise the historical importance of the rising middle class in India of his time and visualised a sovereign Indian state in course of time. He had full faith in the English-knowing modern elites of India, who would play a significant role in shaping a free and modern polity in India. This idea of Rammohun was revealed in his various articles and essays written during the last five years of his life.

There is an on-going debate among historians, social scientists and indologists on whether the intellectual awakening found in the mid-19th century could properly be called 'Indian Renaissance.' A number of scholars prefer to describe the changes taking place in many aspects of India's society, polity, economy and culture as 'cultural efflorescence' rather than Renaissance. Admittedly, the features of the European Renaissance were not all present in India's case. But what cannot be denied is that from 1820s onwards India was definitely moving towards far-reaching changes which continued till the first decade of the twentieth century. Many talented leaders of public affairs contributed to this process of basic changes in Indian life and culture. And Rammohun was the pioneer in bringing a substantive change in the people's attitude towards life as a whole.

1.04 Liberty and Democracy

In his preference for political ideology, Rammohun was always for democracy. On his legal-political thinking the British constitutional system had a good influence. He made a comparative assessment of monarchy, aristocracy and direct democracy, and found all of them unacceptable because of their demerits, especially in a country like India having a fractured social organization in terms of castes and classes. Participation of people in political decision-making can be ensured only in a representative republican democracy.

Considering the peculiar socio-cultural and political conditions of India in the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Rammohun realised that a democratic social order could be initiated in India only through religious reforms which would help establish religious harmony among the different sections of the population. He sincerely believed that legal and social reforms in India could be achieved only through harmony and active cooperation between the followers of different religions, especially the Hindus and Muslims. In his political philosophy and scheme of nation-building and state-formation Rammohun heavily depended on intercommunity and interclass understanding and cooperation. This was the key to Rammohun's social and political thinking.

He realised that the peasants and farmers in India constituted an important class which would have an important role to play in India's social and political development, because India has been traditionally an agriculture-based

country. He submitted more than once his views on ameliorating the conditions of the agricultural class to the British administration and pleaded for social and economic liberation of this exploited class.

As the basis of social integration of the Indian people at large, he underlined the importance of social harmony between different communities and classes. In this task he strongly asked for the intervention of the state, because he argued that in an economically underdeveloped and socially fractured society, the state would have to play a key role in the process of socio-economic transformation. He therefore wanted on many issues the intervention of the state in facilitating social and economic change. This kind of social thinking on a modernist tone ultimately paved the way to Rammohun becoming a world citizen, so to say, who was seriously concerned with the values of liberty of the individual, prosperity of the country and advancement of humanity. This consciousness of Rammohun made him to rise above the limitations of local feelings and constraints of time. He stood for a coordinated approach and well-thought-out strategy of building his thought on religion, society, economy and politics. Religious reforms and social reforms were intimately related in his strategy of modernising India. He could successfully feel the pulse of the Indian people in the early nineteenth century, who were not steeply traditional in their social outlook and were generally ready to welcome a new dispensation, with the supporting role of the state power. His love for his country was not strictly confined to any geographical boundaries. Hence he could dream of an international forum for the benefit of humanity.

Rammohun never considered religion as a system of rituals only. To him, religion was a part of living, and therefore his thoughts on religion, society and politics were complementary to one another. He never tried to copy the perspective of the European Renaissance in the Indian context, although his acquaintance with the European perspective helped him to expand his own idea of a comprehensive socio-political and cultural change in India.

He utilised his proposals for religious reform as an intellectual instrument for achieving social change in India. He was realist enough to appreciate the point that it would be an idle thinking to change social institutions and practices in India by bypassing religious reforms. To him, the issue was not one of Tradition vs. Modernity, it was the problem of Tradition through Modernity. For example, his persistent and heroic efforts to abolish the cruel

socio-religious practice of *Sati* rites in the name of traditional Hindu rites was not a mere programme of social change, he used it to invite intervention of the state power. He realised the meaning and value of the strategy of balancing state power with social power, and was thoroughly conscious that the external change in law by itself would not be able to bring about any fundamental social change. Public awakening would need the prior public consciousness. For the same reason, he helped the cause of establishing western system of education in India. Once a self-conscious, educated elite class is formed, it will organize social movements, which would ultimately lead to social and political reforms. This is the reason why Rammohun was so relevant in his time and his ideas continue to be relevant even today. He knew that the instrument of law-making for bringing about social change would be indispensable, but he refused to consider law by itself as the only instrument of social and political reforms.

Rammohun denounced idolatry of the orthodox Hindus. He preached his considered view on the topic to remind his countrymen that the Hindu scriptures recommended idol worship only for those who were not intellectually capable to comprehend the invisible God. But in his denunciation he possibly went too far and forgot that images of God-head are never worshipped either as clay or wood. They are worshipped only with the mind on God as the supreme energy. Humans and their needs and desires are of limitless variety and hence the concept of different images satisfies them. He was a kind of a 'protestant' Hindu having righteous passion about religion and morality. He felt an intense urge for uplifting the level of understanding of his fellow countrymen to that of a 'modern' person.

Rammohun had his unique conception of law, custom and morality. He broke from the chains of medieval scholasticism. He was aware of the conflict among the scholars of analytical school and historical school. He realised that the nature of law was to be understood from two different angles. Every piece of legislation is born in a particular historical context, but in order to have effect it must have the support of subsequent generations. This shows that he supported Austin's view that the sovereign is the source of law, but simultaneously he supported Savigny's view that law derives its support from its acceptability the later generations. In analysing the nature of law, Rammohun recognised the importance of customs in legitimising law. He made the difference clear on the definite separation between law and morality.

Even though some principles of morality are honoured in law, all moral instructions are not lawful. Rammohun's position was that law must have formal validity even if it does reflect some moral values. He underlined the point that political decisions reflected in law gain validity when it is supported by public opinion. Rammohun's view on this issue again shows the elements of modernity in his political philosophy and his knowledge of jurisprudence.

1.05 Press Freedom and Political Rights

Rammohun's democratic values and conviction were reflected in his strong defence for press freedom. During the Company's rule in India the first weekly newspaper published was *Bengal Gazette* in Calcutta in 1780 edited by James Hickey. Rammohun considered the liberty of the press essential for healthy governance. He was of the opinion that the subject people should have full liberty to profess and publish their principles and opinion. Hence, to him, every legislation and administrative decision would be tyrannical and injurious if it tends to coercion of public opinion.

Rammohun started in 1821 his weekly Bengali paper *Sambad Kaumudi* (Moon of Intelligence). He was the heart and soul of the paper, although there was a nominal editor. The views of this paper were quite advanced and liberal. A rival paper *Samachar Chandrika* (Moonlight of News) began publication in 1822 as the organ of the orthodox section of Calcutta elites. Rammohan started in 1822 the first weekly journal in Persian language *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* (Mirror of News) to reach the Muslim readers throughout India. Rammohun's high sense of public duty and responsibility was expressed in his statement about this paper. He wrote: "My only object is that I may lay before the public such articles of intelligence as may increase their experience and tend to their social improvement; and to that extent of my abilities I may indicate to the rulers a knowledge of the real situation of their subjects and make the subjects acquainted with the established laws and customs of their rulers, so that the rulers may more readily find an opportunity of granting relief to the people; and the people may be put in possession of the means of obtaining protection and redress from their rulers." [quoted in R. C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the British People* (1981), vol. XI].

The administration of the East India Company soon became alarmed at the growth of free press in India. Lord Adam, the acting Governor-General,

promulgated on 14 May 1823 an ordinance drastically curtailing the free expression of opinion in the press. Rammohun closed down his *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* as a mark of protest against the Company administration's policy of gagging the free press. His protest marks the beginning of constitutional agitation for political rights. His was a new type of political agitation which became, in course of time, a landmark in the history of India's freedom movement.

Rammohun and his five other associates submitted a Memorandum to the Supreme Court of Judicature in March 1823. After asserting unshaken loyalty and unlimited confidence in the British administration, the Memorandum pointed out that execution of the anti-free press ordinance would completely end the process of diffusion of knowledge and consequent mental improvement of the people and prevent the knowledgeable Indians from communicating to their countrymen any knowledge of the good work done by the British administration and the strict and impartial administration of justice introduced. The Ordinance would preclude the Indians from making the administration readily acquainted with the errors and injustice that might be committed by the executive officers. It concluded with the request to the Supreme Court to permit the natives to enjoy whatever civil rights and privileges they had been enjoying under the British rule. The Memorandum being dismissed by the Supreme Court, Rammohun appealed to the King-in-Council in England pointing out that the Ordinance would condemn Indians to perpetual oppression and degradation by the British rulers. The Privy Council dismissed it. Subsequently Governor-General Sir Charles Metcalf rescinded the Press Regulation in 1835. Judged by the modern thinking on press freedom, Rammohun's thinking was modernist in this respect. He believed that a free press was a necessary appendage of representative government.

Rammohun's modernist temper is also found in his economic ideas. He had no definite theoretical thinking on the economic role of the state, but he recognised that the state had some role in the economic life of the individual and society. He did not accept economic liberalism and any visionary socialism, but he strongly defended the individual's right to acquire, enjoy and dispose of property. However, he was not a believer in political individualism, because he wanted the state to take appropriate action to protect the economically vulnerable sections of society. He also felt the need of appropriate reforms in land tenure system in order to increase revenue

collection. He was against the migration of India's economic resources and capital to foreign lands. Hence he pleaded for foreign mercantile elites to settle in India in order to increase their investment in India.

He was also interested in the state's positive role in expansion of modern higher education in India. His basic ideas in political thinking can be summarised as follows:

- (i) individual's right to property,
- (ii) equality in the eye of law,
- (iii) fundamental civil rights of citizens,
- (iv) appointment in higher civil service through competition,
- (v) government's respect for public opinion,
- (vi) some sort of planned thinking of the government for political development of India.

1.06 Concluding Remarks

Rammohun Roy made significant contribution towards development of modernist ideas in India. He was seriously concerned with some aspects of misrule by the East India Company, but was simultaneously enthusiastic about accepting the liberal, scientific and modernist ideas of the European civilisation. He had faith in the good aspects of the British rule in India and simultaneously protested against the illiberal and exploitative actions of the Company officials. He had high regards for the enlightened civil society of Britain and believed that the British rule in India, if kept under the pressure of benevolent public opinion of the Indian society, would be helpful for political and constitutional development of India.

Rammohun was the first internationalist of modern India. He was influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution and the American War of Independence. He developed admiration for, and personal friendship with, Bentham. He accepted the constitutional ideas of Blackstone and Montesquieu, and was influenced by the ideas of rule of law and separation of powers, as he believed that these two fundamental doctrines of political philosophy would aid the realization of individual freedom and balanced administration. Like Bentham, Rammohun also did not believe in the theory of Natural Rights of Man. He did not agree with Bentham on the point of difference between law and morality. Moreover, Rammohun was consistent on taking the factor

of historical context of development of politics and law in any society. For example, Rammohun pleaded for framing a criminal code for India, but insisted that such a code should be founded as far as possible on those principles common to, and acknowledged by, all the different sects and tribes inhabiting in India.

Rammohun developed the habit of reading English newspapers when he worked with John Digby, and became extremely interested in continental politics. While staying in England, he watched with anxiety the final stages of the passage of Reform Bill of 1832 in British Parliament, as it affected the fortune of democracy for mankind. He rejoiced at the victory of the Latin American colonies against Spanish imperialism, and hosted a dinner to celebrate the incident. He saluted the flag of revolutionary France while sailing for England. He felt extremely sorry at the success of the reactionary forces in Naples. He had a vision of an international order as he believed the whole mankind was one great family and welcomed human intercourse throughout the world in order to be benefited by reciprocal advantage through constitutional governments cooperating with one another and settling disputes at some representative international body. It is worth quoting his letter to the French foreign minister in 1831 : "It is now generally admitted that not religion only but unbiased common sense as well as accurate deductions of scientific research lead to the conclusion that all mankind are one great family of which numerous nations and tribes existing are only various branches. Hence enlightened men in all countries must feel a wish to encourage and facilitate human intercourse in every manner by removing as far as possible all impediments to it in order to promote the reciprocal advantages and enjoyment of the whole human race." [English Works, Part IV]. His was a world-view of both religion and politics. He was sympathetic to the aspirations of the colonial people of the world. Rammohun thus possessed a remarkably modern mind.

By any standard of assessment Rammohun Roy was an outstanding and remarkable public figure of the early nineteenth-century India, despite some limitations of his social background and circumstances of his time.

He has been variously hailed as 'the father of modern India', the 'apostle of a religious revival', 'upholder of synthesis between eastern and western values', 'philosophic modernist', 'bridge between tradition and progress', and 'inaugurator of the modern age'.

1.07 Suggested Readings

1. B. N. Dasgupta, *The Life and Times of Raja Rammohan Roy* (1980).
 2. S. L. Ghosh, *Raja Rammohan Roy : Path-maker of Modern India* (1970).
 3. V. C. Joshi (ed), *Rammohan Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*.
 4. Saumyendranath Tagore, *Raja Rammohan Roy* (1989).
 5. *Raja Rammohan Roy : His Role in Indian Renaissance* (Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1975).
 6. V. P. Gupta and Mohini Gupta (eds), *Raja Rammohan Roy* (1998).
 7. B. B. Majumdar, *History of Indian Social and Political Ideas : Rammohan to Dayanand*.
 8. Dilip K. Biswas, *Rammohan Samiksha* (in Bengali) (1983).
 9. S. M. Gangopadhyay, *Bangaleer Rashtra Chinta* (in Bengali) (1991).
 10. S. Chakraborty (ed.), *Bharatbarsha : Rashtra Bhavna* (in Bengali) (2002).
 11. Ashok K. Mukhopadhyay (ed.), *Bharatiya Rashtrachinta Parichay* (in Bengali), West Bengal State Book Board (2013).
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Short-answer Questions

1. Mention five important features of Rammohun's modernist mind.
 2. Why is Rammohun called the inaugurator of the modern age in India?
 3. Write a short note on the social reforms of Rammohun Roy.
 4. What was Rammohun's attitude on political reforms in India?
 5. Briefly explain Rammohun's view on democracy.
 6. Give a brief account of Rammohun's view on law.
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Long-answer Questions

1. Examine Rammohun's contribution to the growth of modernity in India.
2. Why is Rammohun called 'the father of modern India?' Explain fully.
3. Discuss Rammohun's view on religion and religious reform.
4. Explain Rammohun's strategy of reforms in India's social and political system.
5. Examine, with illustrations, Rammohun's views on Tradition and Modernity.

Unit-2 : □ Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894)

Structure

- 2.01 Introduction
- 2.02 Life and Times
- 2.03 Religion, Society and Politics
- 2.04 Nationalism and Nation-building
- 2.05 Equality and Socialism
- 2.06 Concluding Remarks
- 2.07 Suggested Readings and Sample Questions

Objectives

This unit aims at :

- placing Bankim Chandra in historical perspective ;
- explaining the position he took on the rational approach to religion and the proper relation expected of religion in respect of society ;
- clarifying the stand of Bankim for making the European idea of nationalism adaptable to India ; and
- underlining the imperatives of social justice as upheld by Bankim.

2.01 Introduction

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (Chatterjee) (1838-94), the first great novelist of Bengali literature and one of the first two graduates of Calcutta University, was a leading intellectual figure in nineteenth-century Bengal. His name is intimately connected with the growth and development of nationalism in India. He coined the immortal clarion-call of "Bande Mataram" (Oh, Mother, I Salute Thee), which inspired generations of freedom-fighters of India. As the illustrious editor of Bengali monthly

journal *Bangadarshan*, he greatly shaped the minds of the educated Bengalees and inspired the patriots and freedom-fighters in India. One of the leading intellectuals of the nineteenth century, he wrote a large number of Bengali novels, intellectual essays and humourous tracts, and a few critical essays on the concept of socialism and spiritual nationalism. After Raja Rammohun Roy, Bankimchandra's contribution to the modernization of the Indian mind in the colonial period is widely recognised.

Bankimchandra Chatterjee was a multidimensional genius who wrote tirelessly for setting a standard of intellectual activity and showed the path of national development. Despite his limitations deriving from the context of colonial background, Bankim cannot be ignored in any way. His zeal for intellectual and social modernization influenced the thinking pattern of the educated elite class of India. He was influenced by the leading figures of European culture of the nineteenth century as much as the intellectual leaders of ancient Indian culture and ethics. Although widely famous for his creative novels in Bengali literature, his critical mind largely shaped the cultural attainment of Indian intellectuals. Like Vivekananda, Bankim also played a very important role in rousing the educated middle class to the deep feelings of modernity, rationalism and nationalism. Both Bankim and Vivekananda also underlined the ideology of social equality and economic egalitarianism and for that matter, socialism in their own inimitable style and language. Their goal was to help the process of regeneration of the masses for the ideals of freedom, equality and modernity.

2.2 Life and Times

Bankimchandra was born on 26 June 1838 at Kanthalpara near Naihati in the district of 24-Parganas in a respected well-to-do Brahmin family. His father Rai Bahadur Yadavchandra Chatterjee was a Deputy Collector in Midnapore district. Bankim had three other brothers, all of whom were Deputy Collector. In terms of income and social prestige, his family belonged to the elite group in mid-nineteenth-century Bengal. Yadavchandra was conservative in his social outlook. Bankim was therefore exposed to the traditional social values common to any well-to-do high-middle class family in Bengal.

After initial schooling, Bankim studied in Hooghly Mohsin College, a prestigious government college at Chinsurah. In 1856 he joined Presidency College to study law. He was the first graduate of Calcutta University, which was established in 1857. He immediately got appointment as a Deputy Collector and Deputy Magistrate and was

posted in Jessore district. After a few years, he passed the graduate examination as a law student of Presidency College. Bankim was a brilliant scholar all through his life and had a deep interest in a wide range of subjects like history, literature, politics, economics, philosophy, sociology, mythology and elementary physical sciences. Apart from proficiency in English and Bengali language, he also had working knowledge of Latin, Sanskrit, Arabic and French languages. He had a sharp mind and developed a habit of regular study throughout his life, and, therefore had acquired mastery over a considerable part of eastern and western learning. But, culturally speaking, he had his intellectual mooring in Indian culture and he refused to copy the habits and mentality of the Anglicized "Young Bengal" group.

His professional life as a civil servant in the Provincial Service was never smooth and he had to suffer discriminatory treatment from the British rulers, presumably for his independent bent of mind and patriotic attitude. He served in administrative postings under the provincial government of Bengal for long thirty-three years. He was denied promotion in service, to which he was entitled, because of his frequent clashes with the British officers in the field. He often experienced unexpressed grudge and silent hate from his white superiors, but he hardly allowed his cumulated grievance and insult in his service career to come out in the open. Some historians have observed that there was a "cautious Deputy Magistrate" within the spirited patriot as he was, and this fact perhaps in the final analysis proved culturally good for India.

Bankimchandra pursued his intellectual and literary interest, parallel to his government service, with sincere zeal. For long thirty years (1865-94), he wrote ceaselessly historical and social-romantic novels, critical academic essays, intellectual discourse on aspects of Western political philosophy, humourous writings based on wit and social consciousness, and tracts on socio-religious and ethical themes. He founded and edited the first serious Bengali monthly journal *Bangadārshan*, first published in 1872, which set a high standard of literary writings and intellectual debates. In his writings, he appeared not only as an eminent litterateur but also as a social critic and political thinker in the second half of the nineteenth century. Thus, in his so many roles, Bankimchandra played a constructive role in inaugurating a modernist outlook in thoughts and activities of his countrymen.

Let us have a hurried look at Bankimchandra's creative writings before going for a critical assessment of his role as a modernist thinker. His first novel *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) was written in English. It was not an important creation and since then he wrote his creative pieces in Bengali. His first major romantic novel with a historical

background was *Durgeshnandini* (1865). It was followed by *Kapalkundala* (1866), *Mrinalini* (1869), *Visayriksha* (1872), *Indira* (1873), *Chandrasekhar* (1875), *Radharani* (1877), *Rajani* (1877), *Krishnakanter Will* (1878), *Samya* (1879), *Rajsingha* (1881), *Anandamath* (1882), *Devi Chaudhurani* (1884), *Muchiram Gurer Jibancharit* (1884), *Vividha Prabandha* vol. I (1887), *Dharmatattwa* : vol. I *Anushilan* (1888), *Sitaram* (1886-87), *Krishna Charitra* (1892), *Vividha Prabandha*, vol. II (1892). He used his creative and courageous pen for creating new-Hinduism, reverencing the past glory of India and embracing, at the same time, modern science and the scientific spirit. Bankimchandra died in 1894 at the comparatively early age of 56 years.

2.03 Religion, Society and Politics

Because of his family background and the process of his up-bringing in the second half of the nineteenth century in Bengal, all his thinking on social, economic and political issues of the day was basically centred on religion. That was the time when the educated Bangalees and, for that matter, educated and enterprising people from other parts of India, used to be Calcutta-centric in pursuit of their life's fortune. Calcutta was then not only the capital city of India, seat of political power, it was also an important centre of education, culture, trade and commerce. When Bankim grew up first as a student of Hooghly Mohsin College and thereafter of Presidency College, he could feel the rapid changes taking place in national life in the wake of "Young Bengal" movement, Brahma movement in the post-Rammohun period, the anti-British 'Great Uprising' of 1857, and the reactions of the upper-class of the Indian society, the growing influence of Sree Ramakrishna (the saint of Dakshineswar) on the elites, the establishment of the Universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, the beginning of the press media, and the social reforms started by Vidyasagar and the Brahma Samaj. In short, the whole of India, especially Bengal, was experiencing the impact of British rule and the varied responses of the elite classes. It was in this socio-economic and political milieu that Bankim began his intellectual journey. Quite naturally, religion, society and nationalism emerged as the key themes in his writings.

In his youth Bankim was initially attracted to the sophistications of western civilisation and its relevance to his contemporary society and politics. But very soon he realized, by dint of his intellectual training and his own experience in the civil service, that the Britishers cannot be the idol of Indian elite, and secondly, the educated India must find its mooring in the country's rich culture and true religion.

Bankim's fascination for true Hinduism is quite palpable in his novels and critical writings. But religion was, to him, not exclusively rituals only. The real function of religion is to keep the society on an even keel and guide the people towards enlightened life-style. The metaphysics of Hinduism as propounded in the *Upanishads* teaches rational thinking and universal love. In his book *Dharmatattwa*, (Discourse on Dharma), Bankim observed that in the eyes of the Hindu 'Sanatana Dharma', the Hindus and the Muslims are all equal. 'Secularism' was not a fashionable buzzword in Bankim's time, but his observations in the mature period of his life and also in his economic writings like *Bangadesher Krishak* (Peasants of Bengal) he pleaded for economic uplift of both Hindu and Muslim landless peasants. The socially and economically downtrodden people should be treated alike by the government. There is hardly any trace of typical 'communalism' in Bankim's thinking in the sense of the term that has been used in politics since the 1930s and especially in very recent time.

In fact, Bankim had profound admiration for Upanishadic Hinduism and not for orthodox, ritualistic, priest-dominated, short-sighted and illiberal Hindu religion. He admired Hinduism for its metaphysical strength and human values, its wonderful capacity to adapt itself with changing social and political conditions. At the same time, he was quite aware of the degeneration this great religion had set in. Hence he made a strong plea for regeneration of the civil society in India by reforming the value system of the institution of religion and reorganising the Hindu society. Incidentally, it may be guessed that if and how far Bankim was influenced by Sree Ramakrishna and his gospel, because there is no document supporting Bankim's thought on Hindu religion being influenced by the saint of Dakshineswar. The only data recorded is that Bankim had one brief meeting with the saint.

Bankim finally believed that religion and society are inseparable as both are inseparable parts of the process of attaining liberation. He preferred Hinduism because of the high ethical message from the *Upanishads* and the *Gita* and its potential strength for reinvigorating a subjugated and decadent society. And this attitude is closely connected with his main theme of nationalism. Bankim, writing at the fag end of the nineteenth century, had enough political-economic data and his personal experience of the British rule in India to come to the conclusion that the great people of India must strive to rebuild themselves as a united and strong nation. He was no politician by profession nor was he a social activist. He was just a brilliant intellectual of his time and a creative litterateur. He developed his political thought as a modernist and had received inspiration from intellectual sources—both Indian and European. His main point was that the society, economy and politics of India in the late 19th century urgently needed a thorough shake-up, and a reformed Hinduism would serve as the

best instrument to usher in the necessary changes and invigorate the Indian society. He pointed out that some of its features had become redundant in the context of the introduction of rule of law by the British administration and of a legal system accepting legal equality of all individuals.

In his sociological analysis, Bankim made a distinction between 'varna' and 'caste'. The social institution of *Varna* recognizes diversity whereas the institution of caste stultifies society. As caste goes against the principle of social equality, it must therefore be abolished by law, if necessary. In the republican Constitution of free India caste indeed has been abolished under Article 17. This provision has been included in the Part III on Fundamental Rights of the citizens of India in order to underline the urgency of restructuring the old social structure of India. It is, however, entirely a different point to argue that although caste has been formally abolished, the compulsion of the competitive electoral politics has given a new lease of life to the caste system in the name of social justice in post-independence India. Bankim had, in fact, in his humorous tract *Kamalakanta*, hugely ridiculed the social system of Brahminical design to exploit the lower castes. He argued that by institution of *Varna* is a mechanism to cope with natural and functional differences among humans. It helps integrate the social structure which is full of diversities and differences, whereas caste gives importance to differences and discrimination on grounds of heredity and tradition.

In his *Vividha Prabandha* (Miscellaneous Essays), Bankim commented, "Worshipping thirty-three crores of gods and goddess is not '*Sanatana Dharma*', it is an inferior variety of folk religion...Devotion to God, love for humanity and peace in mind—these elements constitute the core of Hindu religion." He personally believed in 'universal religion of man.' There was no place for divisive communal feeling in his social outlook. He made it amply clear in his book *Dharmattwa* that "to a real Hindu, both Hindus and Muslims, are all equal." To bring the charge of communalism and Hindu fascism against Bankim betrays a motivated conspiracy against the Hindu ethos. Such pseudo-intellectualism endangers the spirit of democratic governance. Rabindranath Tagore in his essay *Kalantar* also observed that the essence of religious feelings lies in recognition of, and respect to, humans *qua* humans. On the basis of the discipline of human conscience can be built up the ethos of religion which would create healthy society and free cooperation among people. Tagore specifically concluded that the *mantra* of 'freedom' leads to Dharma and the *mantra* of slavishness leads to slavery. Thus the two great leaders of the Indian Renaissance came to the same kind of conclusion in regard to religion-society interdependence, which, in turn, shapes the nature of politics.

2.04 Nationalism and Nation-building

Modernity as an all-comprehensive attitude towards every aspect of human life, individually as well as collectively, was ushered in western Europe by the leaders of the Enlightenment movement in the late seventeenth century and it had its fulfilment through the eighteenth century. Its main feature was to free the human mind from the medieval ideas and superstitions and to adopt and introduce a culture of open mind and sovereignty of Reason as the guide to thought and action, and simultaneously to demand appropriate ideology and reform programmes in economics, sociology and politics. This kind of intellectual movement was initiated in India by Raja Rammohun Roy and it continued to develop by the next generation of intellectuals throughout the nineteenth century. Bankimchandra was an important leader in this intellectual movement.

As in West-Europe, the idea of nationality or nationhood emerged among the different distinct culture groups. Rising above the regional or professional (class) identity, the people were emotionally veered round the identity of language and culture to consciously claim themselves to form distinctly different social and political groups having their own economic interests. The common sufferings in the past and the common aspirations for the future served as the cementing bond of such groups called by a new name - 'Nation'. Such nations demanded the end of political domination by feudal aristocracy and imperialism. Marxism explained the new phenomenon of the emergence of nations in terms of capitalism's need of safeguarding markets. That is to say, in the garb of patriotism, capitalism helped the process of the birth of nationalism. But recent research has proved it to be an inadequate explanation. The idea and ideology of nationalism later gathered strength in the colonial world.

Nationalism in India was born out of anti-colonialism and it began to influence the popular mind in the wake of the spread of modern western education and the gradual unfolding of the exploitative character of the colonial political and economic system. The consciousness of the rich culture of India added an additional fuel to the national pride and strong desire for self-rule. Of course, the process of nation-building is a complicated and long historical process in all countries, and India was no exception.

Bankim was definitely an initiator and leader of nation-building process in India. In his life-time, Germany and Italy achieved national unification. But Bankim was not sure what good come out of that kind of nation-building to the people concerned

or to humanity as a whole. But he could foresee the strength of nationalism as a social and political force. As an important spokesman for modernity in India in the mid-19th century, he therefore advocated strong efforts for nation-building in India. His argument was the social solidarity and politico-economic strength would facilitate modernization and progress in India, especially when the European nation-states have already started competition among themselves for achieving glory and strength of the nation-states. He considered nationalism as the "new religion" which would be helpful in unifying the different regions in India in political unity and controlling the divisive forces like language, religion and castes. On this point, he compromised his modernist outlook and preferred to treat nationalism as a sort of religion so that the different varieties of public morality could be assimilated. He attempted such assimilation in his theory of *Anushilan* in his book *Dharmatattwa* and tried to establish Lord Sreekrishna of the *Mahabharata* epic as a historical figure and a great nation-builder. Here he formulated his doctrine of love and argued that love for one's own country is the highest religious morality. Related with this point, he pleaded for reconstructing the history of India and rejected the accounts of European scholars on Indian history. From the early 1880s onwards Bankim pursued this line of argument and philosophy of nation-building, and beautifully expressed it in literary form in his novel *Anandamath* (1882), where he appropriately included his highly patriotic song "Bande Mataram" (first published in *Bangadarshan* a few years earlier). To imagine one's own country as the 'Mother' and paying devoted obeisance to her, however, was not accepted by the Muslims and, for this reason, the 'mantra' of patriotism was not later accepted as India's 'National Song'. Despite the fact that this one particular 'mantra' or battle-cry highly influenced generations of India's national revolutionaries, Bankim's critics point it as a weakness of his modernist outlook.

2.05 Equality and Socialism

Bankim's modernity is strongly reflected in his ideas on equality and socialism. To him, equality does not mean mechanical equality of circumstances but equality in terms of rights and equal opportunity. He recognises diversity of circumstances, which is natural and forms the basis of human progress. Hence his concept of equality means equal treatment to persons with similar socio-economic standing. He did not accept heredity as a criterion for different treatment.

At the early stage of his intellectual development, Bankim was a full-fledged champion of modernity, heavily influenced by western intellectual trends like positivism of Comte, utilitarianism of Bentham and J. S. Mill, liberalism of Gladstone, socialism of Fourier, Proudhon and Owen, enlightened radicalism of Rousseau and Voltaire. At this time he wrote his tract on *Samya* (equality).

Equality is basically a western concept and a product of the temper of modernity. In the medieval period inequality was accepted by the society as a divine dispensation and inevitable fact.

Industrial Revolution and French Revolution sounded the arrival of modernity in Europe in the later half of the eighteenth century. Bankim was heavily influenced by the Age of Reason and developments in science and technology in Europe in the nineteenth century. All these influences induced him to think about equality in a serious way.

In the Enlightenment movement and during the Age of Reason, the European intellectuals, for the first time, seriously questioned the acceptability of the ideal of inequality in social, economic and political fields. As an impact of modernity, a section of Indian intellectuals started challenging inequality since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Bankim was in the forefront in challenging inequality as an ideology and a social practice.

Bankim was acutely conscious of the rich-poor divide in society and opposed the exploitation of humans by the upper-class people in the Indian social structure and the exploitation of the labouring class in agriculture by the landlords and in industry by the capitalists, mainly on the moral grounds of such exploitation being motivated by the selfishness of the exploiters. His sensibility as a modernist thinker prompted him to conclude that society as a whole suffered from this kind of exploitation. Because of unequal privileges, the rich becomes richer and the poor becomes poorer, the strong becomes stronger and the weak becomes weaker. He was convinced that caste divisions facilitate and perpetuate exploitation in Indian society.

Before he wrote his tract on *Samya* (Equality), he wrote a penetrating analysis of the economic deprivation and social backwardness of Bengal peasants and landless labourers in a long essay 'Bangadesher Krishak' (Peasants of Bengal) in the pages of *Bangadarshan* in 1872. He held the Permanent Settlement of land tenure system

introduced by Lord Wellesley in 1793 as the main culprit responsible for increasing the miseries for the Bengal peasantry. This long essay the product of a modern mind well-informed about economic data and the legal system. His personal administrative experience of witnessing the actual miseries of the peasants in Bengal enriched his understanding of the problem of rural poverty.

Bankim's *Samya* was first published in a booklet form in 1875. He wrote this booklet not only with a modern intellectual's deep concern with a burning socio-economic problem but also with a sort of missionary and idealist zeal to spread awareness about the real facts and data about rampant inequality prevailing under the administration of the British rule in India. His feeling of anger, banter, sorrow, mental pain, and sympathy for the downtrodden has been expressed with the analytical mind of a modernist intellectual. Bankim's *Samya* has been rhetorically compared with a "dazzling unscathed sword." While analysing the nature of inequality, Bankim raised the issue of unequal distribution of power in society, but he did not go deeper into the question whether inequality is the outcome or the cause of political subjugation. He also stopped short of finding a way out whether through political revolution or through legal-constitutional reforms within the prevailing political system. He hinted very vaguely to the politico-sociological concepts like power, domination, authority and hegemony, which drew the attention of later-day political philosophers and sociologists in the twentieth century.

In his analysis, Bankim touched upon three types of inequality viz. economic inequality, caste-based inequality, and gender inequality.

While dwelling on economic inequality, he was influenced by the modernist and socialist thinkers of Europe like Fourier, Owen, Comte, Mill, and sometimes just referred to Voltaire Rousseau and Marx. It is not clear whether he was aware of the difference between socialism and communism, but what needs to be underlined is his modernist bent of mind. But he appears to be a socialist when he argues in favour of egalitarian distribution of national wealth. He followed J. S. Mill and the European socialists in accepting the individual's right to inherit the paternal property and preferred a limitation to the right to property inheritance so that the huge surplus over what is needed for maintenance of life of the inheritor may be used for the benefit of society at large, especially for the amelioration of living conditions of the poorer sections of the society. To him, this kind of economic reform would help achieve social justice.

He could foresee boldly that this kind of socialist measure would be acceptable in many parts of the world by the coming generations for the sake of social justice.

Bankim's egalitarianism and socialism are evident in his non-communal attitude in ensuring the basic needs of the poor, Hindus and Muslims alike. His reference to two names—Rama Kaibartya and Hasim Shekh—was purely symbolic of the two main communities in Bengal. Bankim refused to accept the so-called economic growth achieved under the British rule as indicative of national prosperity unless and until the benefits of economic growth reaches the marginalised people. This was definitely a socialist thinking by any modern criterion. Bankim refers to Paran Mondal as a symbolic name of those marginalised people who are victims of socio-economic repression and inhuman treatment by the feudal lords. He categorically observed that "Bengalee landlord is the enemy of Bengalee peasants", sucking the blood of the landless people.

Bankim's limitation and weakness is revealed when he refuses to recommend and campaign for the rejection of the Permanent Settlement introduced by the capitalist colonialists on the grounds that if this land tenure legislation were to be made null and void, the people's confidence in the Raj (colonial government) would be destroyed, leading to political instability. He was perhaps afraid of violent revolution which he did not prefer because of his own class consciousness. Later in his life he withdrew the circulation of his book *Samya*.

In regard to gender equality, Bankim's views were quite modern. He supported Hindu women's right to inherit paternal property, but was silent about this right for the Muslim women. He echoed the western idea of equal rights for males and females. He defended the rights of women to education, free mobility, free choice of profession and acquire full empowerment. But here, again, Bankim's modernity is found to have its limitations. He opposed Vidyasagar's social movement for widow remarriage but considered the practice of permanent widowhood for very young widows as a cruel and inhuman system. He spoke against the practice of one male having a number of legitimate wives in the name of the Hindu Brahminical system of 'Kulinism'. However, what is remarkable is that he pleaded for equality in the eye of law and therefore the same law of marital reforms for both Hindus and Muslims. The point of uniform civil code is logical and modern, but logic has its limitations in actual life and politics.

Thus Bankim was simultaneously a modernist in *Samya*, a religious preceptor in

Dharmatattwa and *Krishnacharitra*, and a free and creative artist in his historical and social novels.

2.06 Concluding Remarks

Bankimchandra was a keen intellectual and a propagator of modernism in Bengal and, for that matter, India. His creative mind was scientifically trained and he was hugely influenced by European ideas of Enlightenment and modernity. But there is a streak of contradictions all along in his mind and social consciousness. There is contradiction between his sentimental attraction for traditional values and his interest in modern science and open mind; between his religious belief in idealist philosophy in respects of issues internal to his mind and intellectual dependence on reason in matters external to the mind; between his strong emotional feelings for the glory of own nation and high respect for western science and technological skill. This coexistence of contradictions of values and intellectual inclination made his mind quite complicated. For an example, in his famous essay on Bengal peasantry there is a distinct contradiction between his brilliant data-based analysis of the causes behind the peasantry's socio-economic misery and his timid policy prescription of not making any violent protest against the exploitative actions of the landholders, because he was afraid of social chaos and consequent political instability of the British rule. It is then reasonable to argue that Bankim's own class consciousness as a member of the elite 'Bhadralok' class did not permit him to suggest revolutionary land reforms and abolition of the Zamindari system as the logical remedy to deep evil consequences of an unjust land tenure system. In the beginning he showed his great interest in Rousseau, Saint Simon, Comte, Mill, Owen, but later he himself admitted that he had lost his interest in the writings of these European philosophers and political economists. He stopped re-printing and circulation of his tract *Samya* arguing that it had no relevance any more (But he never withdrew his essay *Biral* (cat) which contained his egalitarian ideal in the garb of literary wit and humour) In his *Dharmatattwa* he became attracted to the theory of well-balanced cultivation of moral values as the real way to social progress and praised the role of the Hindu religious hero Lord Sri Krishna as the ideal nation-builder.

It is true that Bankim's thought inspired deep sentimental and patriotic feelings among the educated middle-class Hindus, internalised a critical spirit of enquiry in their minds, and drew their intellectual attention to the creative potentials of modern science and technology. He created a wonderful literary store-house to ignite a sense of human dignity in the minds of his readers, and imparted a strong spirit in the cause

of anti-imperialist struggle. But Bankim's genius had limited impact on the evolution of social and political consciousness of the masses, and in shaping the logical frame of mentality of the mass of the Indian people.

2.07 Suggested Readings

1. Partha Chattopadhyay, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*.
2. Sudipta Kaviraj, *The Unhappy Consciousness: Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India*.
3. T. Raychoudhuri, *Europe Reconsidered: Perceptions of the West in the 19th century Bengal*.
4. M. K. Halder, *Foundations of Nationalism in India : A Study of Bankimchandra Chatterjee*.
5. B. N. Ganguly, *Concept of Equality: The Nineteenth Century Indian Debate*.
6. Amallesh Tripathy, 'Western Influence on Bankim's Thought' (in Bengali), *Desh* spl. vol on Literature (1988).
7. S. Islam Chaudhuri, *Bankimchandra's Zamindar and Peasant* (in Bengali)
8. M. Shaheedullah, 'Socialist Bankimchandra' (in Bengali), *Paschimanga* (1995).
9. S. K. Das, *The Artist in Chains: The Life of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee*.
10. B. Chatterjee (ed.), *Bankimchandra Chatterjee : Essays in Perspective*.

Short-answer Questions

1. Briefly indicate the reasons why Bankim is called a multi-dimensional genius.
2. Briefly describe the political context of Bankim's life and times.
3. Briefly analyse the socio-economic context of Bankim's life and times.

4. Mention the leading European thinkers who had an abiding intellectual influence on Bankimchandra's modernist thinking.
5. What are the main points in Bankimchandra's essay on Bengal peasantry?
6. Indicate the probable reason why Bankimchandra stopped publication of his booklet *Samya*.
7. What is the main contribution of Bankimchandra to the modernist revolution in India?
8. Explain the nature of contradiction in Bankimchandra's view on Modernity and his view on the relevance of Indian traditional value system.

Long-answer Questions

1. Discuss Bankimchandra's contribution to the modernist thinking in India.
2. Analyse the political, social and economic environment in which Bankimchandra grew up as an intellectual.
3. Write a critical assessment of Bankimchandra's concept of nationalism.
4. Give your assessment about Bankimchandra as a socialist thinker.
5. Explain the contradictions in Bankimchandra's social consciousness as a modernist thinker.

Unit - 3 □ Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898)

Structure

- 3.01 Introduction
- 3.02 Life and Times
- 3.03 Champion of Western Education
- 3.04 Religion and Politics
- 3.05 Advocacy for Democratic Governance
- 3.06 Concluding Remarks
- 3.07 Suggested Readings and Sample Questions

Objectives

This unit is designed to :

- explain the contemporary social conditions of Muslim Community in India.
- emphasize the ideas Syed Ahmed upheld and propagated to advance the position of Muslims with special emphasis on education.
- bring out the role of religion in politics, as viewed by Syed Ahmed, along with his concerns about the consequence of representative government.

3.01 Introduction

Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) is mostly known as “the Father of Muslim Modernism.” In order to understand the reasons of this identification of a learned Muslim in the 19th century it would be necessary to understand the social and economic background of the Muslim community in modern India. The predominant position that the Muslims had held in the medieval period depended on Muslim political authority. Once the Muslims lost this authority after the establishment of the British rule under the East India Company in the second half of the 18th century, the conditions of the Muslims began to decline. This was also the time when the

subcontinent gradually came in contact with the western civilization and modern science and technology. Responses of the Hindus and the Muslims to the British rule and its impact were different, and the difference greatly affected the development of the two communities. While the Hindus in general welcomed the British rule, the Muslims perceived it as a calamity. The Muslim leaders failed to see the potentiality of the changed situation, and they generally suffered from a sense of cultural isolation. The Hindus quickly began to take advantage of the British connection, their ideas and institutions, while the Muslim elites preferred to live in cultural isolation and refused to learn English and open their community to new ideas of the modernised Europe. The Hindus had, through the ages, adjusted to new social challenges coming from outside. The Muslims, on the other hand, took the ideas and institutions as laid down in the *Quran* as valid and inflexible. Freedom of thought was not generally allowed in the Muslim community.

Notwithstanding this general trend in Muslim social thought of orthodoxy, five different trends can be identified, which had left their mark on the mind and character of the Muslim community in India, viz. (a) orthodox fundamentalist, (b) spiritual humanist, (c) conservative reformist, (d) modern reformist, and (e) secular rationalist.

Syed Ahmed Khan was the outstanding leader of the fourth variety viz. the modernist reform movement in north India. He sought to reinterpret Islam in the light of contemporary challenges in the 19th century. He gave a rationalistic interpretation of the holy book, arguing that there need not be any contradiction between the word of God (*Quran*) and the work of God; that is, Nature. Like Rammohun Roy, Syed Ahmed Khan believed that religious doctrines should be examined with the help of reason and common sense and revaluated in the light of contemporary knowledge and requirements.

3.02 Life and Times

Syed Ahmed Khan was born on 17 October 1817 in Delhi in an aristocratic Muslim family, which was attached to the Mughal court. He grew up under the care of his maternal grandfather Khwaja Fariduddin, who was an influential intellectual of his time and had served as the Principal of Calcutta Madrasha in the 1790s.

His formal education was on traditional lines, and was neither complete nor comprehensive. But his diligence and perseverance stood him in good stead and later

helped him produce creative writings on religion, dialectics, history and education. His mental formation was influenced by the great moderniser and reformer Rammohun Roy.

When his father died in 1838, Syed Ahmed had to join the judicial service of the East India Company to earn a livelihood. He was promoted to the post of Sadar Amin (sub-judge) in 1855. Same year he was transferred to Bijnor from where he took part in the 1857 Uprising in his capacity as a civil servant. He emerged from the ordeal as a loyal functionary of the British government in India and a strong Muslim nationalist.

The year 1857 incidentally proved to be a watershed in his life. As a civil servant supporting the Britishers in the Uprising, he saved twenty Europeans, who were at Bijnor during that time, risking his own life. For this chivalrous role, Sir John Strachey once remarked that "no man ever gave nobler proof of conspicuous courage than Syed Ahmed Khan" (Quoted in Abdus Subhan, 'Father of Muslim Modernism', *The Statesman*, 30 March 1998). But the British reprisals after the failed Mutiny moved him so deeply that he once thought of migrating from India. Later he dropped the idea and instead took up the work on building Muslim harmony. A sense of remorse for the people of his own community generated a psychological pressure on him to create an "irrepressable urge to work for the uplift of his own people."

After the uprising was repressed, the British administration punished the Muslims more than the Hindus. In Delhi alone, Muslims experienced a pogrom, in which the slightest suspicion of being anti-British brought instant disaster. The revengeful repressions carried out by the British soldiers almost decimated Muslim aristocracy in Delhi, and those who were spared were silenced into submission. The British rulers made it clear that the Muslims must surrender arms and forget their statecraft and past glory. Their future would be chalked by the British authority.

Syed Ahmed Khan retired from government service in 1876 and devoted the remaining twenty-two years of his life to the service and uplift of the Muslims in India. He took the task of spreading English education among the Muslims in order to achieve a balance between Islamic and European learning. He considered himself first a Mohamedan and thereafter an Indian. When the Indian National Congress was formed, Sir Syed asked the Indian Muslims to stay away from the INC dominated by the Hindu elites. He wanted the Indian Muslims to realize that the British rule in India was too powerful to be resisted and too useful to be ignored.

In 1866 Sir Syed founded the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, an organ for educated

Muslims. In 1869-70 he visited England, which was the most significant event in his life. In England, *St. James Gazette*, published from London, hailed Syed Ahmed as "an example of a singular phenomenon of modern time."

In 1878 Syed Ahmed was appointed a member of the Public Service Commission by the British government. From 1878 to 1882 he was a member of the Viceroy's Council. When in 1883 the Self-Government Bill was debated in Indian Legislative Council, he expressed satisfaction that India would have an opportunity to be trained in the art of self-government, but he objected to the introduction of the elective element in Indian politics, on the grounds that the Hindus would have more powers than the Muslims in local-self government institutions. Syed Ahmed died on 28 March 1998.

Syed Ahmed made a positive assessment of the British colonial rule. He remained loyal to the British Raj. This attitude of Sir Syed, in contrast to the negative attitude of the other sections of the Muslim community, especially the poor peasantry, played an instrumental role in awakening a liberal attitude among the Muslim urban elites and causing the birth of reformed Islam in India. He asserted emphatically the identity of the Indian Muslims and observed: "The Turkish Khalifa's sovereignty does not extend over us (i.e., Indian Muslims). We are residents of India and subjects of the British government."

3.03 Champion of Western Education

In promoting Muslim modernism in India, Syed Ahmed stressed two basic points, viz. (i) importance of western liberal education, and (ii) loyalty to the British empire. The essence of Syed Ahmed's modernist attitude was his zeal for a fresh orientation of Islam.

Syed Ahmed founded in 1875 a school in Aligarh (UP) for the Muslim students in order to open their minds towards western model of liberal education. He had to face criticisms and organised opposition from the orthodox Muslims against this reform introduced for bringing a fresh intellectual air in the minds of the young Muslim generation. The school soon developed into Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental (MAO) College in 1877. Thanks to his persistent and dedicated efforts to introduce western education for the Muslim community's social advancement and uplift, MAO College was finally up-graded to Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in 1920.

Aligarh in UP had a strong fortress which was captured by the English army from

the Marathas in 1803 in course of the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-05). When Syed Ahmed selected Aligarh as the site for his MAO College, he received generous help from both the British administration as well as a section of the Hindus. When he visited England, Syed Ahmed was impressed by such high-quality educational institutions as Eton school and Oxford University, and Harrow School and Cambridge University in England. These institutions inspired him so much that he decided to establish his own school and MAO College. The main purpose behind this effort was to reform the outlook, understanding, idioms and conduct of the new generation of Muslims through English education so that fresh air of modernity can improve the culture of his *qaum*. (The Urdu word 'qaum' which he used means people of own community, and it may also refer to the larger society).

In this modernist project, Syed Ahmed received generous financial help from the Government and his countrymen. Aligarh Governor Muir helped to procure 75 acres of land and Viceroy Northbrook contributed Rs. 10,000/- from his discretionary fund. Viceroy Lytton laid the foundation-stone of MAO College in 1877. Syed Ahmed was hailed by the Britishers as the leader of "advanced Islam in India". But he was misunderstood by a section of his countrymen as some Hindus suspected his credentials and some Muslims opposed him for his emphasis on western education.

Syed Ahmed's basic motivation was the development of scientific attitude of mind in his 'qaum', as he considered it to be the *sine qua non* of intellectual advancement and social progress. He firmly believed in creating dynamism in his contemporary society, supremacy of Reason in thinking and habits of the people, especially spiritual and social matters, liberty of conscience and freedom of expression and a concept of a nation free from parochial considerations.

He propounded a social ethics in which religion was interpreted in terms of the service of mankind. He felt that the blind prejudice of the Muslims is preventing them from emulating western education, science and technology. He was a nationalist who could see immense danger of religious communalism. Few people know that while Syed Ahmed was opposed bitterly by many Muslims for promoting western education, the Hindu community extended help to him in his educational reforms. In a speech at Muzaffarnagar on 7th February 1884, he explicitly acknowledged their help when he said: "I cannot forget the debt of gratitude that I owe to my brother Hindus who, realising the fallen position of their Muslim brethren, have contributed thousands of rupees for the building of MAO College. They have really performed a human act of charity. The walls of the college on which their names are inscribed bear testimony to their kindness and non-communal attitude." (Quoted in Faizan

Mustaffa, 'Sir Syed and Hindu connection of AMU', *The Statesman*, 17 October, 2009).

Syed Ahmed welcomed western education, however, he was not in favour of technical education for the Muslims and higher education for women. He was concerned with the fate of the Muslims as a religiously defined community. This exclusive concern for Muslims as a distinct community led him to reject the Indian National Congress as a national forum of all Indians and to lay the foundation for a consciousness that gradually evolved into 'religious nationalism'.

Aligarh MAO college was established for the entire *qaum* of Indian Muslims, not for any particular Muslim sect. All Muslim students, both Shia and Sunni, were to hold their Namaz prayer collectively. With the help of the British administration, government jobs used to be reserved for the graduates of the MAO College. Later, when MAO College was upgraded to AMU in the early 1920s, some of its graduates like Mahammad Ali and Saukat Ali, Liaquat Ali, Khwaza Nazimuddin became notable leaders of Muslim politics in India. Liaquat Ali and Nazimuddin played significant role in political movements demanding separate 'home land' for the Indian Muslims. In one sense, Syed Ahmed's dream of ushering the spirit of modernism and enlightenment among the Muslim young generation was achieved, but only partially. MAO College eminently fulfilled Syed Ahmed's mission of letting in the light of modernity among the Muslim community through western education. In recognition of this historical role, he was nominated by Viceroy Lytton and his successor Lord Ripon as a member of the Central Legislative Council, where Syed Ahmed played an important role in respect of the Indian Muslims who very much accepted him as a competent, sympathetic and sensitive leader of their community.

3.04 Religion and Politics

Syed Ahmed's importance in the modernity movement lies in the fact that he felt the urgency of lighting the torch of western learning in the stagnant and culturally backward Muslim community. He was sensitive to the social and political forces of the times and wanted a fresh reorientation of Islam in India.

In 1864 he started a Translation Society in Ghazipur, which was later rechristened as Scientific Society, as a seat of learning. This Society performed very useful work of translating English books into Urdu language on about forty themes of modern western ideas, from religious texts to literary and scientific pieces, in order to introduce

the hitherto stagnant minds of the backward Indians, especially the Muslims, to the modernist outlook. One purpose of this project of transmitting the fruits of western knowledge into Urdu language was to popularise the rationalistic and scientific mental outlook of the West for enlightening the minds of the Indians. A more immediate and pragmatically necessary objective was to initiate the Muslim community to English education and higher western culture so that the Muslims could prepare themselves for having employment under the British administration in India.

He recognized the importance of social reform and advocated for necessary reforms in his monthly periodical *Tahzibul Akhlag* (The Social Reformer). He also started the practice of organizing Mohammedan Educational Conference to create popular enthusiasm for modern education, social reform, and general intellectual and socio-economic progress. He observed in a sorrowful mind about the Indian Muslims that "they are under the influence of false and meaningless prejudices, and do not understand their own welfare. In addition, they are more jealous of each other and more vindictive than the Hindus and suffer more from a sense of false pride. They are also poorer, and for these reasons I fear that they may not be able to do much for themselves." (quoted in V.P. Varma, *Modern Indian Political Thought*, 1980, p. 429).

Syed Ahmed himself had a rational approach for diagnosing the cultural and economic backwardness of the Muslim community in India. In his rational analysis, he identified the wrong approach to religion as the root cause of Muslim backwardness. He took a rational approach to the study of the Quran and, for this attempt, he was criticised and squarely blamed by his co-religionists who even called him a heretic. Syed Ahmed, however, proceeded with undaunted courage and his rational conviction that the social and political progress of the Indian Muslims could be achieved by remaining loyal to the British Raj and being trained in western education. He, therefore, pleaded for social reform, liberal and scientific education, and synthesizing the old values with modern education. He gave a liberal interpretation of Quranic injunctions, translated the Bible in Urdu language and showed his unstinted faith in the progressive mission of the British rule in India. The 'Aligarh movement', which he launched with his untiring zeal and efforts, was intended to be a deliberate counterpoise to the Muslim orthodoxy and the policy of political seclusion. His aim was to give a place of pride to modern education and modern Islam.

Through his monthly Urdu periodical *The Social Reformer*, he propagated his proposals in plain Urdu language for reforming Islamic theology. The main points of his reform efforts were (i) the system of slavery popular in the Muslim community was un-Islamic and prohibited in the Quran; (ii) polygamy among the Muslims may

be permitted if the husband can do equal justice to his wives; (iii) the practice of usury (practice of lending money at unreasonably high rates of interest) is prohibited in the Quran; (iv) Muslims are free in eating the food taken by the non-Muslims and dress up in the fashion of the non-Muslims; (v) Muslims are within their rights to take their independent judgment in matters not mentioned in the Quran, (vi) no unreasonable anecdote, even if mentioned in the Quran, need to be accepted as truth. For these so-called heretical remarks made by him, Syed Ahmed was branded as a heretic and atheist by his co-religionists. But he remained undaunted and went on using his right of free expression as a subject living under the liberal legal system introduced by the British administration and thereby creating dynamism within the Muslim community through the medium of Urdu language which was the language of the ordinary Muslim folk.

In his political thinking and activities, Syed Ahmed was a believer in liberal ideology. In his own times, India had no democratic system of government, hence he began preparing the base of a democratic political culture which would aid the functioning of democratic institutions in future. In his analysis, it would be risky to experiment with democratic machinery of governance without creating the basic minimum requirements of popular education on the basis of a modern and scientific outlook on life and a minimum economic equality among the masses.

This could be one of the reasons why in 1888 Syed Ahmed advised the Muslims to stay away from the Indian National Congress (INC) formed in 1885 by a small elitist group of Hindus with the indirect political blessings of the Viceroy. That is why, he formed an alternative forum called United Indian Patriotic Association in 1888 with the help of Raja Shiva Prasad of Varanasi and active help from Theodore Beck. He also founded a frankly loyalist organisation called Mohamedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association in 1893. It is true that the INC's mode of functioning, the nature of its membership and the demands it raised disappointed the eminent cultural leaders of the Hindus like Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh, Aswini Kumar Datta and others. May be from his own angle of vision, Syed Ahmed also had no high hope of the INC's role in the 1890s. He preferred to concentrate on levelling-up of the socio-economic and political status of the Muslims. Perhaps he had a lurking fear that INC, born out of the British administration's indirect support and designed as a 'safety valve' against any possible violent up-rising of the Indian people, would henceforth draw more attention and sympathy of the Government, and in consequence, the Muslims would be neglected. If this possible development had taken place in Indian politics, Syed Ahmed's own

long-nurtured project of advancing the Muslim community's interest might be jeopardised.

Towards the end of the 19th century, Syed Ahmed endeavoured to make a separation between religion and politics. In a true secular spirit, he wanted the material interests and relations were to be separated from the influence and interference of religion. In the last decade of his career he firmed up his mind to demand that the state should never function under the influence of religion, and the Government should never interfere in personal religion of the people. Such secular policy of the government would be conducive to peace and progress of the society. This vision and political thinking of Sir Syed Ahmed, however, was not followed in course of Indian politics in the twentieth century. Moin Shakir in his well-researched book *Khilafat to Pakistan* (1970) has documented to establish the trend of the growing Islamization of Indian politics from the beginning of the 20th century. It remains debatable whether Syed Ahmed Khan or the next generation of Muslim politicians was responsible for creating the Hindu-Muslim separatism which ultimately proved to be very costly.

3.05 Advocacy for Democratic Governance

After the Uprising of 1857 ended and the British Crown took over direct responsibility of governing India from the East India Company, Syed Ahmed wrote his famous book *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* (1858). Originally written in Urdu language, it was translated into English by Colvin and Graham in 1873. As identified by Syed Ahmed, the primary cause of the Revolt was the non-admission of Indians into the processes of law-making. He considered the participation by people in the legislative councils essential. Such participation enables the people to ventilate their grievances and register their protest. In the absence of such participation, the intention of government is not clear to the people and inevitably suspicion about the government's move grows in the mind of the people.

In his book Syed Ahmed deplored the absence of effective communication and information feedback between the rulers and the subjects. He lamented that the British rulers controlling the activities of the East India Company did not feel the need of consultation with the Indian people. There was no institutional channel whereby public wishes and views on measures taken in governing the country could be known to the rulers. He pointed out that as the British rulers were foreigners in India, security of government should have been based on their knowledge of the governed and the rights and privileges of the governed should have been carefully

observed.

He also identified some subsidiary causes of the Indian Revolt, which were rooted in the primary cause. These other factors, according to him, included (i) passing of some definitely objectionable laws and measures, (ii) the government's ignorance of the desires and aspirations of the people, (iii) the government's neglect of basic elements which were required for good governance of India, and (iv) finally, bad management of the army leading to the spread of disaffection among the sepoys.

In making this analysis of the watershed incident of the Uprising, he underlined the need of friendship and sympathetic intercourse between the rulers and the ruled. Thus he showed his loyalty to the British ruler and simultaneously advocated for some Indian participation in the scheme of governance.

During the patriotic phase of his career Syed Ahmed supported the Government's bill in 1883, (known as Ilbert Bill, so named after the Viceroy's Law Member Sir P. C. Ilbert), which proposed to eliminate the racial discrimination suffered by the Indian judges while trying criminal cases involving Europeans. The liberal nationalists led by Surendranath Banerjea, Kristodas Pal and others supported the Bill in the face of the organised anti-Bill agitation launched by the Anglo-Indian community. At the beginning of 1883 he spoke about the Hindus and Muslims belonging to one *qaum* (nation) in all matters of everyday life and wished for a union of hearts, mutual sympathy and love. He expressed his eagerness to develop a composite nationality. But his views changed in 1888 and onwards when he saw the Hindu nationalists consolidating politically, he became suspicious of the goals of the Indian National Congress. This change of attitude of the Muslim elite was later explained by M. N. Roy in his book *India in Transition* (1924) : "Those of the Hindus who inaugurated the agitation for representative government and social reforms, were intellectual bourgeoisie, whereas the Aligarh alumni, on whom were showered the good graces of the British government, belonged to the landed aristocracy with social and political tendencies predominantly feudal. Elements so diverse socially could not unite in a national movement."

Syed Ahmed did not believe in the efficacy of a representative form of popular government in India in the last decade of the 19th century. Influenced by John Stuart Mill's thinking, Syed Ahmed, at that juncture of history, had a genuine fear of the "tyranny of the majority", and he was afraid that an advanced form representative government would result in marginalising the socio-economic interests of the Muslims. He spoke in this vein not from the angle of the agrarian aristocracy. The basic reason was his dread of the numerically overwhelming size of the Hindu community.

As a leading pioneer in the advancement of modern learning in India, he was

conscious about the educational backwardness of the majority of his co-religionists. Hence he refused to go the whole hog with the English-educated Hindu elitists in taking any political move against the British rulers. However, his persistent championing of the cause of education on modern lines made him a major figure of enlightenment movement in India in the second half of the nineteenth century.

3.06 Concluding Remarks

Syed Ahmed Khan grew up and propagated his modern reformist ideas in an age which saw remarkable growth of scientific knowledge and development of liberal political thought in the West. His main contribution to Indian social and political thought was that he gave a rationalistic interpretation of the Quran, the holy book of the Muslims. He showed that there was no contradiction between the word of God and the work of Nature and that religious doctrines should be examined by using the human faculty of reason and common sense. He had an intelligent understanding of the realities of his contemporary situation. Unlike the conservative reformists, Syed Ahmed Khan did not seek to conciliate Muslim orthodoxy and obscure social practices. He maintained that Islam was not inimical to liberal social thinking. His junior reformist follower in Bengal was Syed Ameer Ali (1847-1928). In fact, Ameer Ali went a step further than his senior colleague. He presented an Islam which is an embodiment of liberal progress and insisted that enlightenment of the Muslim masses must precede reformism in the Muslim community. Hence Ameer Ali suggested to allot financial support to High English and technical education, not to traditional madrasa education.

Syed Ahmed Khan, despite his limitations, will be recognised as the pioneer in the advancement of modern learning in the Muslim community. In his life time, he saw the birth of Deoband (in the district of Saharanpur in UP) school established in 1867 as the centre for the study of Islamic theology and jurisprudence. Syed Ahmed Khan struggled throughout his life against the orthodoxy in Islamic thought. He must be given due credit for starting the Aligarh movement against the Deoband orthodoxy. He urged his people to rouse themselves out of the lethargy, sloth, ignorance and degradation in order to receive the benefits of modern education and science. Commenting on Syed Ahmed Khan's modernist attitude, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his convocation address of AMU in 1949 observed: "If Hindus and Muslims of India had understood the spirit of his teaching and followed it, the whole course of

recent events would have taken a different turn." Syed Ahmed, no doubt, played a significant role in the process of nation-building in India.

In a speech delivered on 27 January 1883, Sir Syed said: "...my Hindu brethren and my Muslim co-religionists breathe the same air, drink the water of the sacred Ganga and the Jamuna, eat the products of the earth which God has given to this country, live and die together...I say with conviction that if we were to disregard for a moment our conception of Godhead, then in all matters of everyday life the Hindus and Muslims really belong to one nation (*Qaum*)."

[quoted in V. P. Varma, *Modern Indian Political Thought*, 1980, p. 430.] But he did not pursue this theme seriously. Substantially he devoted himself to work entirely on behalf of the Muslims. But, to be fair enough, this role of Sir Syed was historically significant, because he seriously worked to free the minds of the Muslims from religious obscurantism and social prejudices, and bring them into the wide and free space of modernity. His lead was taken up later vigorously by a movement for emancipation of intellect by the enlightened section of Muslims in Bengal.

3.07 Suggested Readings

1. V. P. Varma, *Modern Indian Political Thought*. (1980).
2. M. Shakir, 'The Dynamics of Muslim Political Thought', in P. Thomas and Kenneth Deutsch (eds.), *Political Thought in Modern India*.
3. R. M. Gandhi, *Understanding the Muslim Mind*, (1987).
4. Hafeez Malik, *Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Muslim Modernization*. (1980)
5. G. F. I. Graham, *The Life and Work of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan*.
6. Muhammad Shan, *Sir Syed Ahmed Khan*. (1969)
7. Hafeez Malik, *Political Profile of Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan : A Documentary Record*, (Islamabad, 1982).
8. S. Raichaudhuri, 'Muslim Nationalist Thought: Development and Fruition' (in Bengali), in Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay (ed.), *Introduction to Indian Political Thought* (in Bengali), West Bengal State Book Board (2013).

Short-answer Questions

1. How is Syed Ahmed Khan's role popularly known?
2. Indicate two basic features of Syed Ahmed Khan's political attitude.
3. What was Syed Ahmed Khan's most important institutional contribution in the field of education?
4. Mention the main items in Syed Ahmed Khan's social reform project.
5. What was Syed Ahmed Khan's attitude towards Ilbert Bill (1883)?
6. Briefly discuss Syed Ahmed Khan's attitude towards the British administration in India.

Long-answer Questions

1. Examine Syed Ahmed Khan's modernist ideas for social reforms.
2. Explain why Syed Ahmed Khan is called the "Father of Muslim Modernization".
3. Write a critical assessment of Syed Ahmed Khan's outlook on religion and politics.
4. Discuss Syed Ahmed Khan's stand on democracy and governance in the context of his 19th century-experience.

Unit - 4 □ Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Structure

- 4.01 Introduction
- 4.02 Life and Times
- 4.03 Liberation of Intellect and Individual Rights
- 4.04 Society and State
- 4.05 Social Egalitarianism and Social Justice
- 4.06 Ecological Balance and Environmental Degradation
- 4.07 Religion of Man
- 4.08 Concluding Remarks
- 4.09 Suggested Readings

Objectives

- A comprehensive introduction to the social and political conditions of India on the threshold of modernity ;
- A biographical sketch of Rabindranath Tagore ; highlighting the significant moments of his life ;
- A critical overview of some ideas and values central to the intellectual outlook of Tagore, essential to the understanding of his social and political discourses ;
- An introduction to the poet's urge to make man nature—friendly ; and
- An enunciation of the principles underlying Tagore's notion of the 'Religion of Man'.

4.01 Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is universally known as the icon of modern India's achievements in intellectual liberalism and synthetic culture. By any

consideration, he was a brilliant, multifarious genius and his critical creation has influenced almost all aspects of the modernist temper in India continuously for over fifty years from 1891 to 1941. He has left behind a rich legacy of artistic creations and modernist outlook on life through his rich contribution to all branches of literary and artistic creation of poems, songs, novels, short stories, dramas, and essays on state, society and human civilization. His mystic philosophy of universal love and brotherhood served as the voice of humanity. His life span of eighty years cover forty years in the 19th century and forty years in the 20th century. However, his ideas appeared quite modernist throughout this period, because of his intellectual courage and readiness to imbibe the values of modernity whenever he confronted critical problems of social change and political challenges. He enriched modern India's sensibilities and perceptions towards pressing problems such as disorganised education system, democratic deficit in political system, corruption in public administration, failure in implementing development programmes, inequity and violence in social and political life, economic maldevelopment, communal disharmony, crumbling moral values, neglected and unempowered womanhood, deprivation of marginalised people, injured human rights, environmental degradation, and civilizational crisis.

His ideas and experiments were unique, unconventional and sometimes even revolutionary. His mental make-up and logic of understanding were always modernist and completely free from obscurantism, prejudices and vested interests. He accepted the indispensability of science and technology in shaping the individual and social life, and the urgency of achieving a balance between human habitation and ecology. He refused to be an iconoclast and always pleaded for showing due respect for traditional values of Indian culture. In short, Rabindranath a complete example of the Indian Renaissance, an able successor to the tradition of modernity initiated by Rammohun Roy and Iswarchandra Vidyasagar.

4.02 Life and Times

Rabindranath was born on 8 May 1861 in Jorasanko area of North Calcutta in an aristocratic and well-to-do family. His father Debendranath Tagore had zamindari estates scattered in East Bengal and North Bengal (now Bangladesh). His grandfather Dwarkanath Tagore, a personal friend of Rammohun Roy, amassed a huge amount of wealth through commercial activities and had good connections with the East India Company. Their family belonged to a socially inferior 'pirali' sect of the Brahmin caste, and Dwarkanath adopted Brahmaism, a religious protestant faith,

introduced by Rammohun Roy. Tagores, however, believed in spiritual and metaphysical foundation of the Upanishadic Hinduism, and Rabindranath used to claim his religious identity as a "Hindu-Brahma".

He spent his childhood in a big joint family but experienced limited contact with the larger society outside. His initiation in formal education was in three schools — Oriental Seminary, Normal School, Bengal Academy of St. Xavier's School in Calcutta — in quick succession. Everywhere he found himself uncomfortable, and finally his disciplinarian father arranged private tuition at home under some eminent scholars. Here he received good training in liberal education in humanities, fine arts, and basic sciences.

In the late 1860s and 1870s there was a rising wave of patriotism in Bengal. As a young and educated boy, Rabindranath participated in some of the local activities for promoting patriotism. His circle of socialization process began widening when he was seventeen years old and he spent some time outside Bengal with his second-elder brother Satyendranath Tagore, the first ICS officer serving the British Raj.

In the late 1870s he was given the responsibility as the secretary of Adi Brahma Samaj. Side by side, his literary career began. This was also the time when the Liberal nationalist agitations began protesting against some illiberal measures of the government. The political agitation of the Liberals against the arrogant Anglo-Indian community's opposition to the Ilbert Bill (1883) ultimately led to the birth of Indian National Conference in 1882 and the Indian National Congress (INC) in 1885. Rabindranath had no personal involvement in these political developments, because to the members of the Tagore family, patriotism did not mean open political agitation against the Raj. Rather it meant building up self-dependence, awakening the people's mind to modernity. Gradually Rabindranath developed some tangential relation with the INC through his occasional participation in the annual conference of the INC as a singer in its opening session.

The year 1890 was a turning point in his life in more than one sense. He read out his paper *Mantri Abhishek* at a public meeting in Calcutta, wherein he supported the INC demand for representation of Indians on the government's highest law-making body. In August this year he went to England to live with his ICS brother Satyendranath Tagore for a brief period. Here he took little interest in the on-going intellectual movements in England, but he could vaguely feel the arrogance of British imperialist policies. At the end of the year his father sent him to East Bengal to manage their family zamindari estates.

Rabindranath intermittently stayed in East Bengal for the next ten years. Here he got his first personal experience of poverty of the 'ryots' when he took keen interest in the problems of rural development and thought of a number of innovative measures like rural bank, co-operative, agricultural credit and so on.

Coming back to Calcutta in the early years of the 20th century, Rabindranath enthusiastically took active part in the nationalist political agitations against Viceroy Curzon's administrative reform (1905) of partitioning the Bengal presidency and creating a new province of Eastern Bengal & Assam with its new capital in Dacca. But his participation was confined to composing and singing a large number of emotional patriotic songs and walking occasionally in popular processions for spreading the message of communal harmony. He hailed the main leaders of the movement like Surendranath Banerjea and Aurobindo Ghosh. But soon he withdrew from this political movement when the rising national revolutionaries began indulging in violent activities in the name of patriotism. He expressed his disappointment and disgust when the moderates and the extremists within the INC began openly fighting among themselves. He lost interest in violent in-fighting and armed revolutionary activities, and began expressing his open disapproval through his poems, essays and novels.

After the government annulled the partition of Bengal and shifted India's capital from Calcutta to Delhi, the armed revolution was suppressed, a new trend of communal politics began in the wake of Morley-Minto Reforms. The extremists quit the INC. Rabindranath went to England with his family in May 1912. Next year (November*1913) he received the Nobel Prize in Literature for his book of poems *Gitanjali* (Song Offering). In 1914 he was awarded knighthood by the British Crown.

With the beginning of the World War in 1914 Rabindranath could see the ugly and cruel face of aggressive and predatory nationalism in Japan and Europe. While on a lecture tour of Japan and America in 1916, he roundly condemned imperialism and identified nationalism as the cousin-brother of imperialism. His mind was now seeking the higher and more meaningful ideology of internationalism and human unity.

In April 1919 the Jalianwala Bag (Punjab) massacre happened when the local representative of the British Raj massacred the unarmed peaceful crowd of women and children who gathered to celebrate a socio-religious holy occasion. As the news of this cruel and inhuman action of the imperialist police came out, the whole of

India was deeply shocked but kept mum for the moment. Rabindranath was the first to condemn it publicly by returning his knighthood as a mark of protest and called a public meeting in Calcutta. The political leaders followed his lead. All his earlier illusion about the western civilisation vanished.

In 1921 Rabindranath established Viswabharati for experimenting with his ideas of education and planned it as a centre of higher education and research, where eminent educationists of the world would be invited for fruitful exchange of culture and ideas. Very soon he started the sister institution Sriniketan as the centre of technical education and practical training.

When Gandhiji launched his non-violent non-cooperation movement in 1920, Rabindranath openly disagreed on the non-cooperation ideology. He found non-cooperation, charkha, burning of foreign clothes and other programmes meaningless. He ridiculed Gandhiji's promise of Swaraj within a year as magical utterance to mislead the people. When Gandhiji abruptly suspended his movement unilaterally on his personal decision on a flimsy ground, Rabindranath, like many other nationalist leaders, criticised Gandhiji's decision as betrayal. Similarly, he condemned the decision of associating the Khilafat movement with freedom movement as an unprincipled marriage of political convenience.

Rabindranath visited Italy in 1926 at Mussolini's invitation and he praised the Fascist leadership for huge development activities, but his momentary illusion broke down after meeting Romain Rolland. He could later understand the real nature of Fascism, and he came in the forefront of anti-fascist movement.

In 1930 Rabindranath visited Soviet Union and he was impressed by the immense achievements made by the communist government in education, rural development and industrialization programme. But he also noted a sort of suffocation because of the absence of political freedom of the people there.

Rabindranath and Gandhiji had great personal regards for each other. But Rabindranath did not hesitate to criticise Gandhiji on issues like absence of freedom within the Congress organization. The poet severely criticised Gandhiji's attitude on Subhas Chandra Bose's election as the Congress President in 1939 and the subsequent politics within the INC.

Towards the end of his life, Rabindranath deeply felt for his work still undone, that is, he could not reach the working class and help the marginalised people. In two memorable poems, 'Aikyatan' and 'Ora Kaj Kare', he expressed his own shortcomings in this respect.

In his essay 'Crisis of Civilisation' (1941), Rabindranath felt deeply sad to see the moral poverty of the British imperialists in India, but he refused to lose his modernist hope for the ultimate triumph of human values.

4.03 Liberation of Intellect and Individual Rights

Rabindranath was brought up in Rammohun Roy's legacy of rationalism and freedom of intellect. In his younger days, he expressed in his poetic brilliance his ecstatic joy of freedom in his famous poem 'Nirjharer Swapnabhanga'. Here he celebrated the awakening of his Inner Life and human sensitivities. Rabindranath himself said that he was born at the confluence of three movements – the 'religious' movement introduced by Rammohun Roy, the 'literary' movement initiated by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, and the 'national' movement started by the Liberals. All these movements left an imprint of the value of freedom in his thinking. Because of his rationalist bent of mind, he opposed the violence involved in the Swadeshi movement (1905-08) and violent activities of the national revolutionaries thereafter.

Rabindranath's inner mind seems to have had three salient features. The first and foremost is his love for individual freedom; secondly, social freedom; and thirdly, freedom of spirit. Throughout his life's experience he valued individual freedom as the highest value. In his school life, he revolted against the tyranny of routine life and boring education system. In his youth he revolted against the tyranny of social customs. In his mature life, he vehemently criticised the domination of the caste system over the individual's freedom of choosing from among the alternative political ideologies and competing religious beliefs. His attitude in this respect was positively influenced by the agitation of the Indian Liberals and also by the articulations of liberal leaders William Gladstone and John Bright in England. His revolt against social tyranny is found in his poems like 'Durbhaga Desh'; in novels like 'Chokher Bali', 'Ghare Baire', 'Char Adhyay', and 'Shesher Kabita'; in plays like 'Achalayatan' and 'Tasher Desh'; in a number of immortal short stories, and in some letters collected in 'Chhinnapatrabali'.

His freedom of spirit is eminently present in his poems like 'Shivaji', 'Prashna', and in his immortal poetic prayer to the Almighty beginning with the line "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high..." (Gitanjali), and also in his plays like 'Rakta Karabi.'

His mind was free from all kinds of fear, parochialism, and meaningless religious rituals. These characteristic features of his modernist outlook on life would be amply clear if one goes through the whole poem:

“Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high
Where knowledge is free
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments
By narrow domestic walls
Where words come out from the depth of truth
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habits
Where the mind is led forward by Thee
Into ever-widening thought and action
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

(Song Offerings, 1913)

Rabindranath severely condemned the inhuman and brutal violation of the rights of the individual by the armed police of the State (government) in the wake of the Jalianwala Bag massacre in Punjab in April 1919. In a strongly-worded letter to Viceroy Chelmsford, Tagore protested against monstrous violation of rights of the individual: He wrote: “... The disproportionate severity of the punishments inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out, we are convinced, are without parallel in the history of civilised governments...Considering that such treatment has been meted out to a population, disarmed and resourceless, by a power which has the most terribly efficient organization for destruction of human lives, we must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency, far less moral justification... I, for my part, wish to stand, shorn of all special distinctions, by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings.” He admired the western ideals of law and liberty, but expressed his injured sensibility whenever the manhood of the entire population of India had been crushed down to utter helplessness.

Again, at the time of police firing on the unarmed political prisoners within the Hijlee jail in Midnapore in September 1931, he raised his voice against the barbarous action of the police. In a public meeting held at Calcutta to voice people's protest against the barbarous and uncivilized action of the government, Rabindranath in his written speech severely criticised the government's defence of the police action and

wondered how can the alien government defend itself against the people's complaints in the court of the Almighty. Later in his celebrated poem 'Prashna' (Question), he gave vent to his feelings philosophically by asking the Almighty whether He would show mercy to those who put out the light and poisoned the air.

Thus everywhere Rabindranath defended the rights of the individual against the arbitrary and cruel actions of the State. This liberal bent of his mind and his moral courage to protest against the arrogant show of state power underline his commitment to the modernist temper. This same message is found in some of his novels, plays and short stories. In essence, Rabindranath all along had an intense hate for autocracy, violence and terrorism in any form.

In his lectures on Nationalism (1916), Rabindranath severely condemned the aggressiveness and mindless barbarism of jingoistic nationalism of Japan and of the imperialist European powers. In his assessment of the role of nationalism as a political force he, however, appears somewhat ambivalent. His modernity is to be found in his logic and reasons in analysing the reality of the soulless and ruthless exploitation of the weak by the power-hungry capitalist class. His modernity lies in his logical arguments and reasonable standard of ethical judgment on the basis of objectivity. He is ethically committed to prefer borderless development of humanity and the ideal of cosmopolitanism and inter-culture dialogue. He was vigorously anti-colonial and believed, at the same time, that the European nations taught the colonial people about reason and enlightenment, value of liberty, civil rights of free speech, conscience and culture. He distinguished between good nationalism and bad nationalism, and he was convinced that the colonial people learnt from the western nation-state about modernist ideology, liberty and equality, industrialization and modern standard of living. In his considered judgment in the final analysis, 'nation' remains an evil force, as it denies the very values which, for him, constitute the core of humanity. The best way to understand Rabindranath's position on the modern concept of the nation is to take his views as a moral critique and not a political theory of nation and nationalism.

4.04 Society and State

Rabindranath's thinking about society and state begin with his concept of *Atmashakti* (inner strength of the Self) of the group or social life of man, which alone

can provide desired autonomy to the community. He elaborated his ideas on state and society in his famous essay 'Swadeshi Samaj' (the native community) in 1904. He pointed out the difference between the western idea of 'State' and the Indian idea of 'Society'. In the traditional Indian context, State (King) was concerned with defence, policing and providing justice to the people; all other functions like education, irrigation, social welfare and so on used to be performed by Society. Change of ruler did not affect society. But in the modern age in the western countries the State (government) holds enormous power. Hence Tagore concludes that in the western context State becomes powerful at the expense of Society. He lamented that in India under the British rule the tendency was to copy the West. His suggestion was to organise self-financed native fairs (*mela*) as the space for intermingling of people in order to get the real feel of the country and the community and exchange of ideas between urban educated people and rural folk. This would ensure social initiatives in various fields of social life outside the control of the State (government).

Rabindranath always gave priority to Society over the State. His idea was to empower Society, through suitable social action and institutions, to meet the needs of the people. He was not interested in creating a *swadeshi* (indigenous) State (administration) to replace a foreign government, rather he preferred to privilege the Society over the State.

This thesis of Tagore has been questioned in recent time by Arabinda Poddar in his book *Rabindranath : Rajnitik Byaktittwa* (Rabindranath : Political Personality, 1982). Poddar noticed a sort of irreconcilable tension in two separate identities of Rabindranath as an anti-imperialist champion of society's autonomous role in governance and himself being a landlord enjoying the benefits of the Permanent Settlement introduced by the British Raj. Perhaps Rabindranath himself also knew that his projected scheme of political autonomy of social institutions was to be achieved by a series of actions. The point is that Rabindranath just wanted to lay primary importance on social and cultural domain and not on the political-administrative apparatus of the State. Society was, to him, more important than the State, although political authority of the sovereign state would be ultimately the deciding factor. As the recent political theory of the post-modernists would have it, the application of power and knowledge at any sphere involves the use of political power.

Rabindranath was not essentially a political theorist. By 'state power' he meant the decision-making power of the political parties, as was revealed in his personal

experience in India of his time. Even in his own thinking of functioning of society, he accepted the need of a "samajpati" or a strong leader of the society, who would be capable of leading the social enterprise. In his essay *Swadeshi Samaj* (Society and State) he observed: "If the community is to protect itself, it must take its stand on united strength. The best way would be to invest a strong personality with leadership quality and rally round him as our representative; to submit to his rule would mean no loss of self-respect, for he would be a symbol of freedom itself... If the society is alive and alert, no leader can do any permanent damage... If society recognizes its unity as symbolized in a particular person, it will be undefeatable." Rabindranath himself visualised, on different occasions, leaders like Surendranath Banerjea, Gandhiji and Subhas Chandra Bose as *Deshanayak* (Leader of the country).

Tagore exhibited wonderfully his modernity in social-political ideas in his two famous symbolic plays – *Rakta Karabi* and *Muktadhara*. In both these plays he asserted the people's right to achieve collective welfare of the society through a popular revolt against anti-people institutions and anti-people policy pursued by the all-powerful ruler. And in both cases what is good for the entire community has been successfully articulated as the people are organized by the Leader (hero) of the people.

Rabindranath talks about himself in a small article in Bengali titled Rabindranath's Political Ideas (1929), which he wrote in order to display his disapproval of Sachin Sen's views and comments in his book on *Political Philosophy of Rabindranath*. Rabindranath clarified that no distinct political theory came to his mind at any specific moment or time, and that all his ideas took shape gradually through his life experience. His suggestion was to identify the inherent link scattered in his literary creations and occasional speeches in order to distinguish between the momentary and permanent ideas. Here he explained that he started writing on political themes in the 1880s in the Bengali periodicals *Bharati* and *Sadhana*. He never believed in any strategy of political mendicancy and agitational politics of 'protest, prayer and petition', because all these movements in the name of the people had no connection with the people at large. People did not understand their real living conditions by applying their intellect and mind, their service to, and sacrifice for, their own society's real welfare. They heard the word *Swaraj* (self-rule) from the elite leaders but never cared to develop power, skill and competence of the self (*Atmashakti*). This point was further clarified in his writings and speeches during the Bengal anti-partition movement (1905-07) when he underlined the urgent need to discover the

genius and capability of the folk first and only thereafter participate in political agitations. Without this prior preparation, politics would degenerate into the art of scrambling for power and satisfying one's own selfish goal. Rabindranath himself experimented with his ideas of rural development and social reconstruction, first in his zamindari estate in East-Bengal and thereafter in Santiniketan and Sriniketan projects. All these concrete endeavours were made by using his own family resources, his Nobel Prize money and donations from well-wishers. He never asked for government grants. The reason was his consistent primacy given to Society over the State (government). Moreover, in all his constructive experiments in education and comprehensive social development schemes, Rabindranath applied the modern theories and technological innovations. His approach to rural development and reconstruction speaks a lot about his modernist mind and creative imagination without any preconceived ideas, social prejudices or obscurantist creed. Rabindranath's modernism was never expressed in empty phrases and rhetorical language. Unlike some of his eminent contemporaries, he was guided by logic and not by magic or vague (sometimes diplomatic) inner voice in his thinking and actions.

In 1934 there was a severe earthquake in Bihar causing extensive loss of life and property. Gandhiji commented that the earthquake was God's curse in the form of punishment awarded to the people of Bihar for their inhuman social practice of untouchability. Rabindranath's modernist outlook prompted him to issue a forthright criticism of Gandhiji's prejudice and jaundiced anti-modern outlook. To him, earthquake is a natural disaster and there is clear scientific causes of earthquake, which no modern mind can overlook.

4.05 Social Egalitarianism and Social Justice

Rabindranath's idea of egalitarianism was never systematised, as is found in Bankimchandra's well-argued essays 'Samya' and 'Bangadesher Krishak'. Tagore was not a social philosopher in a technical or professional sense, yet he showed his commitment to social egalitarianism in his creative writings.

When the Russian revolution occurred in 1917, Tagore did not welcome it as a significant step towards realising the ideology of egalitarianism. While inaugurating the school for labouring class in August 1917, he referred to the increasing inequality among the rich and the poor. In November 1919 in his address in Santiniketan he hinted at the theory of alienation of labour. He staunchly criticised the selfish

activities of the rich class and expressed his concern at the growing alienation of the labouring class from the production process. He held the lust for money of the rich responsible for the ruination of the traditional peaceful rural life.

Rabindranath was also bitterly disgusted at the social insult meted out to the outcast sections of the Hindu social structure. His famous play *Chandalika* (1933), which was reproduced as a dance-drama in 1938, shows how deeply he was moved by the inhuman social practice of extreme neglect and marginalization of the lowest caste, who suffered inhuman insult at the hands of the upper caste people. Through his beautiful exposition of the humanist egalitarianism of Ananda, a disciple of Buddha, Tagore underlined the need for achieving the minimum social equality in the caste-ridden society of India.

In another play *Rather Rashi* (Chord of the Chariot), Rabindranath criticised the practice of social discrimination in the name of religion. Here he has shown how the chariot of the Lord did not move an inch so long as the upper caste people only pulled the Chariot's chord, but it began moving only after the out-caste people lent their hands in pulling the Lord's chariot.

In his symbolic play *Raktakarabi* (Red Oleanders), he described the kingdom of the Yakshas where the king rules from behind the curtain and exploits the dehumanised people mercilessly. The lifeless machine of exploitation was ultimately crashed when the working class became conscious of their deprivation and exploitation under the inspiring leadership of their leader Nandini, and even the king's minister finally came out to join hands in crashing the soulless machine of the kingdom.

The progressive social consciousness of Rabindranath, however, took shelter ultimately in an idealist and humanist position. He never cared to analyse and identify the real cause of economic inequality and social exploitation. Some change in his thinking on social egalitarianism and economic exploitation is found in his essays *Kalantar* and *Russiar Chithi* (Letters from Russia).

Rabindranath visited the Soviet Union in Sept. 1930 at the invitation of the Government of the USSR. He was impressed by the education system and the system of production in agriculture and , and he especially praised the system of honouring human labour. He was, however, sceptical about the political milieu there, which did not allow freedom of thought and expression. Towards the fag end of his life his illusion about Europe's achievement in liberating the human spirit was gone. In a letter to *Manchester Guardian* (28 Feb. 1938), he wrote : "... The future lies in our learning to ally ourselves with those human forces in the world, wherever found, which are seeking to end altogether the exploitation of man by man, and of nation

by nation..." But, at the same time, he could never support the use of violence for achieving redistribution of wealth. Ultimately he found a better institutional arrangement through organized cooperatives for promoting egalitarianism and social justice. Any negative strategy like non-cooperation and boycott of foreign goods was not acceptable to him. He also abhorred the strategy of violence adopted by the national revolutionaries. This is abundantly clear in his many essays and in novels like *Ghare Baire* and *Char Adhyay*.

When in 1932 the British government announced the Communal Award accepting the system of separate electorate for the depressed classes in India, Tagore supported Gandhiji's stand against the Award and advised his countrymen: "The solution of the communal problem is in our own hands and we should take advantage of the new feeling of resentment that is sweeping the intellectual circles in our country today against irrational communal and class differences, come to an agreement between ourselves and thus remove one of the greatest obstacles in the path of our national self-expression."

Rabindranath wanted to secure social justice for all. For this purpose, he followed what may be called his politics of "Atmashakti" to generate the inner spirit of self-dependence for achieving self-improvement. To him, Society receives primacy over the State, social liberation comes prior to political liberation.

In his search for social justice, Rabindranath intellectually leaned towards a kind of progressive socialism, although he never accepted any "ism" as an ideology. In the 1890s he first had the personal experience of seeing the miseries of the poor peasants in his family zamindari estate. He could feel the distress of the poor people resulting from discrimination in distribution of wealth and merciless exploitation. He wrote an article on 'Socialism' in the periodical *Sadhana* (Jaisthya 1299 B.S.) discussing the views of British socialist Ernest Belfort Bax. Here he observed that socialism basically aims at replacing the authority of the rich by the authority of the people. His deep anguish at the discrimination suffered by the poor has been reflected in many of his letters collected in his *Chhinmapatrabali*. His short stories *Shasti* (Punishment), *Durasha* (Failed Expectation), *Anadhikar Prabesh* (Unauthorised Entry), *Thakurda* (Grandfather), *Prayaschitta* (Penance), *Muhamaya* and others depict his sensitiveness to human miseries, unhappiness, deprivation and inhuman treatment received by the poor and the powerless from the rich and the powerful, social indignity of the downtrodden and marginalised people. His egalitarianism and concept of socialism took shape from his own personal observation of the unequal social structure of Indian society, and not from any bookish, ideological debates among European social

philosophers. Tagore's modernity was in line with the tradition of intellectual modernism of Rammohun and Vidyasagar. His socialistic ideas focussed on economic ruination of the peasantry and the working class, psychological depression of womanhood, and the capitalist exploitation of the downtrodden. He compared the exploiting landlords with "tiger on land and crocodile in water". In a letter to his daughter-in-law Pratima Devi, he reveals his mind to the effect that the zamindari estate should be managed as the trust property and the ryots should have some participation in the management of such properties.

4.06 Ecological Balance and Environmental Degradation

Rabindranath was introduced to learning the basic elements of physical sciences like Physics and Chemistry and also Astronomy in his childhood by his private tutor. There was a small science laboratory in his house at Jorasanko (Calcutta). In his memoirs about childhood, he has referred to his deep interest in preliminary scientific experiments in his family laboratory. His father also grew his son's interest in Astronomy and observation of stars and planets. By nature, he was a nature-lover all through his life and he derived much pleasure in living in the midst of Nature. While planning the landscape and constructing buildings in Santiniketan, Rabindranath took deep interest in achieving and enjoying harmony with Nature.

Rabindranath developed close friendship with his contemporary eminent scientist Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose. In his mature years he wrote a small book on science *Viswaparichay* (1937) wherein he collected a large number of scientific data about the universe and discussed scientific concepts with remarkable clarity. Sometime in his European tour, he met world-famous scientist Albert Einstein and exchanged with him ideas about science and functioning of the universe. This openness of mind and eagerness about knowing the mysteries of the universe show how his attitude and mentality was influenced by modernist ideas.

Like Gandhiji, Rabindranath was also in love with simple living in the midst of Nature. His social consciousness and literary creativity flourished more in rural, rather than urban, surroundings. In many of his essays, poems and symbolic plays, Rabindranath cursed the mechanical social relations developed in machine-based and technology-dominated civilisation in the industrialised countries. He wished to develop the surroundings and the pattern of life-styles in his Brahmacharya Ashram School in the style of ancient 'Tapoban' life of the Aryans. Out of frustration derived

from densely-populated and mechanical way of urban living, Rabindranath once prayed to God to bring back the greenery and forests of the older days and take back the suffocating city life.

In the 1920s and 1930s the physical conditions of living in Indian cities began to deteriorate because of industrialization and its accompanying slum life and urban pollution. The sensitive and modern mind of Rabindranath began protesting against reckless destruction of Nature in the name of development. He could diagnose the ills and ugliness of machine-dominated social life. He saw through the ugly nature of urban social living heavily dominated by industries, machines and development projects, and he identified the unrestrained greed for wealth and the uncontrolled passion for grabbing more and more control as the inherent cause of the degradation of social life and loss of mental peace. In his essay on *Palliprakitti* (Nature of Village Life), he observed that human greed for power and pelp is an anti-social instinct which whets the selfish activities of man and destroys the stability of social life. As this passion of greed for money and lust for power increases, it destroys the balance between individual self-interest and social interest. This view has been repeated in his essays on *Samabayniti* (Principle of Cooperetion) and *Kalantar*.

Rabindranath elaborated his point of socially destructive effects of human greed for money and power in his article published in *Viswabharati News Bulletin* (1933). In this article titled 'Can Science Be Humanised', he observed : "... the social unrest prevalent today all over the world is owing to the anarchy of spirit in the modern civilisation. What is called progress is the progress in the mechanical contrivances; it is in fact an indefinite extension of our physical limbs and organs which, owing to the enormous material advantage that it brings to us has tempted the modern man away from his inner realm of spiritual value and thus the balance is lost...today our homes have dissolved into the hotels, comunnity life is stifled in the dense and dusty atmosphere of the office, man and woman are afraid of love, people clamour for their rights and for their obligations, and they value comfort more than happiness and spirit of display more than that of beauty."

Rabindranath decried the passion for maximising profits and amassing limitless wealth, which leads to arrogant demonstration of crude power to coerce others. This process nurtures the motivation to dominate over men and grab wealth, finally leading to imperialism and violence. He deeply resented the process of concentrating ill-gotten wealth through exploitation of human labour and plunder of natural resources. To him, the unbalanced differential between ruthless capital and helpless

labour appeared to be the root cause of societal and ecological degradation. He found the institutional remedy to this depraved situation in organising cooperatives in agriculture, industry and infrastructural development projects, because cooperatives constitute the most democratic and civilised means for fruitfully mobilising human labour and using financial resources. He urged to harness human efforts in forming cooperatives for the purpose of controlling human greed and prevent the worship of power and domination. He was in favour of using science and technology for increasing leisure for man's creative activities and reducing financial poverty, but not for exploiting the masses and destroying Nature. This was the message of his symbolic plays *Muktadhara* and *Raktakarabi*. When the toiling masses are inspired to attain a higher level of living through selfless leadership, the ruling class would be compelled to join hands with the people for achieving really sustainable development of human society.

The expression 'sustainable development' means using the ecological system in a judicious manner so that the present generation is benefitted without jeopardising the interest of the next generation. The essence of this concept, coined by Brundtland Commission (1987) and endorsed by the UN Conference on Climate Change and Development at Rio (1992), was clearly foreseen by Rabindranath as early as 1920s-30s.

Rabindranath's openness to modernist outlook on life was no isolated thought. It was inherent in his total social philosophy. His concern for ecological or environmental degradation was an integral part of his vision of higher civilisation. Some of the social festivals introduced by Rabindranath in Santiniketan life, such as Spring Festival, Tree Planting Festival, Monsoon Festival, Festival of Land Cultivation and Winter Festival (Pous Mela), are symbolic of his deep concern for fighting against ecological or environmental degradation caused by mindless and profit-driven development programmes through jaundiced use of science and technology.

4.07 Religion of Man

A new dimension of Rabindranath's openness to the Enlightenment tradition of modernity is found in his spiritualism centred around the ideology of humanism. Nurtured in his boyhood days in the rationalistic, intellectual and spiritual surroundings of his family affiliation with the Bramha Samaj, Rabindranath had imbibed a critical attitude against dogmas, superstitions and ritualistic prejudices. Simultaneously, as a

romantic poet believing in piety, love, sentiments and enthusiasm for life, he also believed in higher morality which enriches the human mind. Although accepting Reason as a guide to action, he was conscious of the limitation of Reason to fathom the reality of human life in society. He was a humanist poet and prophet of love, fellowship and cooperation among all social beings. He was strongly inclined to cross over the narrow dividing walls between different social and religious groups. His concept of humanity was an organic whole and he pursued the ideal of harmony tenaciously till he breathed his last.

Like the Renaissance-humanists, Rabindranath believed in God as a supreme spirit expressing creativity through Man and his external objective reality. He believed that till the beginning of the Age of Reason and modernity, the human spirit had been suppressed by governmental despotism and institutionalised religious dogmas. His own spirit revolted against the tyranny of social customs and deadening slavery perpetrated in the name of religious establishment and disciplined social order. His craving for the freedom of human spirit was directed towards moral illumination. Through his intellectual and literary creativity, Rabindranath worked throughout his life for promoting humanism and its values.

For fulfilling this goal, he prayed to Lord of his life (*Jiban Devata*) whom he glorified in his poetic creations like *Sonar Tari* (Golden Boat), *Chaitali* and *Manasi*. This concept was nothing but deification of the Vedantic idea of Life-principle. Unlike Sri Aurobindo's concept of transcendental divine values, Rabindranath placed stress on empirical human values like love, peace and harmony, and asserted the supremacy of the canon of human conscience. In his Hibbert Lecture delivered at Oxford University in 1930 Rabindranath talked about Religion of Man. The theme was also explained in his essay in Bengali in *Manusher Dharma* delivered at Calcutta University.

In explaining this concept, he observed : "... Truth, which is one with the Universal Being, must essentially be human, otherwise whatever we individuals realize as true can never be called truth – at least, the truth which is described as scientific and can only be reached through the process of logic, in other words, by an organ of thought as human... In the comprehension of truth there is an eternal conflict between the universal human mind and the same mind confined in the individual. The perpetual process of reconciliation is being carried on in our science and philosophy, and in our ethics. In any case, if there be any truth absolutely

unrelated to humanity, then, for us, it is absolutely non-existing... My religion is in the reconciliation of the Superpersonal Man, the universal human spirit, in my own individual being." In his poem *Jivana Devata*, Rabindranath points out that even the Infinite needs loving and cooperative response from the finite human being.

From this high altitude of spiritual consciousness, Rabindranath distinguished between *Dharma* and *Sampradaya* (community). He defined 'community' feeling as a collective consciousness which, when rooted in *Dharma*, gives rise to separate communal identity and provokes the followers of the separate identity to consider the other community as enemy. Thus begins 'communalism' which creates a deep psychological cleavage in Indian social life into two separate and mutually inimical communities of Hindus and Muslims. When this psychological cleavage is used as a weapon of power politics, communalism arrives in its full form. Tagore's modernist orientation and his logic of universal humanism was his answer to the political problem of communalism. In a letter to his friend Andrews (30 April 1921) Rabindranath revealed that dabbling in partisan active politics of power was never present in his own nature.

In his important social novel *Gora*, the hero declares that he is neither a Hindu nor a Christian, his religion is religion of man. This confessional assertion of Gora came when he came to know the real background of his birth. Rabindranath's thinking on *Dharma* (religion) ultimately accepts the Vedantic version of the *Brahma*, the omnipresent energy, revealing itself in every human being. To him, religion is essentially realization of human self-fulfilment by man. Rabindranath calls this process of worshipping man by man as the essence of religion. This was possible by his modernist interpretation of 'Dharma'.

That way Rabindranath can be seen as searching for a Scientific foundation when it comes to accepting anything as a matter of faith Tagore had once written : "I am not a scientist, but my desire to enjoy the essence of science knew no bounds. Constant reading had created a natural, scientific temper in my mind, which prevented me from giving in to blind faith." The many science references made by Tagore in his writings need to be studied and analysed further.

4.08 Concluding Remarks

Tagore is the perfect example of a true product of modernist culture. By his versatile genius and well-balanced logical mind, he proved to be the best cultural

ambassador of India to the modern West and, along with his contemporary Swami Vivekananda, a capable interpreter of India to the West. He played the role of a seer of humanity and successful poet of universal harmony and spiritual humanism. By all accounts, he was a truly universal man whose dynamic and courageous spirit embodied the essence of modernity mingled with the continuity of the best cultural values of India. His logical temperament easily triumphed over the magic of obscurantist social and religious ideas. Tagore's vast and variegated literary creation bolstered the sagging morale of a despondent generation in India and set an illustrious example of scientific logic mixed with enlightened sympathy for the downtrodden millions of the world.

4.09 Suggested Readings

1. V.P. Verma, *Modern Indian Political Thought* (new end. 1980).
2. K.P. Ghosh's article in Asok Kumar Mukhopadhyay (ed). *Bharatiya Rashtrachinta Parichay* (in Bengali), West Bengal State Book Board, 2013.
3. T. Pantham and K.L. Deutsch (eds), *Political Thought in Modern India*.
4. Collected Works of Rabindranath Tagore (in Bengali) and English translation of some of Tagore's writings.
5. Aanisur Rahman, *Social and Ecological Thought of Rabindranath* (in Bengali).
6. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, *Rabindranath Tagore : An Interpretation*.
7. Abu Sayyid Ayub, *Adhunikata o Rabindranath* (Rabindranath and Modernity), 1968.
8. Uma Dasgupta, "Rabindranath Tagore and Modernity", in *Tagore and Modernity*, ed. Krishna Sen and Tapati Guha (2006).
9. Kedarnath Mukherjee, *Political Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore*.
10. Arun Kumar Mukhopadhyay, *Rabindranath : Palli Punargathan* (in Bengali), (1996)
11. Asok Sen, *Rajnitir Pathakrame Rabindranath* (Rabindranath in the syllabus of Politics), Viswabharati, July 2014.

Short-answer Questions

1. Mention briefly the political and socio-economic problems of India, which received attention of Rabindranath's modernist mind.
2. What was the nature of Rabindranath's participation in Anti-Partition Movement in Bengal (1905-07)?
3. What was the reaction of the modernist mind of Rabindranath against the Jalianwala Bag massacre (1919)?
4. Mention two major points of Rabindranath's attitude toward nationalism.
5. Summarise briefly Rabindranath's views expressed in his essay on 'Swadeshi Samaj'.
6. Discuss briefly Rabindranath's attitude on the primacy of society over the state.
7. Mention the titles of Rabindranath's literary creations arguing for social egalitarianism.
8. Discuss briefly Rabindranath's disagreements with Gandhiji's views on non-cooperation as a protest movement.

Long-answer Questions

1. Discuss how Rabindranath Tagore accepted the western Modernity in his thought and actions.
2. Examine Rabindranath Tagore's ideas on the State-Society relation.
3. Explain Rabindranath Tagore's intellectual orientation towards liberation of intellect.
4. Examine Rabindranath's views on the theory of individual rights.
5. Discuss Rabindranath Tagore's conception of social justice.
6. Analyse Rabindranath Tagore's attitude towards preservation of Nature and fight against environmental degradation.
7. Explain Rabindranath Tagore's concept of 'Religion of Man' and assess its significance in the evolution of his social philosophy.

MODULE - 2
NATIONALISM

PROBING
THE

Unit-1 : □ Bankimchandra's idea of Nationalism

Structure

- 1.1 Objectives of study
- 1.2 Bankimchandra's thoughts on Nationalism expressed in 'Bangadarshan'
- 1.3 Dharmatattva and Krishnacharitra: The pride of Hindu Tradition
- 1.4 Anandamath and Nationalism
- 1.5 Bankim's nationalism in the eyes of contemporary social scientists
- 1.6 Suggested Readings
- 1.7 Sample Questions

1.1 Objectives of Study

- How did the nationalist sentiment develop in Bankim's thought?
- Analysing the nature of Bankimchandra's idea on nationalism as expressed in the journal 'Bangadarshan'.
- How is Bankim's pride about Hindu tradition expressed in his works and the nature of Hindu Nationalism?
- How can one evaluate Bankim's thoughts on nationalism?

1.2 Bankimchandra's thoughts on Nationalism expressed in 'Bangadarshan'

The journal *Bangadarshan*, edited by Bankimchandra, was first published in the year 1872. The publication established almost a new era, not only in the literary field but also in the political and socio-cultural area of thought. And the main pivot of this change was Bankimchandra's writings. *Lokrahasya*, *Bigyanrahasya*, *Samya*, *Bangadesher Krishak* and *Kamalakanter Daptar* were published between 1872 and 1876. During the same period his various write-

ups on literary theory, history, philosophy and politics were published in the collection titled 'Bibidha Prabandha'. And it was in these essays on history-politics and society, his reflections on nation and nationalism was first expressed explicitly.

In the year 1872 his essay titled 'Bharatkalanka' was published in *Bangadarshan*. Here he raised the question, what is the main reason behind India's captivity? The answer to this, according to the Europeans, was the sarcastic expression "effeminate Hindoos". But Bankimchandra never accepted this. He cited the example of Marathas and Sikhs, also referred to the certificates of bravery awarded to Indian soldiers by the British. He define this problem of such a long foreign rule in the country in his own way. Two points put forward by him in this regard are especially important. First, Indians lack the urge of independence in them. And secondly, there is a lack of unity within the Hindu community. Thus there is less effort in establishing a Hindu nation. According to Bankimchandra, "not only the modern Hindoos lack faith in independence, it's most probably common to the Hindoos of all ages." Referring to the 700 years of foreign rule he said, "It's not so that the prolonged history of subordination has erased the craving for independence among the Hindoos. Rather according to history, from the very early days the Hindoo community lacked the sense of independence." Starting from early Hindu Puranas to Nataka, Kavya, Mahakavya—nowhere can one find a reference to the importance of independence. Only in the Pre-British period against the Mughal rule can we find some scattered example that denies this trend. Ranapratap of Mewar, Maratha Shivaji and Ranjit Singh, the brave Sikh, are just a few exceptions. In order to save their kingdom from external enemies and to increase the boundaries of their own territories the Hindu kings have been found to engage themselves in warfare, but the ordinary Hindu subjects were never seen standing by their rulers in hard times. They never created the history of struggle for their land. Bankimchandra wrote, "Over three thousand years the aryan are fighting the aryan nation; aryan nation is fighting against the non aryan nation, Magadha against Kanyakubja, Kanyakubja against Delhi, Delhi against Lahore, Hindoo against Pathans, Pathans against Moghals, Moghals against British—everyone fought with the other, and hurt the country in long drawn warfare. But when it came to the context of fighting between just two kings, the ordinary Hindoos never fought for any side."

Thus the urge for independence and keeping control over one's own nation was limited to the king and kinsmen. It was never a concern of the Hindu masses. If a foreigner captures the throne the mob would accept him as the King. It did not disturb their regular routine—this was the case with respect to the Hindu-society.

Through his analysis Bankimchandra explained that, it was this lack of consciousness about independence that brought in the black stain on India. For the Hindus always lacked unity and the will to establish their national identity within the greater society. For this one needs to understand two basic things. Firstly, "I am Hindoo, You are Hindoo, Ram is Hindoo, Jadu is Hindoo and there are lakhs of Hindoo. And whatever is good for all these Hindoos, that's good for me too." Thus Bankimchandra was talking about the sense of equity within oneself, in order to establish the feeling of nationalism in the community. Secondly, "There are many communities in the world other than the Hindoos. Whatever is good for them won't necessarily be good for us too. In many instances something positive for them may mean somewhat negative for us. In such cases, where something good for them may mean to be bad for us, there we need to be careful. We can't allow that good to happen to them. If we need to oppress the other communities for this, then we'll do so. This is the second step towards establishing one's own community."

In this context another writing of Bankimchandra is also mentionable. It was during the same time period Bankim published an essay titled 'Jaati Baira' in the journal 'Sadharani' (1873). There he wrote, "As long as we don't come at par with the British, till then this sense of enmity of nations will be as strong within us. As long as this enmity is there, there will be the sense of competition within. Till then we will strive to come at par with the British."

Thus according to Bankimchandra, apart from feeling of equity in one's own community, within the community, enmity towards other exploiting nationality was also considered important for establishing one's own nation. Moreover, according to him, the urge for independence and the will to establish one's own national identity was unknown terrains to the Hindus. He believed, the British rule helped us to get introduced to those terrains. "The Englishmen had been of very helpful to India. We have got to learn a lot of new things." Thus it was because of the British people that the idea of nationalism received its importance within the Hindu community.

The most important point that comes up while discussing Bankimchandra's idea of nation is the lack of sense of nationalism among the Hindus. Whether the king can protect his kingdom or not was the concern of the ruler solely. The general mass was never worried about it, because the rulers also never bothered to care about the will of the people. The kingdom was operated solely on the will of the king and his board of advisors. According to Bankimchandra, if the consent of the general mass doesn't become the basis of the rule of the king then it would never be possible to establish the idea of nationalism within the Hindu society.

Just for the sake of establishing the nation Bankim had discussed Hindutva (sense of Hinduism) and traditional Hindu pride in several occasions. In the year 1873 in a journal named 'Shadharani' (November) Bankim wrote, "...the English people are the victor, we the won over. To be respectful towards the won over is not there in human nature. ...we are obedient people, but we are not submissive, we can't be. For we belong to an ancient race. We grow up reading Mahabharata, Ramayana. Our lifestyle follows the verdicts of the great Manu. We pray to our god in the pure and incomparable Sanskrit verses after bathing. As long as we can't forget all these things we can't become meek, that's impossible."

1.3 Dharmatattva and Krishnacharitra: The pride of Hindu Tradition

According to Bankimchandra, this idea of Hindutva and the pride of one's tradition is the basis of our Nationalism. We belong to an ancient race. The British rule might have made our position miserable at present, but we belong to an ancient race, no one can deny the pride of our traditional heritage. In fact, our sense of nationalism has to be established on the basis of that pride, our sense of superiority. Bankim was immensely influenced by the 19th century European thinkers such as Mill, Spencer, Auguste Comte etc. He was much into terms with the various movements of European enlightenment such as, rationalism, liberalism, utilitarianism, positivism etc. Science and technology of 19 century Europe also played a role in the construction of his knowledge system. Through that understanding Bankimchandra set himself into the task of creating a platform where tradition will meet modernity. In that light he wanted to analyse and explain the greatness of the ancient

Hindu culture. That's why Bankim once wrote, we don't abide by the guidelines laid by Manu and Jajñabalkya only. We will have to rediscover and re-interpret Hinduism in the light of modern scientific rational thoughts. In unequivocal language Bankimchandra protested against all the orthodox beliefs, superstitions and blind-faith practised in Hinduism. In order to reinvent the actual greatness of Hindu thoughts he was keen on taking the help of modern European logical analysis, righteousness, scientific bent of mind and the overall European world of knowledge. In his book called 'Dharmatattva' Bankimchandra had contrived a new definition of Hindu religion and theist philosophy. In the same work he had also drawn a link between this belief in Hinduism and love for one's nation or Nationalism. He believed that the Indian concept of nationalism would be built up on the basis of religion. By this religion Bankim didn't mean to refer to the ritualistic part of Hinduism, rather it was the culture (Anusilan) that he referred to. He was also talking of practising religion, but in a different way. To him religious practice has to be a complete and balanced exercise of humanism. Through such a practice only can a human being achieve completeness, contentment and salvation. Despite of his love and dedication towards the mother land, the ultimate truth to him is religion. His polite diction for the motherland is 'Vande Mataram' (I bow to thee, Mother). According to Bankim, this practice can only establish the pride, prowess and virtue of his motherland. The spirituality and other unearthly behaviour that is generally glorified in traditional Hindu philosophy are all denied by Bankim. He redefined the uprightness and religiousness for the Hindus.

He wrote 'Krishna Charitra' almost during the same period of time when he wrote 'Dharmatattva'. It was not the playful Krishna of the Vrindavanas that he worshipped; he was the worshipper of a perfect and complete human being in Krishna. The fighter Krishna, the diplomat Krishna, the legal advisor Krishna, was his ideal. He was the worshipper of the philosophical religious preacher and yet a family person that Krishna represented. Bankim had always worshipped the character of Sri Krishna that has been described in the Gita. There Krishna was the epitome of uprightness and reasoning. The Jyanayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Dharmayoga that the Gita preaches form the basis of Bankimchandra's theory of Anusilan. His understanding of nationalism was intrinsically linked to all these thoughts. He claimed that Hinduism had attained an extremely high level of spirituality. That can actually be the driving force behind our idea of nationalism. Thus according to Bankim, loving one's

motherland is the ultimate religion of the earthly human beings. In the project of constructing his own nation and making it powerful enough, he looks forward to the figure of Krishna represented in the Mahabharata. To him Krishna is the ideal representation of ultimate powerful individual. He didn't negate the logical way of analysing situations that the Western world had established by that time. Rather he took in the task of redefining the traditional knowledge bank of India, i.e. the Gita, the Mahabharata and the Puranas in the light of modern understanding. In the course he established the logical character of the national pride and dignity. He never ever imagined the countrymen to suddenly feel the bond by denying the barriers of language-caste-creed-religions. That's why he wanted to bring in the sense of unity by igniting the national pride. For that he took into the project of creating the idea of practising faith in 'dharma-tattva' and the imagery of lord Krishna in 'krishna Charitra'. *Anandamath* and *Devi Chowdhurani* are his artistic expression of the same line of faith and realization.

1.4 Anandamath and Nationalism

Anandamath is a historical novel that has a role in the construction of the idea of nationalism in modern India. In his Anusilan theory Bankim had analysed the philosophy of Love. To him, power plays an important role in the construction of the personality of an individual or a nation. But according to Bankim, love or amiability holds greater importance than that. That is, the ultimate important thing behind the construction of a nation is love or amiability. It is through this sense of attachment within the nation that helps to create the path for the manifestation of oneself. This attachment within the nation gives birth to a selfless love that gradually comes forward to reflect its nature. The attachment between human beings, with the community and with one's nation reflects the selflessness of love. When this attachment grows towards God, then it takes the form of devotion. When it comes to earthly linkages, it can be seen in a different light. When a person's sense of attachment crosses the boundary of love for self, family, neighbours, society and gets manifested in something much above everything (i.e one's own nation), it is then the ultimate devotion. It is this nature of religion that is reflected in the novel *Anandamath*. In his prelude to *Anandamath* Bankim wrote, piercing through the silence of the forest came out a human voice "won't my wish

ever be fulfilled?" In that sea of darkness, this was repeated thrice. Then there went a reply, "what can you stake?" "I can stake my whole life," was the reply. "Life is nothing great, anyone may stake it," was echoed all over. "What else is there? What else may I give?" "Devotion," was the answer.

The devotion that *Anandamath* discusses is directed towards one's motherland. Bhabananda tells Mahendra, "We are not aware about any other mother—*janani matribhumischa swargadapi gariashi*. We believe, the motherland is our only mother. We don't have a mother, a father, a brother, a friend—we don't have a wife, a son, a home, a house. We only have the *sujala, sufala, malayajasheetala, sashyashyamala*—"mother, we worship only her.

Bankimchandra's idea of nationalism became very popular among the Hindu Bengali middle class. The noted historian Ashin Dasgupta wrote in one of his essays that, in order to introduce firmness, valour and dedication towards life and work among the middle class Bengali Hindus Bankim wanted to establish his idea of nationalism. It was not the playful Krishna of the *nanichor kirtanas* or the character of Krishna described in Jayadeva's poems, it was the Krishna of the Gita that he wanted to rediscover. He left aside the mythological (puranic) parts from the history of Sri Krishna, and he never wanted to leave aside science from his method of study. He went into analysing the character of Krishna in the way as a detached historian does. Bengalis learnt to sing and utter '*vande mataram*' in this way as described by Bankimchandra. Regular pronunciation of the verses from the *Gita* also drew this section of people towards self-sacrifice to the gallows. Through this, one kind of national feeling had been established. But idea of nationalism was completely restricted to one class of people. His ideology was shared only by the middle class Bengali Hindus of the 19th century.

There's no doubt about it that the dominance of Hindu, Bengali and middle class sentiments in Bankim's theory on nationalism played as a limitation. In this vast land of India there are many communities like Hindu-Muslim-Buddhist-Christian-Sikhs residing together. This diversity in Indian society was somehow ignored in Bankim's theory; this diversity of religious faiths was later addressed in Rabindranath's writings on nationalism. Bankimchandra's nationalism was more into the search for Hindu sentimentality. His pride in Hinduism and Hindu culture got more importance

in his thoughts. In this respect, it won't be wrong to arrive at a conclusion that celebration of Hinduism has been reflected in Bankim's ideology on nationalism. In fact the extremist politics and nationalism that dominated the earlier part of 20th century was highly influenced by Bankim's preaching. The young revolutionaries of the Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar Dal almost worshipped Bankimchandra's nationalist novels, his *Vande Mataram* and his essays that arouse nationalist sentiments. Personalities like Swami Vivekananda, Auravinda Ghosh and Bipinchandra Pal also claimed to be influenced by the thought of Bankimchandra. Bankim's *Vande Mataram* is not just a song, rather it is known to have played a very important historical role in the India's struggle for freedom. Thus despite of a lot of criticism the historical importance of Bankim's thoughts cannot be denied. There was great debate over the song and slogan of *Vande Mataram* in India's freedom struggle. But yet its tremendous influence cannot be denied. A large section of Indian Muslims have not been able to consider this song as something worth of worship. Moreover the anti-Muslim comments in his novels like *Anandamath*, *Rajsingha* etc have been a major and regular point of criticism among the Muslim community. He had been designated as 'communal' by many of such critics. But the detached, objective and rational critics, irrespective of Hindu and Muslim have seen Bankim in a different light. They refused to accept Bankimchandra as communal, but none of them did deny the fact that the ideology of Hindu nationalism was first established by Bankimchandra in India. In fact during the hay period of *Vande Mataram*-criticism, in 1937, Tagore himself mentioned that this song is actually a reflection of Hindu community's inclination for deity worship. Thus according to him, it was not the fault of the Muslims to criticize this verse of Bankim. Objectively this can be stated that in *Vande Mataram* there is no worship of deity, it is actually the worship of motherland. And it was no conscious attempt to present this song as a national anthem. Although it had aroused a great national feeling among the masses during the whole freedom struggle.

Tagore, therefore, opined that in the first two stanzas of the song there is no instance of inclination for deities so that part can be considered as the national song of India. We must remember that, just after independence when *Tagore's Janaganamana Adhinayaka* was recognised as the national anthem of the country, the first stanza of Bankim's *Vande Mataram* was recognized as

the second national song. This is to be remembered that before our independence in several national and provincial congress conferences *Vande Mataram* was popular, both as a song and as a slogan.

1.5 Bankim's nationalism in the eyes of contemporary social scientists

Professor Ashin Dasgupta along with most of the Bankim researchers agreed on the idea that Bankimchandra was the first to infuse the nationalistic sentiment among the middle class *Bhadraloks*. Practically, in 19th century Bengal, the renaissance movement was also limited among the upper-classes and middle class. Majority of the lower-class was not included in this.

Prof. Dasgupta has described the nature and role of the middle class during the age of Bankimchandra in much detail. In his words, "In the whole of 19th century the character and role of the middle class was not identical, it took different shapes. The middle class then took the shape of the professional section of the society. The Bengali middle class had by then no longer identified themselves with their landowning ancestors. They no longer considered themselves part of the big landowning class. Putting aside the British Indian Association, the organization of the zamindar class, they formed a separate group and named it Indian Association. So now the middle class could afford to stand for and comment on matters that might not serve the purpose of the landowning people. This change in the society has been well reflected in the thoughts and writings of Bankimchandra." According to Prof. Dasgupta, "We must remember that this professional middle class was the creation of the British rule. Thus Bankim's social thought doesn't have any element of protest against the imperialist rule. He believed in the idea that the Indian society has gained a lot from the British rule. He was much conscious of the positive qualities of the English nation, as well as other western cultures. As his 'teachers' (Stuart Mill, Spencer, Comte etc.) believed that there is no harm in free trade principles, so he also took for granted the same. The only problematic area was that related to self-respect. Self-dependent Indian nation can only be established by going against the British rule; the Indians have to snatch the control over their fates from British

hands. The existence of the professional middle class was somehow dependent on the British rulers. But one has to go against the British rule in order to establish one's national identity. This dichotomy was there in Bankim's thoughts and theory."

But irrespective of all these it's also widely accepted that, Bankimchandra's *vandemataram* established the nationalistic sentiment among a huge section of Indians. With its growing nation-wide acceptance it no longer remained just a song but became the most popular nationalistic slogan. But this popularity was undoubtedly limited among the Indian Hindus.

It's also important to mention here another point while discussing Bankimchandra. That is, during the period of nation's struggle for freedom Bankim's *vandemataram* became popular all over India though in his writing he only mentioned the Bengali middle class over and over again. Professor Ashin Dasgupta wrote, "...the next point of doubt is Bankim's 'nation' itself. He picks and chooses only a single community from among so many communities of India. Thus the other Indian communities remain left out yet again."

Bankimchandra's nationalism and ideas on society have been researched by two other noted thinkers of our time, Professor Partha Chatterjee and Professor Sudipta Kabiraj. According to Professor Chatterjee, reading a lot of the western theories on rationalism, liberalism, historicism, positivism along with the 19th century discoveries in science and technology Bankim became pretty aware of his contemporary world. Bankim didn't question the demand of the universally accepted generalizations of the then contemporary European philosophy and social theories. Bankim did not question the assumptions of the European Indologists that India was in darkness before the arrival of the Europeans, or all Indians are lazy, fearful, good for nothing and feminine by nature. To them, only the people of Occident are enthusiastic, courageous and masculine. It won't be wrong to mention that, Bankim was sort of captivated in this light of thought and knowledge. And that's why, Prof. Chatterjee feels, that Bankimchandra himself never went into a direct criticism of the British rule. Bankim's nationalist discourse was mainly derivative of the western thoughts. The European ideas on free trade, modern science and technology, their structured legal system fascinated Bankimchandra. He drew

his inspiration for nationalistic thought from western world of knowledge. But to our mind, this argument of Prof. Chatterjee is a depiction of a part of Bankimchandra's thought. It is not the whole or totality of Bankimchandra.

Prof. Kabiraj discovered another facet of Bankim beside his so called pro-Europe image. There are other researchers too who discussed the other shades of Bankim's thought. This other shade of Bankim's thought has been discovered through the study of his works like *Kamalakanter Daptar*, *Kamalakanter Patra* and *Kamalakanter Jabanbandi*. Bankim had strictly criticised the logical structure of colonialism in these works. Prof. Kabiraj describes *Kamalakanta* as a secret face or secret autobiography of Bankimchandra. *Kamalakanta* is mainly a satire. The laughter and humour are the only arms of marginalized and deprived section. It is through this weapon of laughter that Bankim criticized European rationalism and the colonial rule in India which was founded on this rationalist discourse. Not only the colonial structure, he also criticized the blind imitation of the British by the newly English educated people, mainly the *babu-class*. Prof. Ashit Kumar Bhattacharya wrote that, in *Kamalakanta's* exercise there are mainly two noteworthy aspects. One, the social milieu of the then society, the dominant class and groups—their ideology—the colonial rulers and their ideas and opinions. Bankim had bitter criticism against all this. Secondly, his intense ideational inclinations to get rid of this unbearable social milieu.

Prof. Bhattacharya also comments, the desire for betterment was expressed indeed, but in vain. The despair that finally drew Vidyasagar to self-exile or the influence from which the personality cult or Avatarbad came into existence at the time of Keshavachandra, that disappointment itself led Bankimchandra to finally turn aback. The non-believer in scriptures got involved in examining scriptures, but eventually he lost interest in such judgments and dedicated himself to the philosophy of submission to divinity.

It is not the Bankim of 'Bangadarshan' in 1870's who is being analyzed. Ashit Kumar Bhattacharya made such comments basing on his analysis of the Bankim of 'Dharmattatva', 'Krishnacharit' and 'Prachar'. On studying this last phase of Bankimchandra's thoughts separately, Bankim can also be linked to Hindu revivalism. But in the context of analysis of nationalism in Bankim's thinking this effort is highly relative and incomplete. It should be

remembered, it was just the vague dawn of nationalism. He didn't give up by just introducing some sentiments towards the word called 'Desh' (nation). There was an extreme lack of strength within the indigenous society to uphold the powerful ideology of nationalism. Thus it was very necessary to uplift the sense of strength within oneself by overcoming all the illogicalities, internal disputes, self-deprivation, and lack of confidence. Thus in order to arouse the sense of nationalism within the community, Bankim's took into the project of introspection of the Hindu community. He had a positive approach towards the Muslim community as well. In his writings in '*Krishakkuler Durabastha*' there is no difference between Hasim Sheikh and Rama Kaibartya. Actually the divisions such as 'Hindu Nationalism', 'Muslim Nationalism' came into formation in a much later stage. When evaluating the contributions of great men like Bankimchandra, it's better to have a holistic outlook.

1.6 Suggested Readings

Ashin Dasgupta: *PrabandhaSanghrraha*, Ananda Publishers (The essay titled 'Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and Nibaran Chakarborty').

Partha Chattopadhyay: *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, Oxford.

Sudipta Kabiraj: *The Unhappy Consciousness—Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and the Formation of Nationalist Discourse in India*, Oxford.

Asit Kumar Bhattacharya: *Banglar Nabayug O Bankimchandrer Chintadhara*, Granthajagat.

1.7 Sample Questions

1.7.1 Analytical Questions

1. Analyse the nature of nationalist ideas in the works of Bankimchandra.
2. Should Bankimchandra's idea on nationalism be referred to as Hindu nationalism?

1.7.2 Short Questions

1. Analyse Bankim's Anushilan-tattva.
2. Why is *Anandamath* referred to as a nationalist novel?

1.7.3 Tick the right Answer

1. In the nationalist ideology enmity against other nations is a major component—Bankim recognized it/ didn't recognize.
2. Bankimchandra has been characterized as a Hindu revivalist thinker/ has not been characterized as a Hindu revivalist thinker.
3. The song *Vande Mataram* is recognized/ not recognized at the national level.

Unit-2 □ Rabindranath Tagore : Nationalism and Internationalism

Structure

- 2.1 Objectives of study
- 2.2 What is Nation and the problem of Nation building in India
- 2.3 Tagore in the phase of anti-partition movement in Bengal
- 2.4 Tagore's analysis of the nature of Nationalism
- 2.5 Tagore in the path of Internationalism
- 2.6 Suggested Readings
- 2.7 Sample Questions

2.1 Objectives of study

- How did Tagore analyze the concept of Nation?
- What was the nature of Tagore's idea of nationalism, during the anti-partition movement of Bengal in 1903-08?
- Description of Tagore's speeches against Nationalism, delivered in Japan and United States of America.
- Describing Tagore's idea of Internationalism.

2.2 What is Nation and the problem of Nation building in India

During the long period of struggle for Independence, Indian nationalism has been developed slowly from Bankimchandra to our national dignitaries like Surendranath Bandyopadhyay, Bipinchandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and definitely in the thoughts and politics of Mahatma Gandhi, there has been a sharp expression of nationalism. Tagore may not be considered as an associate of this nationalism. Tagore's idea of nationalism is quite different.

In the year 1901, under the editorship of Tagore the journal 'Bangadarsan' was re-published in a new form. In this phase of 'Bangadarsan', Tagore had written two essays in the first issue of the journal— 'What is Nation' (Nation Ki) and 'Indian Society' (Bharatbarshiya Samaj), Must be mentioned in reference to it, that the second essay while its publication in 'Bangadarsan' was titled as 'Hindutva', the name was changed while it was compiled in the form of book.

In these two essays Tagore had raised two very essential questions. In the aforesaid first essay he had written that in traditional India there was no existence of any such thing which could be called as nation. Nation is entirely a western concept. In the second essay he had written that to deal with the foreign imperialism, inception of nationality is essential. But the process of formation of nation must be different. One more thing to be said here is, 'What is Nation' was written by the poet after reading an essay by the French social scientist Renan. 'What is Nation' is actually ideational translation of the concept of nation in Renan's essay.

Tagore very clearly mentioned in the article that there was no such thing as Nation in the tradition of India; as such the word Nation cannot be translated in Bengali. The word 'jati' (*race*) is used but that had created more trouble. The reason is race, caste all these words are also translated as *Jati*. Tagore wanted to mean race through the word *Jati*. He wanted to retain 'Nation' in our Bengali language.

In the second essay he had written that, in the European heritage nation-state has formed to fulfill the requirement of political unity. The inception of nation there was quite natural, because the base of European civilization was mainly the power of state. But the nature of our civilization is different. In the pre-British India a kind of unity existed in Hinduism too. But that was not political unity. It did not originate through some united political system. That collectivity is not national unity. The unity among the Hindus or the Indians lie in social layers. To the Indians the consciousness for social unity lies in social harmony. Although it is true, in this huge country of India, there are innumerable diversities—in religion, language, race, caste and culture. Even variation lies in the nature of topography of various regions. The unity that lies in this diversity is mainly in the plane of social consciousness. Political cohesiveness never existed in India. There lies the elementary difference between Europe and India. In the article 'Bharatbarshiya Samaj' Tagore

wrote— "... In our country society is superior to any other existence. In other countries nation has won through self-defense amidst various struggles—comparatively in our country society has protected itself for a long time in various perilous situations. That we have not diminished and reached the extreme point of downfall, while going through thousands years of revolt, torture and subjugation—is only due to the strength of our ancient society. The society has never lionized happiness to us—in every saying, every words, every relationship—it has highlighted sacredism, religion and guided us to be morally perfect. That society is our highest shelter, so we must concentrate on it."

Since the inception of British imperialism in our country, the process of nation building began. But what are the factors of nationality? Generally it is said that racial collectivity, lingual unity, regional and geographical proximity, uniform economic interests, these are the reasons on the basis of which nation develops. In the article 'What is Nation' Tagore has analysed the factors and has furnished that these factors were not always active in the process of development of nation in the various countries of Europe. In accordance to the thinking of French philosopher Renan, Tagore came to the conclusion that the main foundation of nation is spiritual and psychic. To the poet 'Nation is a mental substance.... an animated entity, a substance of the mind and spirit'. The internal nature of nation is made up of two things—the asset of the past memory of the common people, i.e. heritage and secondly, mutual consent for residing together.

Establishing nation mainly on the ideational unity, Tagore has not said anything new or novel. Many social scientists have discussed this in a detailed manner. But what is new and significant is that, in the process of making nation in India, Tagore had spoken strongly about the firm existence of social power. He had advised us to avoid the European standards of the state principles of civilization. Naturally Tagore's stress was more on community reconstruction, community consciousness, community feeling, social set-up, i.e social solidarity was more important. In such a process the thoughts on nation-building on political lines have almost no importance.

2.3 Tagore in the Phase of anti-Partition movement of Bengal

In the phase of anti-partition movement of Bengal (1903-08), Tagore

became involved in direct politics for a short span of time. After the declaration of the partition of Bengal, entire Bengal became very billowy. Tagore joined the meetings and processions along with the leaders like Surendranath Bandyopadhyay, Bipinchandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay and others. The poet awakened the entire Bengali race by writing numerous Swadeshi songs one after another. In the year 1906 when Carlyle circular was published, National Council of Education was set up for educating the Indians, discarding the government directed schools. This was again headed by Tagore. That is, in every sphere of the movement, Tagore had established his relationship. But can we ever say that Tagore had total accordance with the mainstream tune of this agitation? Practically there wasn't. He differed in his outlook from the other national leaders who headed this movement, right from the very beginning. To find out the difference we have to go back and analyze a bit of history.

In the magazine 'Indian World' (March-April 1907) a famous Congress moderate leader, Prithwish Chandra Roy, had analyzed the various streams of Swadeshi movement. According to him, this movement was led not only by the extremists and the moderates; there were some other sub-sections. There were moderate leaders like Surendranath Bandyopadhyay, extremist leaders like Aurobindo, Bipinchandra and at the same time the revolutionaries of Anushilan and Jugantar Dal. In addition to them, according to Prithwish Chandra, there were the followers of Tagore, who by disregarding the British rule wanted to go for a self-reliance movement based on the power of one's own self. The main idea behind this Tagorean path was that it is more important to germinate the social strength and not the political. That is the reason why emphasis must be paid to the practice of reconstruction of social fabric. We must keep it in mind that in 1905, when the boycott movement started, Tagore had also advocated for it. But very soon he went against boycott. His anti-boycott statement was revealed not only in his articles and essays, but also it had been manifested in his novel *Ghare Baire* afterwards. Actually there were three different outlooks regarding the objective of the boycott movement. The moderate leader like Surendranath Bandyopadhyay thought that 'boycott was a temporary step, a path to reach the ultimate goal. The main purpose was to attract the attention of British commoners towards the dissatisfaction and complaints of Bengal. If partition of Bengal could be avoided and stopped by this, boycott policy would also come to an end.' That is, to the moderates boycott was a temporary war-tactics. According to

the theory of passive resistance, ie, to the extremists like Bipinchandra, Aurobindo and others boycott was a sharp weapon, the way to achieve 'purna swaraj' and hence it was all-comprehensive. In the year 1906-07 the synonym for boycott was—disregarding foreign goods, rejection of foreign courts, abrogation of foreign schools and colleges, abrogation of foreign rule etc. Seeing this all pervading nature of boycott the moderates got scared and the result to it was the division in the Surat Congress. To Tagore, boycott had a different connotation from the very beginning. His views always differed from the moderates and the extremists. His assertion was, '... not out of anger or stubbornness against the British, out of love for the motherland using the industrial products of the country and avoiding some consumer products; there exists a positive attitude. He has focused on this idea in his writings.'

[A biographer of Tagore, Prasanta Kumar pal has very rightly written these lines in his *Rabijibani* -the biography of Tagore (5th Part).]

In Tagore's compositions 'Abastha o byabastha' or 'Bratadharan', this outlook comes out very clearly.

It is amply clear to us that Tagore did not regard the boycott movement from any negative standpoint or he did not like to use it as a mere political instrument. He was for it as a means of unifying the whole nation. But when the boycott movement became the irrational command and political compulsion of the national leaders and began to lose its spontaneity, Tagore went against it. For this command and compulsion the Hindu-Muslim relation was seriously at stake and that made Tagore very much hurt. To him, once again it became clear that there was no alternative to constructive works.

Analysing Tagore's deep rooted inclination to the movement during the swadeshi days and the songs of *Gitan* dedicated to the motherland—one can come to the conclusion that Tagore was a great nationalist poet. Initially there is no point of objecting to it. Who else, other than Tagore, had expressed so deeply in his literature and worldly activities, his sincere concern for the motherland. But love for one's own country is something and nationalism is something else. This needs a detailed analysis.

2.4 Tagore's analysis of the nature of Nationalism

The poet once wrote in a letter to his friend C.F Andrews, "I love India, but my India is an idea and not a geographical expression. Therefore I am not a patriot—I shall ever seek my compatriots all over the world." If there

is torture in the country, if the aliens seize and grab our land—it is our responsibility to protest against all these violence and injustice. But this responsibility should be shouldered not as an Indian, but as a human being. That is, the essence of humanity in the poet provoked him to protest against the disgrace of mankind. His devotion for his motherland would never stand as an obstacle against his love for the people of the entire world. If this is the feeling, then we have to say that Tagore didn't impose any divinity to the geographical boundaries of his own country. Neither did he express any blind devotion to his motherland. He had always been a well-wisher of his own country, being a true philanthropist, he cared for the entire human race. The dishonour of mankind has always hurt him. The poet has never expressed any special sentiment for the Indian people. That is why, in his collection of lectures named 'Nationalism' he said, "I deeply feel for all the races who are being insulted and injured by the ruthless exploitation of the powerful nations belonging to the West and the East. I feel as much for the Negroes brutally lynched in America often for economic reasons, and for the Koreans who are the latest victims of Japanese imperialism, as for any wrong done to the helpless multitude of my own country." According to the political doctrine, nationalism has two foundations, First, genuine attachment and obedience towards the motherland. Second, segregating other races from one's own and to possess a sort of hostile feelings towards them. Tagore writes, "This blind affection and obedience towards one's race or one's own self is nothing short of committing suicide. This strong selfish attraction does never broaden the path of independence of the country."

In the year 1921 when Gandhi's non-cooperation movement had made a billowy effect in the country, Tagore had openly opposed against the ideologies of that movement. The main point of this criticism was that the movement had negative effect. The idea of non-cooperation teaches the Indians to stay away from the civilization of the world. Hence all bonds with it must be torn off. Non-cooperation does not stand upon the idea of service and affection towards human being. The principles of this movement will take a person towards darkness and hatred. This must be kept in mind that Tagore revolted against blind nationalism, not only in 1921, a few years before that during the first World War, while travelling in Japan and America the poet had delivered three important lectures. The subject matter of all these three speeches was about the nature of nationalism. These lectures have been compiled in a book titled 'Nationalism'.

The thoughts and matter that have been expressed in these articles are as follows—"In small minds, patriotism dissociates itself from the higher ideal of humanity. It becomes the magnification of self, on a stupendous scale—magnifying our vulgarity, cruelty, greed, dethroning God, to put up this bloated self in its place."

The poet was against such devotion of motherland which had no humanity and principles. According to him, practice of humanity means that a person should be creative, social and establish himself above all petty selfishness. Hence, cooperation and empathy should be the two principles which should act as the guiding force of a person. The feeling of nationalism actually exists on just a reverse standpoint. The nation has established itself depending on political power—realizing the difference of one's own self from the others. In that sense nation is neither creative, nor the partner of practising wide humanism in the world. Its only principle is to spread incessant power over others.

The monument of this power has been built upon the groundwork of selfishness. The power and wealth of one's nation state has to be increased at any cost—that is the exposure of nationalism, and that is its ultimate and extreme foundation. Tagore had written, "... The spirit of national selfishness is the brain disease of a people which shows itself in red eyes and clenched fists in violence of talk and movement, all the while shattering its natural restorative powers." If this is the nature of nationalism, then from the extreme consequences of nationalism, imperialism will come. First World War is such manifestation. This was a revengeful war of one state of Europe against the other, Then the ideology of nationalism cannot give freedom to a nation, as it does not teach a person to think positively about the humanity as a whole, it only broadens the path of statism and power politics. So, this plundering nationalism gives birth to imperialism — militarily and culturally. It does not give rise to an organized and cooperative association, a society conducive to peace. That is why nationalism is a menace to civilization.

2.5 Tagore in the path of Internationalism

It is his faith in the creativity of humanity that landed Tagore in the path of internationalism. The Hebert speech in 1930, the title of his presentation was 'The Religion of Man'. Tagore said. "... man misses himself when isolated,

he finds his own larger and truer self in his wide human relationship. His multicellular body is born and it dies; his multi-personal humanity is immortal." Man finds his real self when he transcends his selfishness and earthly meanness and reaches *very-near* to the desire of the universal multitude. In this context the sources of Tagore's internationalism are to be investigated.

The very first source of Tagore's internationalism is that the life of a single human being or race would become too painful, if there is no parity between the consciousness of the world and the consciousness of nation. Universality does not mean to bring the existence of one's home at stake. It means to establish friendly connections, relationship of exchanges with the neighbouring countries. Basically, that was the root idea of establishing *Visva Bharati*. A support to this source can be found in a letter to Pearson by the poet written in 1918. There he wrote, "Our heart is like a fountain. So long as it is driven through the narrow channel of self, it is full of fear and doubt and sorrow, for then it is dark and does not know its end. But when it comes down unto the open, or the bosom of the all, then it glistens in the light and shines in the joy of freedom." The second source is that, the advancement and development of the people or a nation of a particular country is not the proper progress, if the human race of the neighbouring countries is in darkness and is deprived. Then that becomes a shame for the entire world. So, only flourishing one's treasure and spreading one's power does not make a man. The duty of a human being is to be conscientious and attentive towards others. Tagore writes, "... If in the night only my lamp is lit and the rest of the world is dark, the lamp has no real illumination for me." The third source is that, racial hatred and blind nationalism walk side by side, hand in hand. The feeling of racial superiority develops enmity among the neighbouring races. An uncoverable wide gap is created which shuts all the doors of unity. Hence the gateway of exchanging between the east and the west are to be opened widely, a path of friendship must be created. This idea was a foundation of difference in opinion with Gandhiji, in the year 1921. Also here in lies the main cause of establishment of *Vishva Bharati*.

Fourthly, while in the idea of setting up of *Vishva Bharati*, Tagore had very firmly said that all the races of the world have their own cultural and

social heritage. If all the races contribute the best of their culture to the others and accept and practise the best of others, then the civilization of the world will reach the summit. Through this interpersonal relationship of exchanging ideas and opinions, a firm and strong international society will be formed. From the ancient time, within the Indian society this co-existence and a tune of desire for unity have been heard. The idea of 'Unity in Diversity' is very prominent in Tagore's concept of society. It is the duty of the countrymen to pave the way of this tradition and to make an improved variety of freedom or independence.

2.6 Suggested Readings

A few articles by Tagore

1) Swadeshi Samaj, 2) Nation ki, 3) Bharatbarshiyo Samaj, 4) Abastha O Byabastha, 5) Rabindranather Rashtranaitik Mat, 6) Nationalism (booklet)

Sachin Sen: *The political thought of Tagore*, General printer & publishers Limited. Calcutta-1947.

Sudhir Chakravarty (edited): *Rabindranath: Bakpati Biswamana* (Two essays from the first and second volume—Anuradha Ray: 'Rabindranather Swadesh').

Abhra Ghosh: "Nation noy, samajik samanasya chai", Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, 2011.

2.7 Sample Questions

2.7.1 Long Descriptive type questions

1. 'Nation is an animated entity, a mental substance' - Analyse the ideas of Tagore's concept of Nation.
2. Explain the nature of Tagorean Nationalism during the anti-partition movement of Bengal.
3. Give a write up on how Tagore has criticized the principle of Nation in his book 'Nationalism'.
4. Analyze Tagore's idea of Internationalism.

2.7.2 Short Questions

1. 'Europe has a political civilization, whereas India's civilization is social.' Describe the significance of it according to Tagore.
2. 'Nationalism is a menace to civilization.'—Give a short description of this Tagorean view.

2.7.3 Objective type Questions : Tick the right answer

1. 'Nation is an alien idea'—this was Tagore's idea/ this was not Tagore's idea.
2. Vishva Bharati is a reflection of Tagore's nationalism/ internationalism.

Unit-3 □ Mahatma Gandhi : Nationalism and Internationalism

Structure

- 3.1 Objectives of study
- 3.2 The basis of Gandhi's Political Philosophy
- 3.3 Unity in Diversity
- 3.4 Mass base in Gandhi's movement
- 3.5 Gandhi's Economic Thought
- 3.6 Gandhi and Nation state
- 3.7 Difference of opinion between Gandhi and Tagore
- 3.8 Gandhi's Idea of Internationalism
- 3.9 Suggested Readings
- 3.10 Sample Questions

3.1 Objectives of Study

- 1. Analyzing the basic foundations of Gandhiji's nationalist political philosophy.
- 2. To explain that the mass base of India's political movement has been initiated first by Gandhi.
- 3. Discussing the importance of Gandhi's economic thoughts as the basis of his idea of nationalism.
- 4. Analyzing the debate between Gandhi and Tagore on their ideas of nationalism.
- 5. Discussing Gandhi's idea of Internationalism.

3.2 The basis of Gandhi's Political Philosophy

Gandhiji is most widely known as the 'Father of Nation'. Thus the importance of Gandhi as a nationalist thinker and politician is unparalleled. Gandhi's nationalistic thoughts started developing during his stay in South Africa. Gandhi himself has clearly mentioned this in his autobiography: "...God laid the foundations of my life in South Africa and sowed the seed of the fight for national self-respect." In South Africa the Indians were harassed due to the extremely racist policy of their government. In the year 1893 Gandhi went to South Africa as an assistant lawyer to fight a *dewani* case of a businessman based in Porbandar. There he had to face lots of harassment by the 'white' government. The extreme exploitation of the Indian coolies in South Africa also drew Gandhi towards protest. He organized the Indians there and started a protest movement against the government. Soon he became a popular leader. Gandhi's movement against the white government of the British also reached a specific height from the very beginning. He didn't accept the already practised form of protest; rather he introduced a new form of protest—*Ahimsa Satyagraha*. We are to remember that it was in the early 20th century that the nationalist struggle started in India with the extremist leaders like Tilak-Aurabinda-Bipinchandra Pal. It was through them the devices of passive resistance got introduced in Indian politics. Boycott, strike and civil disobedience were the instruments of such movement. Gandhi too used these weapons during his Satyagraha movement but his mood and aims and philosophy were completely different. According to Gandhi, Passive resistance and Satyagraha are not identical. Passive resistance is a political device while Satyagraha is an ethical movement. Satyagraha can be achieved only by staying loyal to truth and by being non-violent. By not fearing self sacrifice and exhaustion one has to fight it through non-violence, the speciality of Satyagraha is to win over the enemy without causing any physical harm to him. In that sense Satyagraha is the movement of the physically strong, self sacrificing people and courageous men. Passive resistance is the weapon of the comparatively weaker section; it's merely a negative political device. Gandhi introduced Satyagraha during his stay in South Africa and started experimenting it successfully. Later on his return to India in 1915, he had worked on the developments of this movement till 1948.

It is clear from the philosophy of non-violent Satyagraha that Gandhi had mixed up religion with his politics. Religion here does not mean rituals or sastras or faith towards Hinduism-Islam or Christianity; to Gandhi religion is loyalty and commitment to truth. According to him, "Truth is God" rather than "God is Truth." Thus, it's the responsibility of every human being to practise morality and acquire truth. In this respect Gandhi's politics and nationalist movement is ethical and religious too. Just as the famous historian Arnold Toynbee rightly mentioned, "Gandhi had spiritualized politics."

3.3 Unity in Diversity

There was another exclusive contribution of Gandhi in the history of India's nationalist struggle. India is a land of diversity with respect to a lot of things, such as caste-creed-religion-language-culture. The responsibility of the leaders was to draw a line of unity within this diversity. But since the end of nineteenth century to the first two decades of the twentieth century the nationalist movement led by National Congress was mainly Hindu centric. Many historians have marked this phase in history as the period of Hindu Nationalism in India. Not only Hindu Nationalism, it was rather defined as the nationalist movement of the new born English educated middle class and the upper class. The working class was never seen to participate in the movements. In the Gandhi-era of the freedom movement, since 1915 to the time of independence, Gandhi introduced a lot of new things for the sake of building up the nation. Firstly, the movement shouldn't remain Hindu centric. The movement should be built by bringing people from various sections of the society together. Irrespective of the fact, whether they are Hindu-Muslim-Sikh or Jains, there should be mutual respect for each others' religious belief. In order to construct a greater nation, he identified the importance of the feeling of unity among the Indians. Not only religion, Gandhi concentrated on eradicating caste consciousness from among the people of India. He tried to convince people in practising tolerance towards each other. Anti-untouchable movement and *mandir* movement were parts of his political project. Gandhi believed, it is impossible to form a real anti-British movement without eradicating the existing differences and evils within the community. It is by exploiting these built-in pores of our society the British imperialist power gradually increased their evil exploitative rule. Tagore once said that the Satan enters the society through such pore. Gandhi wanted to eradicate

this. Thus it was no Hindu or Muslim nationalism, our target should be the construction of a pan-Indian nationalism. Hindu-Muslim-Sikhs-Christians have their respective religious faith. No one should face any opposition from others. In performing religious activities everyone is free. But religions have no role in the construction of the nationalism. The Indianness is the only important component in that construct. Despite of personally being a very strong Hindu, Gandhi's idea of nationalism was thus secular and caste-free. In this respect Gandhi's idea and project of nationalism was completely unlike that of the robust Hindu nationalist Savarkar or the anti-Hindu Dalit leader Ambedkar. Gandhi's historical differences with Savarkar's idea of Hindutva and his differences with Ambedkar's support for different Dalit rights are still relevant.

3.4 Mass base in Gandhi's movement

The important task of turning a political movement into a movement of the masses, in the Indian context, was first done by Gandhi. Before him the anti-British movement was completely limited to the educated upper and middle classes. It was Gandhi, who first initiated the interests of the general masses with the movement. And thus it was Gandhi's leadership that broadened the boundary of the freedom movement. With the help of farmers' movements and trade union movements Gandhi extended the horizon of the consciousness of the masses. In the due course the freedom struggle started gaining the mass support. It was due to his leadership and vision that there was an initiation of democratization of projects and plans in the National Congress. The boundary created by the politically educated upper class was broken and it started spreading among the people of lower classes. Thus the Congress achieved a mass basis as a result of Gandhi's leadership. Another important aspect of his leadership is that, in none of his movement did Gandhi concentrate on the interest of any specific class or community. He gave equal importance to all the classes and communities of the society. This is referred to as the multi-class-community-movement of the Indians. In this respect it can be said that Gandhi is trying to thread all the Indians together, irrespective of their caste, class or religion. In a way, he is working for the evocation of a pan-Indian sentiment. This bringing out the lower class from political circles of the then contemporary elites and establishing a mass-political or mass-nationalistic movement made him the 'father of the nation'¹ and this title is absolutely justified. Buddhadev Bhattacharya, a renowned Gandhi-researcher,

has used Lenin's expression to describe Gandhi. He marks Gandhi as the initiator of 'serious politics' in India. Lenin had mentioned in one of his articles that, where there is mass — not in thousands, but more than thousands, in lakhs -only there exists 'serious politics'.

To the ordinary masses the initiator of mass-nationalism was 'Gandhi Maharaj'. His above the knee *charka* woven dhoti and *chadar* established Gandhi as a representative of the ordinary 'illiterate' Indians. His conversations in simplistic Hindi vernacular and his plain and simple lifestyle brought Gandhi very close to the ordinary Indians. In fact the idioms and symbols that Gandhi used in his politics made him more trustworthy to the masses. In his essay 'Satyer Ahban'(The call of Truth) Tagore wrote, "...Mahatma Gandhi arrives at the doorstep of crores of poor Indians—in their familiar attire, and conversed with them in their own language. This is a real thing; there are no bookish instances in this. And that's why, the name Mahatma, that he has been referred to as is his real name." Its mention worthy that, in 1921 during the non-cooperation movement Tagore presented this essay as a speech in a mass gathering and voiced his opinion against the movement. He couldn't accept this extremely nationalist movement, but never failed to appreciate Gandhi as the actual initiator of mass-movement.

3.5 Gandhi's Economic Thoughts

Gandhi had no doubt about the fact that the British empire in India has completely ruined the production system and our social structure. Starting from Dadabhai Naoroji and Rameshchandra Dutta and almost all the nationalist leaders have analysed how the minimal economic strength of our country is being exploited by the foreign businessmen for their own interest (Drain Theory). Wealth of the nation is being used to nurture British imperialism. In order to compete with the foreign capital a very little attempt of accumulating national indigenous capital was initiated during the period of Swadeshi movement of Bengal in 1903-08. At that time Gandhi was in South Africa. In his book titled *Hindswaraj* in 1909, Gandhi mentioned the importance of strengthening national economy in *Swadeshi movement*. But Gandhi differed with the nationalist leaders in his idea about developing the national wealth against foreign wealth. He was against the power of big machines. He was not only a critic of the economic system of the west, but

was also against the basis of western production system, such as heavy machines and industrialization. Rather he preferred the traditional *charka* for production. He laid stress on agricultural products with the use of simple machines and technology, and also wanted to utilize the labour of the greater human society in the country. Agriculture, agro-based industry or agricultural industry these were the areas of development that Gandhi worked for. In a way Gandhi was against industrial capital and heavy industrialization. These thoughts expressed in *Hindiswaraj* were followed by him throughout his life. But this is the idealist ideological facet of Gandhi. There is also a practical realist face of the same person. From the 1920's Gandhi somehow accepted the importance of limited development of large industries. Moreover, he also accepted the necessity of state initiated industrialization. As evidence to this some of his writings published in the journal 'Young India', edited by Gandhi himself, can be cited. On 3 November 1921 Gandhi wrote, "I will even support the use of the most complicated machine if that helps India to get rid of poverty and joblessness." On 20 November of 1925 Gandhi wrote again, "Ideally I am against all sort of machines....but machines will be there." Finally on 15 April of 1926 he accepted, "use of machineries is relevant, as everyone is privileged by it."

During the 1930-40s Gandhi also accepted the importance of certain heavy industries. Such industries must be kept under government's control was also his opinion. But such records can never be considered as a proof that matured Gandhi had made any rethinking for restructuring his understanding of the economic system. Rather from a comment published in a 1921 edition of 'Young India' Gandhi's thought process can be marked. He wrote, "Our mills cannot produce enough to meet our needs." According to him, mills, factories and industries can never be enough to provide employment to the uncountable population of India. That deficiency can only be met by the *charka*. It's the decentralized production system that Gandhi's movement always advocated for. The philosophy of 'Hind-Swaraj' claims to be understood from such a point of view. The importance of such a basic *swadeshi* stance on economy as a foundation to the political nationalism can never be easily ignored.

3.6 Gandhi and Nation-state

The history of modern nationalism and the idea of nation-state are almost entwined. With respect to the diffusion of the ideology of nationalism in the various countries of Europe and America, the nation-state was born. The most unavoidable companion of modern civilization is the modern state machinery. The importance of ideas like impersonality, bureaucracy, rule of law was immense. Was this state-centricism in human life ever been recognized in Gandhi's philosophy? The two aspects of Gandhi's views on state are there before us as an answer to this question.

Idealist Gandhi considered the state to be an enemy of truth. Prof. Nirmal Kumar Basu while discussing Gandhism wrote that Gandhi said, "The state represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence." From this statement some of the aspects of Gandhi's view about state becomes clear. One, state is an impersonal institution so its medium of violence is not always visible. State executes violence in the form of law and regulations, but this doesn't happen all the time, state takes the refuge of violence in case of urgency. Secondly, the entity of a person is revealed through his sense of freedom. State murders the lively entity of the human being with the help of its unscrupulous bureaucracy. Thirdly, the organized inhuman savage force of the state fights against the sensitivity, sensibility and intelligence of an individual. For all these reasons state is an enemy of humanity and not at all a necessary pre-condition for life.

In that case, was Gandhi a believer of the anti-state anarchy? History doesn't really say so. Rather all through his political career he struggled for establishing free independent state, parliamentary democracy, *ramrajya* in India. That he completely disapproved the idea of nation-state—this statement is historically untrue. Gandhi actually disliked the concept of all powerful domination of the nation state. Immoral and uncontrollable power of the state machinery was never appreciated by him. The state that claims that the only unavoidable institution for the well being of the citizens is a state and it's the best as far as morality is concerned—Gandhi considered such a state to be useless. Gandhi appreciated a state that is keen on protecting the rights

of an individual. He preferred where state is the ultimate protector of law and security and where law is created on the basis of mass approval. A good state is that which is protective towards good-governance. In Gandhian philosophy the importance of *gram-swaraj* (autonomous rule of the villages) was more than that of the all engulfing nation-state. The basic idea behind *gram-swaraj* was to have a rural society independent on itself. Using their knowledge and skills the *gramin* (rural) societies will develop their independent *panchayat* level governing bodies. Basing on that gradually the block-*zilla*-state-central level governance will develop. That will be the ideal democratic governmental structure. That is according to Gandhi, the Ramrajya. Where state is not an all powerful body, rather it's the protector of the democratic rights of individuals and indigenous communities. This can be considered as the crux of Gandhi's idea of decentralized state system. It's obvious that Gandhi's idea differed a lot from the 20th century concept of nation-state.

3.7 The difference of opinion between Gandhi and Tagore

Gandhi can never be considered to be a mean minded nationalist in the trajectory of nationalism in India. Gandhi wrote in 'Young India' in 1921, "Patriotism for me is the same as humanity" or in 1929 he was writing, "Through the realization of freedom of India, I hope to realize and carry on the mission of brotherhood of men" etc. Romain Rolland in his diary on India correctly wrote, Gandhi is a nationalist, but he is greater, rather greatest nationalist. And he might be considered the ideal before the criminal nationalists of Europe. Thus according to Rolland, Gandhi was nationalist but noblest nationalist and he may be the great ideal before the vulgar and criminal nationalist aspirations of European world. That is, Rolland argued that Gandhi was a nationalist but mean mindedness couldn't dominate him. Nationalism is destined to be all engulfing and that instinctually turns into imperialism. On the contrary creative and self-revealing nationalism is a great virtue and that nationalism is not a hurdle in the path of internationalism. It is through healthy nationalism that the path for internationalism is carved.

Gandhi himself also mentioned the same thing, "It is impossible for one to be an internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is only

possible when nationalism becomes a fact i.e. when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man." With respect to the ideology of global humanism this act of believing in oneness is never possible if there is no self-independence. Gandhi wrote in 'Young India', "Cooperation presupposes free nations worthy of cooperation."

The non-cooperation of 1921 movement under Gandhi's leadership was intensely nationalist in nature. He even had strife with Tagore regarding this movement. At that time the poet was preaching the ideology of *Visva Bharati* in the western part of the world. He was propagating that knowledge from all over the world has to be accumulated within one nest. *Visva Bharati* will be the source to seek friendship-brotherhood-peace through universal knowledge. It was just during this time that Gandhi declared non-cooperation against the British rule, for the freedom of India. The movement didn't remain limited to the administrative and political levels. In a mass meeting on the 24th of March of 1921 as an answer to a question regarding English education Gandhi said, "Tilak and Rammohan would have been greater men if they had not had the contagion of English learning... Rammohan and Tilak (leave aside my case) were so many pygmies who have no hold upon the people compared with Chaitanya, Sankar, Kabir and Nanak. Rammohan and Tilak were pygmies before these saints." This comment from Gandhi—calling Rammohan a pygmy had shaken Rabindranath Tagore. There was a furious reaction within him. It was because Tagore believed that despite of being the founder for English education and a pioneer of modernism in India, it was Rammohan who paved the way for relating Indian religion and culture with the new waves of modern times. Despite of welcoming the western knowledge system he did not distance himself from the eastern cultural arena. Rather he broadened the pavement where these two could meet. On 8th March of 1921 the poet is saying to Jagadananda Roy, a teacher in Santiniketan that, "Nationalism is a geographical devil. The world is shaking with the ill deeds of such an evil. From the last few days I am trying to eradicate it. It is when you take the name of God, does the evil run away. ... In our *Visva Bharati* we are building a *mandir* for such a God... The family man who makes the scope for the sky from above the world, the light to enter his home, it is he who loves his home the most. The last day when I read in the newspaper that

Mahatma Gandhi had asked the women of our country to stop studying English, it was then that I realized that construction of a wall has already been started in our country. That is, the attempt to create a prison out of one's own home is being considered as a path to freedom, these days. We are negating all the light from all over the world to worship the darkness in our homes. We are forgetting that, those nations which want to stay miserable in them by abandoning other nations are no less unacceptable to God than all those great nations who want to become greater by hurting others."

Later this letter was published in a journal named 'Prabasi', which brought in a major controversy. Besides the journals and magazines of India, the foreign journals too thoroughly criticized this anti-nationalist point of view of Tagore. During this same time similar anti-nationalist thoughts were expressed by the poet in his letters to friend C.F. Andrews. In these letters there was also a message of caution from Tagore, so that the students of Santiniketan did not get aroused to participate in the non-cooperation movement. Even Gandhi couldn't stay quiet against such a comment from the poet. In 1st June 1921 edition of 'Young India' Gandhi's reaction was expressed in two independent articles. The articles were titled as 'English Learning' and 'The Poet's Anxiety'. In the first essay Gandhi's message was, "The poet does not know perhaps that English is today studied because of its commercial and so-called political value. Our boys think, and rightly in the present circumstances, that without English they cannot get Government service. Girls are taught English as a passport to marriage. I know several instances of women wanting to learn English so that they may be able to talk to Englishmen in English. I know husbands who are sorry that their wives cannot talk to them and their friends in English. I know families in which English is being made the mother tongue. Hundreds of youths believe that without the knowledge of English freedom for India is practically impossible. The canker has so eaten into society that, in many cases, the only meaning of Education is knowledge of English."

Women learn English to get eligible husbands and men learn it to get jobs—despite of this statement being partially true, it rather became a source of huge controversy to call the importance of English education in India

being limited to just that much. Along with the poet a large section of people opined that, in Gandhi's thought another important aspect of English education was neglected—the language had a huge role to play in the cultural revival of India during 19th and 20th century. Although Gandhi, in his respondent essay had written, "I hope I am as great a believer in free air as the great poet. I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed." During the non-cooperation movement Gandhi also mentioned to Tagore that, "My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself." He said, "Isolated independence is not the goal of the world states. It is voluntary independence."

Gandhi himself believed that nationalism, as an ideology is not complete in itself. It gains completeness in internationalism. Like Tagore he also criticized the mean minded, selfish, and exclusive ideology of the nationalism of the western world. He disliked the politics of denying other peoples independence. Gandhi claimed that, the nature of Indian nationalism is different. According to him, it is not selfish and all exclusive in nature. In his words, "there is no limit to extending our service to our neighbours across state-made frontiers."

3.8 Gandhi's idea on Internationalism

In Gandhian philosophy the relation between humanism and non-violence is inseparable. Gandhi's desired ideal is to spread humanism in the international arena through the ideology of non-violence. The basic thought behind his politics is to eradicate war and establish friendship and harmony. But Gandhi's opinion on war and peace was not one dimensional. It would be unfair to say that, Gandhi's theory on non-violence and war was something very extreme. In several turns in life, while fighting several issues, on various international platform the variations in his thoughts on war and non-violence been reflected in various forms. In his autobiography (An Autobiography or The story of My Experiments with Truth) he wrote, "It is quiet clear to me

that participation in war could never be consistent with Ahimsa. But it is not always given to be equally clear about ones duty. A votary of truth is often obliged to grope in the dark." That is, according to Gandhi pacifism is not an extreme ideology. When it comes to the question of peace and anti-war movement, or may be following the belief of non-violence one has to keep the practical political situation in mind. Pacifism is not an unconditional ideology, if required even the advocate of non-violence might need to take refuge in violence. During the First World War Gandhi was not seen to be abandoning war completely. Rather there was some sort of doubtfulness noticed in his thinking. In his words: "When two nations are fighting, the duty of a votary of ahimsa is to stop the war. He who is not equal to that duty, he who has no power of resisting war, he who has not qualified to stop war, yet whole-heartedly tried to free himself, his nation and the world from war." It can be well understood from this ambivalence that Gandhi's ideology on peace was rather conditional in nature. It was not just establishing peace at any cost. During 1904-05 when Russia under the directions of the imperialist Tzar attacked Japan unduly, Gandhi had given full support to the counter attack of Japan in a newspaper named 'Indian opinion'. He has always differentiated between just war and unjust war. Once Gandhi addressed the protestors of war by saying, "It is open to a war resister to judge between two combatants and wish success to the one who has justice on his side." It is basing his faith on this that he supported the republicans of Spain fighting the Franco's or appreciated the struggle of the Chinese troupe against Japanese invasion. During the phase of World War II he did support the Polish unhesitatingly as they went ahead to combat the German attack. He always considered the fight of the war resisters justified, even if that was an armed one.

During World War II Gandhi overtly criticized the Germans, or rather Hitler and his Nazi soldiers' slaughtering of the Jews. In the *Harijan* magazine Gandhi said, "My sympathies are all with the Jews" because "the German persecution of the Jews seems to have no parallel in history." Despite of being anti-violence and war resistant he believed in the concept of just war and thus he wrote, "If there could be a justifiable war in the name and for

humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton prosecution of a whole race would be completely justified."

In 1945 when United States of America dropped nuclear bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki of Japan, all the peace lovers from around the world did contempt this heinous act. Gandhi was deeply hurt, he said, "War knows no law except that of might." From the very beginning of our Independence there were endless problems at the India-Pakistan borders. The most important problem happened to be the Kashmir issue. When the Indian government sent armed forces to protect Kashmir, Gandhi also supported the war tactics of the government. Though the critics of Gandhi became very vocal during this time, but Gandhi didn't hesitate to allow the action of the armed forces in this issue. In cases of international problems and disputes, Gandhi always suggested the path of non-violence. But when in need of establishing justice, he didn't totally abandon the methods of violence. It had been very clearly revealed in many cases. It was because the line between just war and unjust war has always been an important part of Gandhian philosophy. It won't be right to mark him as an extreme advocate of peace. His thoughts on internationalism have to be counted as a complimentary to national interests.

3.9 Suggested Readings

1. Dr. Buddhadev Bhattacharya: *Evolution of the Political Philosophy of Gandhi*, Calcutta Book House, 1969.
2. Nirmal Kumar Basu: *Studies in Gandhism*, Indian Associated Publishing, 1962.
3. Shibajipratim Basu: *The Poet and the Mahatma, Engagement with Nationalism and Internationalism*, Progressive Publishers, 2009.

3.10 Sample Questions

3.10.1 Analytical Questions

1. Analyse the various foundations of the Gandhian philosophy of nationalism.

2. Analyse Gandhi's economic thought as reflected in his ideology of nationalism.
3. Describe the nature of debate between Gandhi and Tagore on the idea of nationalism.
4. Write a note on Gandhi's thought on internationalism.

3.10.2 Short Questions

1. Describe the importance of non-violent *satyagraha* in Gandhian philosophy.
2. Is Gandhi an anarchist philosopher?
3. Describe Gandhi's thoughts on economic decentralization.

3.10.3 Objective Questions (Tick the right answer)

1. Unhesitatingly Gandhi was a supporter of nation-state/ not a supporter of nation-state.
2. In Gandhian thoughts large industrialisation is necessary for the development of India/ not necessary for the development of India.

Unit-4 □ Subhas Chandra's Ideas on Nationalism and Internationalism

Structure

- 4.1 Objectives of Study
- 4.2 Nationalism in Subhaschandra's Thinking
- 4.3 The Nature of Subhaschandra's Nationalist Ideology
- 4.4 Subhas's Views on Internationalism
- 4.5 Suggested Readings
- 4.6 Sample Questions

4.1 Objectives of Study

- * How Subhaschandra became a nationalist, an analysis.
- * Description of the various aspects of Subhaschandra's nationalist thoughts.
- * Analysis of Subhaschandra's views on Internationalism.

4.2 Nationalism in Subhaschandra's thinking

In the year 1927 Subhaschandra had said, "If any 'ism' has to be accepted whole heartedly in a unfree country, it is nationalism." On coming across this statement of Subhaschandra, it would definitely come to the mind of the students of political science, that the ideology of nationalism has been framed in various parts of the world in different ways and in accordance to the different time-space and person. The process of framing of the ideology of nationalism in the European countries is not the same as in countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In many unfree countries like India, nationalism had evolved as the sharp reaction to foreign imperialism. In the colonial society the movement for nationalism had started not only as a sharp weapon against imperialism but also as an idea of self-development according to the

culture, heritage and history of the country. Hence, on the one hand it reflects enmity against the torture of the foreign ruler; on the other hand nationalism flourishes and develops itself with the idea of economic, social and cultural progress of the same nation. Along with that, there definitely exists the idea of political freedom and a dream for constructing a free nation. Netaji had not only noticed both these trends of nationalist movement, but had very acutely tried to construct the ideology of nationalism. His name surpasses all others in the history of anti-imperialistic movement. While explaining the intense love for his motherland Gandhiji had once said that, Subhash is a 'patriot of patriots'. 'Starting from his student life till the formation of 'Azad Hind Fauz movement', his valour, courage, sacrifice and patriotism would ever remain as a golden mark in the history of India's struggle for Independence. Although he went to Europe and had passed the ICS Examination, yet he did not accept the government service. He came back to India and sprang into the freedom movement under the leadership of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan. He considered his own country as his motherland. His source of inspiration was Bankimchandra's and Vivekananda's love for motherland. Tagore's poems and songs were also the stimulating force. In the year 1914 when Subhas was seventeen years old—a college student—taking a few friends with him Subhash visited Santiniketan. They were too excited anticipating that they would hear some stimulating words from Tagore—the poet of 'Balaka'. But that was mere an imagination; they could never guess what the poet would say. During the inauguration of 'Sriniketan Silpabhavan' in Kolkata in 1938, Subhas in his speech had said, "When we went to the poet we had no idea on which subject the poet would speak. Initially we could not understand why the poet was talking of so dull a matter like village reconstruction and all that to the emotional young men of Bengal. Truly speaking, we did not get any inspiration from it. But as days went by, I could realise that practically whatever he had said then, how precious they were!"

Actually, Tagore's way of perceiving politics, patriotism and nationalism totally differed from those of the then contemporary leaders of India. This became very clear from Netaji's description of Tagore's view. To Tagore philosophy of social reconstruction is more important than political agitational

activities. To him the central idea of politics is the gradual empowerment of an individual and nation. The struggle to acquire state power by violently agitating the British rule, was not so vital to the poet. But to Subhashchandra the importance of political movement for independence was first and foremost. Though reconstruction of society and nation was important to him, he thought that this development is not possible until and unless the state or political power is acquired. This latter view may be considered as the strongest and the principal trend of our nationalist movement.

The first most significant step of Subhaschandra's political career is the participation in the non-cooperation movement led by Gandiji in the year 1921. We must remember that on 16th of July, 1921 he came back to India after rejecting the lucrative offer of ICS job. After arriving at Bombay port Subhash directly went to Gandhi and tried to understand the agenda of the non-cooperation movement. But he did not get any clear idea from the discussion with Gandhi. Rather, according to Gandhi's suggestion he went to meet Chittaranjan Das, the leader of Bengal and under his leadership he actively took part in the non-cooperation movement. During this period Subhash became acquainted to nationalist revolutionaries and noticed their activities. In the year 1922 he was also invited to join the fourth congress of Communist International to be held in Moscow. But the British government did not give him permission to join it. However, in 1922 after the ChowriChowra incident, when Gandhi withdrew the non-cooperation movement, like most of the leaders of the country Subhas had stubbornly criticised the stand of Gandhi. As a reaction to this incident, in the year 1923 C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru formed the Swarajya Dal within the Congress. Subhas had joined this movement as an assistant to Chittranjan Das and very rapidly he reached the level of national leadership. 1928 is a very significant year in the political career of Subhash. He gave leadership in the movement against the Simon Commission; established 'Independence for India League' with the support of Jawaharlal Nehru and also became its joint secretary. In the Calcutta Session of the National Congress very successfully Subhas carried on the duty of 'General -Officer- Commanding' of the volunteer group. Also in the same year he became the leader of the young society of Bengal. In this Assembly of Congress Subhas opposed Gandhi's proposal of dominion status. He

proposed for complete freedom, which was ultimately rejected. In the year 1933, when Gandhi declared to withhold the movement of civil disobedience, Subhas strongly opposed it from the city of Vienna. He demanded for radical change in the policies of the Congress and also proposed for new leadership. In 1934, within the Congress a new platform came up as 'Congress Socialist Party'. Under the leadership of Acharya Narendra Deb the following young leaders like Jayprakash Narayan, Minu Masani, N. G Gore, Nambudripad were the initiators of this platform. The philosophy of nationalism and socialism, were their ideology. In order to fight against the rightist leadership of National Congress Subhas had accepted the importance of this socialistic platform and had supported it from outside.

At the end of the year 1937, in accordance with Gandhi's wish, Subhas was proposed as the president of National Congress. In 1938 he was elected as the president. In this year in the Haripura session of Congress Subhas delivered his presidential speech and had said that, "National Congress must be developed into the largest anti-imperialist platform and taking the due advantage of international politics a great national agitation must be developed." In the Haripura conference Subhash expressed his idea of economic development of the country through his organised economic planning. Under his leadership National Planning Commission was founded and Subhas's thoughts and activities frightened Gandhi and the rightist leaders of the Congress. In 1939 in Tripura Congress Subhas was elected president for the second time. But as the followers of Gandhi did not at all cooperate with him Subhas had to resign from the post. He was expelled from National Congress for three years. In 1939 Subhash formed Forward Block and in the programme of this party there was the reflection of the unified philosophy of socialism and nationalism. In 1940, under the leadership of Subhas the movement of anti-Hallwell monument began. Subhas became imprisoned once again for this strong nationalist fervour. Behind the bars Subhas started hunger strike and the government decided for his confinement at home. And this was the time when his historical absconding took place. In the chaotic international situation during the Second World war Subhas established a 'Free India Centre' at Berlin in order to build up violent rebellion against the British rule. In 1942 Subhas approached the German dictator, Hitler in order

to get help for his war against the British rule. Hitler at that point of time was unable to reciprocate. Gandhi's Quit India or August Movement started just after this. From Azad Hind Radio Station Subhas gave his support to this movement and declared a total scheme of his movement. Not receiving any help from Germany Subhas then approached Tojo, the then Prime minister of Japan and with his aid he declared war against British India. On 21st of October, 1943 Subhas framed temporary Azad Hind government. This Azad Hind regiment proclaimed war against the British and American imperialism. Azad Hind government received diplomatic recognition from the countries like Japan, Germany, Italy, Nanking, Philippines, Thailand and Burma. Gradually Azad Hind regiment with its chieftain Subhas reached Andaman and Nicobar Islands with the help of Japan. In January 1944 the head office of Azad Hind government was shifted to Rangoon (Burma). But by the end of this year the trend of war went in favour of the Allies and the United States of America dropped atom bomb in two cities of Japan in August 1945. Japan was forced to surrender. The Azad Hind regiment had to retreat. On 18th of August, 1945 Subhash set off for Tokyo. But a few days later there was an announcement in the Tokyo Radio that Subhas had expired in an air crash. But controversy over this death news started immediately which still persists.

4.3 The nature of Subhas Chandra's nationalist ideology

From the very beginning of his political career Subhas was extremely nationalist. The armed national struggle was always preferred by him than the non-violent programmes of Gandhiji. Directly and indirectly he was connected with the secret revolutionaries. His Azad Hind movement is no less than a war.

There are various aspects of Subhas's uncompromising nationalistic opposition against the imperialist exploitation. Sometimes his movement accepts Gandhi's programme and follows the nationalist movement of Congress. Sometimes he calls for an open combat. Both of these reactions are the result of his strong national feeling. Parallely, Subhas's nationalism has an economic aspect. This trend can be named as constructive nationalism. From his very student life Subhas had an observation and analytical study on

how the imperialists used to continuously economically suppress the colonial countries of Asia and Africa. He was acquainted with the studies and methods of analysis of Naoroji, Ranade and Ramesh Chandra Dutta. On the other hand, as a student of Cambridge University, he had keen interest on the nature of the world economy. After joining the National Congress Subhas had shouldered the responsibility of various constructive programmes. Actually, even before joining Congress Subhas believed that the struggle for freedom should not be restricted only to political fields. Various constructive programmes must be made for our self-development or we need to know our motherland or we should be active for the making of our own nation. In 1921, before the non-cooperation movement started, he had written a letter to Chittranjan Das. There he wrote. Congress must divide its members into various units who should be given the charge of spreading education in the society. Mass awareness programmes, social service and various other experimental projects must be made forthwith. Subhas himself wanted to take the responsibility of a few such projects. He had written to C.R. Das, "You might say that Congress is now busy in destroying the existing order. Hence without completing destruction process constructive works cannot begin. But what I feel, now onwards along with demolition, creative process must begin. If we want to formulate any policy against any existing problem of the nation, it requires a thorough study and careful research. Hence we must begin the research right from this moment. If Congress is able to prepare a complete programme, then the day when we will achieve our freedom we will not have to hesitate for any policy." In Subhas's book *Taruner Swapna (Youth's Dream)* we get many such descriptions and ideas of constructive policy. During the decades of 1920's and 30's through various speeches Subhas had tried to inspire the members of Congress for the economic development of the country. In the Haripura Congress session, 1938 the major part of Subhas's presidential speech was devoted to the constructive nationalism, in his speech here Subhas had emphasised on the necessity of development of Indian economy through organised economic planning under the leadership of Congress. He had also set up a Planning Committee. In the process of the formation of the committee and for the rapid industrialisation in the country, he got immense help from Jawaharlal Nehru; and scientist Meghnad Saha had also given a great support to him. In 1939 after the formation of Forward

Block, the task and the duties which Subhas had set also contained the matters of economic development.

According to Subhas, India is a unified multi-dimensional state. Enormous diversities are there in the country in the field of religion, language, race and regional culture. To develop nationalism therefore a feeling of unity should have been inculcated among all these diversities. Subhas considered National Congress as a major instrument for developing such unity. It is very difficult to establish unity in this country where caste and religion and other divisive forces are quite active. But to Subhas the most important challenge was an entreatment for unity for building up our nation. Making religious sentiments his weapon Veer Savarkar got involved in a nationalist movement. Or by rallying the Dalits, who are oppressed by the Varna Hindus, Ambedkar organised a socio-political movement in our country. Subhas's dream travelled totally in a different route from all these. He wanted a composite nationalist culture where there would be no disagreement among the religion, language, regionalism, race and community. Where there would develop a feeling of Indianness.

Subhas's main objective was not to entertain communalism among Hindus and the Muslims; he wanted to create absolute unity and amity among them. After leaving the country when he built up India Legion in Germany or later forming Azad Hind Fauz in East Asia Subhas was very cautious that religious communalism does not get any impetus. Throughout his political life Subhas's main concern was to declare war against communalism. He had repeatedly pleaded to Gandhi and other national leaders to leave the country unified. As the Commander of Azad Hind Fauz and Azad Hind government Subhash had tried to strengthen the mental state of the Indian soldiers. For this he had prepared a nationalist slogan in Urdu—'Ittefaq (unity) Ittemad (faith), Quarbani (self-sacrifice).' This is quite clear that staying above communal politics and culture Subhas tried to create an undivided India.

4.4 Subhas's Internationalism

Arrogance and strong national sentiment is not true nationalism. This was Subhas's idea. His earnest desire was to reach to internationalism through

smooth and forbearing nationalism. In the year 1943 while in abroad he was busy in constructing a new form of movement for independence. At that time he was invited to a greater East Asia Conference. A part of the speech that he delivered there is as follows: "True internationalism does not deny nationalism; rather true internationalism is innate in the healthy nationalism. False internationalism stands on refusing the essence of various nations, it must be noticed that, in this matter European philosophers like Romain Rolland, Laski, Zimmerman and eminent Indian personalities like Vivekananda, Aurobindo and others thought that, the road to internationalism lies through nationalism." Of course nationalism must discard arrogant national sentiment and it must be balanced and able to accept others' opinion. In his speech in the conference of East Asia Subhaschandra had agreed to the proposal of constructing 'Pan-Asian Federation'.

Subhas had also focussed in his speech that, universalism is a spontaneous element in ancient Indian philosophy and cultural heritage. Hindu civilisation teaches acceptance, it is against rejection. Ancient Buddhism had widely opened its arms from India towards China and Japan. Buddha's teaching of peace and 'moksha' had spread throughout Asia. In the middle age when the Muslims came from West Asia, they too were accepted by India. But India's international relationship with West Asia was not true, because internationalism does not destroy or suppress the free rights and aspirations of other nations. Practically, the main characteristic of internationalism is not to underestimate nationalism, but to construct international society through mutual exchanges.

In the last phase of the Second World War the allied forces thought of forming the United Nations. There was an indirect support to this endeavour in Subhas's speech. Following is an extract from his talk: "Today we have developed the faith that if we can form a body in the pattern of United Nations for the East Asian countries, then only it would be possible for us to construct an international organisation for the nations." Subhash had also added in his speech that during the formation of Pan-Asian Federation we must be very cautious that it does not take the form of Vienna Congress of the First World War, which had turned out to be a centre for the notorious people. If true amicable relationships develop among the various countries of

Asia and a sense of integrity flourishes among the colonial countries of Asia and Africa, then the path to counter the Anglo-Americans will be smoother. In a talk addressed to students at Tokyo Imperial University in 1944 Subhash had said, "Internationalism is a much needed ideology and we can develop an international federation on the basis of liberty, justice and mutual reciprocity. Constructing an international federation out of the blue is difficult and making it successful is almost impossible. The process of foundation of a local association is the only way which can ultimately and gradually lead to an international league."

There was another important dimension in Subhas's concept of internationalism. In the course of nationalist struggle he preached of the importance of international propagation. As the President of Haripura Congress in 1938, Subhash had said, to uphold India's image in the right way in the international world, National Congress must appoint the dependable representatives in Europe, America, Asia, Africa and in different countries of Latin America. An extract from his speech is as follows: "...we had been underestimating central and south America till date. But they are over enthusiastic about India. Such cultural associations which are working in the fields of international culture and Indian industrialists who are involved in international economy can help the Congress in advancing India's international relationship. Apart from this it would be a duty of the Indians to participate in all international assemblies and conferences. As a consequence of joining these conferences the publicity that India would achieve is essential and beneficial."

Subhas had stated that the establishment of this international relationship is not for any conspiracy against the British government. This relation is essential for the publicity of India's great cultural and social heritage. He firmly believed that establishment of proper international relationship would help India to authenticate in the international society, its demand for freedom.

He had also thought of utilising the complicated international situation of 1942 in India's struggle for freedom. During the World war, taking aid from Japan and Germany to counter the British government was one of his political techniques. Similarly his intended target was to fight against British imperialism by manipulating the Union of States of Soviet Russia using the

innate inconsistencies in the relation of Anglo-American imperialism with the USSR.

Having made fraternity with Germany and Japan Subhas had to bear the criticism that he was attracted towards Fascism and Nazism. But this evaluation had no rational ground. On 24 March, 1936 Subhash had written a letter to Dr. Feldar, the Director of German Academy for Foreign Relations. Here he writes, "I do not believe in overpowering of one race of people by the other...that German nationalism is influenced by racism and selfishness, hurts me immensely." The mind-set expressed in this letter shows that Subhash had never supported the perverted and aggressive nationalism of Hitler and Mussolini. The nationalism he desired was not an instrument to hurt others. It was an amiable sustaining power for the relation with other nations. Nationalism should be practised this way.

4.5 Suggested Readings

- 1) Subhas Chandra Bose, *Nirbachita Bhashan Sangraha*, Lokmata Prakashani, 1996.
- 2) Subhas Chandra Bose, *Taruner Swapna*, Ananda Publisher, 1990 edition.
- 3) Ashok Kumar Mukhopadhyay (ed.), *Bharatiya Rashtrachinta Parichay*, Paschimanga Rajya Pustak Parshad, 2013.

4.6 Sample Questions

4.6.1 Analytical questions

1. Analyse the important aspects of Subhas Chandra Bose's nationalistic thoughts and works.
2. Analyse the nature of Subhas Chandra's Internationalism.

4.6.2 Short Questions

1. What according to Subhas Chandra was the concept of constructive swadeshi?
2. Describe the nature of Subhas Chandra's Azad Hind Movement.

4.6.2 Objective Questions (Tick the right answer)

1. Like Gandhi Subhashchandra was non-violent/not non-violent.
2. Subhashchandra was/was not the member of Congress Socialist Party.

MODULE - 3

SOCIALISM

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
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Unit-1 □ Swami Vivekananda's Ideas on Socialism

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 1.1 Brief Life history and philosophy of life**
- 1.2 Is Vivekananda India's first socialist?**
- 1.3 Marx and Vivekananda**
- 1.4 Nature of Vivekananda's socialism**
- 1.5 Summary**
- 1.6 Sample Questions**
- 1.7 Suggested Readings**

Objectives

In this unit the following issues will be highlighted:-

- Brief life sketch of Vivekananda and his surrounding environment
- Introduction to the analysis of the debate on whether Vivekananda is India's first socialist
- Similarities and differences between Marx and Vivekananda on socialism
- Introduction to the analysis of the nature of Vivekananda's proposed socialism

1.0 Introduction :

Swami Vivekananda was a pioneering figure and leader of spiritual nationalism in Bengal and in India and also a major source of inspiration for revolutionary movements. His workaholic life was dedicated to taking care of the human beings across class and caste. Moreover he Championed the main tenets of India's civilization and culture before the western world and by instilling courage in the minds of colonized Indian people had strengthened them to fight for freedom. By arguing in favour of worshipping the deities known for strength and power, he helped in reviving the lost valour of

Indian people. He had no direct links with the grammar and text of Indian politics but those who were associated with the revolutionary movements in Bengal were highly influenced by Vivekananda. Vivekananda was never a philosopher in the strict mainstream sense of the term but his dedication towards the idea of equality was unequivocal. He believed in socialism but only for its practical merit he supported this system. He had never seen socialist system as the only sign of unmet benefit. His ideological stand was never biased towards socialism. In his entire life, Vivekananda gave importance to the goal of life and not to ideology. He has not taken any rigid stand regarding socialism but still some scholars regard him as the first socialist thinker and practitioner of India. Before answering the question whether he was the first socialist of India, it is necessary to find answer to another question that is whether Vivekananda was a theorist? He can very well be seen as a thinker but he never created any structure of thought and ideas. In this context it can be said that may be his ideas and theories were not novel or his own but he was a sensitive, reflective and thinking person and publicly disclosed his views on different political, social and other issues. One can draw a comprehensive picture of Vivekananda's realm of thinking or world of ideas from a wide range of his speeches and complete works. Vivekananda was never a political person but definitely he was aware of politics. Even if he had no fundamental theory or thought to offer, Vivekananda's inclusion in the evolution of the history of India's political thinking is indispensable.

1.1 Brief History and Philosophy of Vivekananda's Life

Vivekananda was born on 12th January 1863 and at that time the name given to him by his family was Narendranath Dutta. After coming in touch with Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar in the month of November 1881, Narendranath's life changed drastically. Ramakrishna inspired him to take care of living beings by equating them as the incarnation of Lord Shiva. Before this meeting with Ramakrishna, Narendranath graduated from Scottish Church College in Philosophy but even after several attempts failed to get a job. His father Bishwanath Dutta was a renowned Attorney but after his death financial crisis engulfed Narendranath's family. Inspired by Ramakrishna, he devoted himself to spiritual meditation. After the death of Sri Ramakrishna, Narendranath along with other followers of Ramakrishna, established Sri Ramakrishnamath at a place called Baranagar. In 1887 along with ten of Ramkrishna's disciples, he also undertook *Sanyas* and at first Narendranath came to be known as Vividishananda and later as Vivekananda. In the face of several odds, Vivekananda undertook a journey of the entire country in foot. On 11th September, 1893 he

participated in the religious conference at Chicago and the participants at the Conference were spellbound by his speech and his stress on integrity of all religions made him the best speaker of the Conference. Since then Vivekananda came to be popularly known as Swamiji and he went across several cities of United States to spread the teachings of Vedanta. In the month of August 1895 he went to Europe and after completing his campaigns in London and Paris he again returned to United States of America. Again in April, 1896 he went to London. Due to his oratoric skills, India's image got escalated in Europe and America. Renowned political leader Bipin Chandra Pal wrote in a letter that under the influence of Vivekananda many in England had started to view the world differently. From London Swamiji started his return journey and on 15th January 1890, he reached Colombo.

The spectacular success and popularity of Vivekananda in West helped the colonized fearful people of India to shrug off their inferiority complex and instilled in them new spirit of courage, manliness and confidence. The stir that Vivekananda's speeches created in the West helped to develop India's prestige. On 2nd May 1897 he formally established Ramakrishna Mission and on 9th December 1898 Ramkrishnamath was established at Belur. On 4th July 1902 Swamiji died. As a pioneer figure of Indian renaissance the contribution of Vivekananda cannot be denied. He gave a true definition of patriotism by saying "Be a patriot – the group of people of the same land has done so many things for us in the past, love that land from your heart." He also said that – "if there is any country in this world that can be qualified as a land of virtue (*punnobhoomi*)...if there is any country where spiritualism and inner-strength has developed to the fullest, it can be said without doubt that country is our motherland – this India(*Bharatbarsha*)."

The main principles of Vivekananda's philosophy of life were to spread education among the masses, to raise the awareness of the female, spread of self-dependence, exchanges with foreign countries without sacrificing independence and uniqueness and most importantly spiritual revolution. From his experience based on his wisdom, Vivekananda argued that before developing India politically and socially, India has to be developed spiritually. For Indians, it is religion first and then other things. At the same time however Vivekananda denied any overarching role of religion. He said "at first food has to be ensured for the people and then religion". While spreading the message of caring for the downtrodden Vivekananda lashed out against the hierarchical Brahminical order that the priests legitimized. And through this gesture one can find the socialist and egalitarian image of Vivekananda.

Vivekananda avoided explicit contacts with the political world but his influence over the members of revolutionary society was paramount. In a meeting with Hemchandra Ghosh, an important revolutionary figure of Bengal Volunteers Association at Dhaka, Vivekananda told the following words – “Colonized country has no religion. Religion for people like you is to bring freedom to the country. By taking recourse to any means and strategy this task has to be achieved.” He said towards the fellow countrymen that ‘do not forget that by birth you are all destined to sacrifice your lives for the motherland’. He inspired his fellow countrymen with courage by urging that in Vrindaban (the birth place of Lord Krishna) worship of Krishna should be replaced by worship of deities of power. Though Vivekananda gave importance to social revolution over political revolution, the question of political freedom of the country was always present in Vivekananda’s thinking.

1.2 Is Vivekananda India’s first Socialist?

Vivekananda spoke in favour of socialism. He had unflinching faith toward the idea of equality. Many Marxist scholars argue that Vivekananda was the first thinker of socialism in India because before him no Indian thinker talked about socialism as candidly as he did. Moreover Vivekananda also predicted the emergence of the Dalits or the *shudra*’s. In 1896 Swamiji told to Sister Christine that “The next upheaval that is to usher in another era will come from Russia or from China. The world is still in the third epoch under the domination of the *vaishya*. The fourth epoch will be under that of the *shudra*.”

Vivekananda’s youngest brother Bhupendranath Dutta told that Swamiji had well before predicted about the world-changing ten days upheaval of Petrograd of 1917. Bhupendranath writes – “in so early time, a labour or socialist government anywhere in the West, had been a pious wish only. But with prophetic instinct, he visualized the establishment of the proletarian state of the future. It was he who was the first person in the world to envisage a government of the toiling masses and prophesied about the proletarian culture of the future.”

It can be known from the interview of the well known revolutionary Hemchandra Ghosh that in 1901 Vivekananda predicted about the future exploitation free society at Dhaka in the following words – “Yes, there will be a resurgence of the *shudra*’s across the world. You all cannot see that right now, but I’ve acquired that insight by the blessings of God and through years of meditation and observation. I can see the future image of the society in a shadowy form. You all take my words for granted

that the powerful emergence of the *shudra's* will first happen in Russia and then in China. In India it will happen later and India will also play an important role in world. Vivekananda was never a thinker of socialism but before him nobody talked about the emergence of the politics."

Vivekananda was never a thinker of socialism but before him nobody in India talked about the emergence of the rule of the downtrodden or the *shudra-raj*. Vivekananda clearly mentioned about the powerful future role of the *shudra's*. In that direction of social revolution, socialism, Anarchism and Nihilism are the vanguard concepts. For this reason only Bhupendranath Dutta said that Vivekananda was a 'patriot-prophet'.

1.3 Marx and Vivekananda

It is not known whether Vivekananda was exposed to the writings of Marx as in none of his writings and speeches, one can find reference to Marx. Well known scholar Rabindrakumar Dasgupta believes that Vivekananda must have been scuzzinred with the writings of Marx because in 1893 the labour party campaigned about the socialist ideas throughout America. During the Chicago Religious Conference there were labour Summits and after few months such Summits also took place in Europe and Vivekananda must have been aware of these developments. But Rabindrakumar Dasgupta argues that if Vivekananda had been influenced by Marx then somehow he would record that indebtedness. In Vivekananda's writings reference to socialism has appeared often. In August, 1900 he met Prince Kropotkin at Paris and he had intention to go to Russia as well. It had to be admitted that at the time when Vivekananda talked about the revolution of the downtrodden, even Plekahnov or Lenin had not thought about it. Marx predicted that the first proletarian revolution will be successful in West Europe where trade union movements were strong. But in this respect the prediction of Vivekananda came true and not of Marx. Renowned intellectual Ribakov correctly argues that "Isn't it a miracle that he had the roaring of the coming social and political events of the twentieth century in the slow and serene life of nineteenth century and had foreseen that revolution would come from Russia."

Even if Vivekananda repeatedly talked about the emancipation of the oppressed and the exploited but his thinking was always not at par with that of Marx. He abandoned the violent bloody path of class struggle. Moreover while Marx saw the working class as the true revolutionary class, Vivekananda gave that position to the youths of the society. Vivekananda saw economics not as the only power but a fundamental one in Marx's theory of economic determinism. For Vivekananda, economic demand is

not a natural demand of human mind but it is a social act. In place of one-dimensional analysis of Marx, Vivekananda used multidimensional approach to analyse the direction of society. For Marx, religion was the opium of the poor. Vivekananda in a similar way criticized oppressive and sectarian approach of religious leaders and mostly in Marx's words equated religion with intellectual opium eating. But he viewed religious element as a centerpiece of national life. In this respect, one scholar comments – "The difference between Marx and Vivekananda with respect to religion was fundamental. While Swamiji made a clear watertight compartment between true religion and priest craft, Marx has made a mess of the two." Vivekananda realized well that spiritualism is the life-blood of Indian civilization. He denounced the priest class by saying that 'Priest craft in its nature is cruel and heartless. Religion goes down when priest craft arises.' Vivekananda has not held religion responsible for the poor condition of the people. He argues that 'Religion teaches you that all living beings in this world are an expression and extension of one's own soul. The poor condition of the society is due to the failure to implement this teaching in practice. The absence of sympathy is the absence of heart...The present condition of the society is to be rectified not by abolishing the society... the meaning of Hinduism is to follow education and to mix this with the ideal sympathetic approach of Buddhism which is the natural culmination of Hindu religion.' It is for this reason that he was against superstition and don't-touchism.

The theory of alienation of Marx was also not like that of Vivekananda. According to Marx, the capitalist system de-humanizes the human self and thereby the workers get alienated from the production system. According to Vivekananda, the oppressed people get alienated from their own self in the sense of spiritual alienation rather than that of material alienation. Vivekananda had no doubt about the presence of good qualities inherent in all human beings. He said that 'Each soul is potentially divine.' When human beings gets alienated from this 'divineness', it had to be awakened once again and for that Vivekananda's message was 'Teach everyone has real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes'. To attach divinity with human nature was unthinkable for Marx.

1.4 The Nature of Vivekananda's idea of Socialism

Vedanta was the ultimate source of all teachings for Vivekananda. According to Rabindranath Dasgupta, Vivekananda's socialism was Vedantic socialism the basis of which was high spiritualism. He gave priority to the idea of equality. He said that the

members of elite class born Hindu families who supported caste system were 'rolling crematory'. In his opinion, the members of new India will emerge with the plough of the farm lands, from the hut of farmers, fishermen and the shanty dens of the outcastes, from the fair price local shops, from industries, from market places and from mountains, jungles and bushes. All of the members of these places had suffered unending oppression for centuries. Their silence also reflected their patience. In the midst of their troublesome life they acquired tremendous life-strength. According to Vivekananda they can transform the world by getting some energy through half a meal per day. They can live a life of hundreds in one life and their sweet behavior is unmatched in the entire universe.

Vivekananda was in high praises for the idea of equality and said 'everyone should proudly declare that he is an Indian and all Indians are his brother including all illiterate, poverty-ridden and the untouchables'. Vivekananda's socialist thought was based on this idea of universal humanism. He equated the poor condition of the *shudra's* with that of animals carrying weights. He criticized time and again the inhuman behavior of the high class high caste Hindus towards the peripheral untouchables of the society. In order to encourage the toiling working masses of India, Vivekananda said that their forefathers may have written on philosophy, novels, may have erected temples and their acts have been highly praised but those on who's labour and valour the development of humanity takes place must be given due recognition. One may attain the stature of a hero after doing some heroic acts and in the face of encouragement of ten thousand people even the least courageous can sacrifice his life easily. But the one who does the least important but most needy things of the society silently, responsibly, unselfishly and without any dream for recognition – he is truly praiseworthy- and he is the member of the most neglected section of the country – the oppressed toiling working masses. Vivekananda salutes their contribution.

Vivekananda was well aware of the natural collision of interest of capital and labor. He believed in the domination of the kingdom of the dalit's or the '*shudra-raj*'. He said 'Each upper class must dig its own grave.' He also used the Sanskrit equivalent of the term proletariat but his socialism was not like the Marxian variety. He never praised socialism as a unqualified blessing for human society. In his words, 'I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system but because half a loaf is better than no bread'. In explaining that in socialism the life of the individual gets diluted into that of a lifeless machine, Vivekananda said "All these things are done by people guided like lifeless machines. There is no mental activity; no unfoldment of the heart,

no vibration of life, there is no strong stimulation of the will, no stag of inventive genins.”

Vivekananda was in favour of such a political system which will be based on the ideas of equality and individual freedom. On 23rd December 1898 he wrote in a letter that socialism sacrifices individual at the cost of the society. On 2nd February 1900 in a speech in America, Vivekananda said ‘You are tying today what you call Socialism! Good things will come, but in the long run, you will be blight upon the race. Freedom is the watchword. I would rather be doing evil freely, than is doing well under bondage. The Indian people are intensely Socialist. But beyond that there is a wealth of individualism’. From these statements one can understand the difference between the Vedantic Socialism of Vivekananda and the Materialist Socialism of Marx. At a fundamental level the difference was that Indian civilization was based on the valuable insights of the soul which was not at par with the materialist understanding of Marx. Vivekananda said, ‘Deluge the country with spiritual ideas’. He said that the only path towards freedom for the oppressed people is through the spread of mass education. In his words – ‘Educate and raise the masses and thus alone a nation is possible.’ He told to Hemchandra Ghosh that Dont ‘Touch-ism is the sin of sins that has to go.’ There is no one as untouchable in this world. Everyone is justice seeker. Vivekananda’s message was the message of character building of human beings. He said – Man making is the mission of my life. He viewed womenfolk as the reflection of ultimate strength and motherhood and without women education he opined unequivocally that all other education will be meaningless. He was in favour of all round development and total freedom of the individual self. That socialism can never be successful by curbing individual autonomy and freedom – was the message of Vivekananda and the farsightedness and correctness of the thinking was proved by the breakdown of communism in the 1990s in East Europe.

1.5 Summary

The socialist society that Vivekananda envisaged was not based on any conservative or rigid ideological position. He was a thinking person and his awareness about historical events was strong. But he had never presented his idea of socialism behind the façade of any particular mainstream theories. He championed the cause of people’s power by instilling self-confidence and courage among the poor, oppressed and the downtrodden. He was aware of the fact that general freedom for the masses can never be achieved only by transfer of power among the members of elite class of society

and unless and until power is taken over by the people at large. Even if there were some similarities in the ideas and approach of Vivekananda with Marx, he never accepted Marxian method of analysis. Vivekananda's idea was pluralist not monistic. The kind of socialist system he envisioned for India was centered upon the freedom of the soul. He said freedom is the song of the soul. Swamiji wanted to realize social revolution through the spread of mass education where women education was considered as the most important element. The centerpiece of his idea of socialism was the idea of equality. He became utterly critical and vocal publicly against any form of social and economic inequality in the society. His socialism was based on humanism and equality. The way his prediction about the foundation of Communism in Russia became correct, in the same way his views on the negative effects of socialism proved itself during the course of historical evolution of society in the midst of the disaster that communism suffered in East Europe.

1.6 Sample Questions

- a) Analyse the ways in which Vivekananda was a Socialist!
 - b) Does Vivekananda's idea of socialism similar to that of Marx? Give reasons for your answer.
 - c) Does Vivekananda uphold socialist system as the best possible system? Analyse descriptively.
 - d) Can Vivekananda be seen as the first socialist thinker of India? Analyse with reasons.
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1.7 Suggested Readings

Bhupendra Nath Dutt, *Swami Vivekananda: Patriot-Prophet*

Hiren Mukherjee, *Vivekananda and India's Freedom*

R. K. Dasgupta, *Swami Vivekananda and Vedantic Socialism*

Unit-2 □ Manabendranth Roy–Nationalism, Marxism, New Humanism

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction**
- 1.1 Life, Activities, Thought**
- 1.2 Manbendranath on Marxism**
- 1.3 The transformation to New Humanism**
- 1.4 Analysis and Criticism**
- 1.5 Summary**
- 1.6 Sample Questions**
- 1.7 Suggested Readings**

Objectives

In this unit the following issues will be highlighted:-

- Brief outline of the life and works of Manabendranath Roy
- The transformation of Manabenranath from Nationalist to Marxist
- The change of Manabendranath's approach to Marxism
- The emergence of New Humanism in the last phase of the evolution of thinking of Manbendranath Roy.

1.0 Introduction

Manbendranath Roy was one of those thinkers in twentieth century India who had some fundamental ideas. His life sailed through many ups and downs and other unnatural odds. It is very difficult to strictly confine the ideas and philosophy of Manbendranath Roy into any particular structure as he never took a rigid position based on one central ideology. His thinking changed with the changing circumstances and naturally in this context a pertinent question is that whether his thinking is a negation of the thinking of his predecessors? In his early life he was influenced by

revolutionary nationalism. Later he was highly attracted by Marxism and came to be known as an important Marxist theorist and organization-builder. In the last sage of his life he searched for a new path which was against the mainstream Marxist and leftist thinking. In the name of humanism he tried to introduce an alternative indigenous political philosophy which though was highly idealist never disregarded the process of changes in society. This new humanism never totally discarded Marxism although the exuberance of Manabendranath Roy about Marxism was down in his later life. His new humanism was a reflection of nationalist sentiments and Marxist scheme of social awareness combined together. While his supporters believe that the philosophy of new humanism is the correct alternative of Marxism, staunch classical leftists disregard him and his theory as something against the Marxist thinking. The key question is whether through his New Humanism, Manabendranath Roy tried to oppose Marxism or through this philosophy he tried to understand Marxism in a new perspective? Had he opposed the most discussed and practiced ideas of Marxism? In other words, was he really anti-Marxist?

1.1 Life, Activities, Thought

Manabendranath Roy's real name was Narendranath Bhattacharya. He was born on 21st March 1887. After the Bengal uprising of 1905, he established close contacts with revolutionary movements in Bengal and got associated with revolutionary activities like political dacoity and for that he had to be sent into jail several times. Manabendranath was also there in the planning of a revolutionary uprising against the British colonial empire in India under the leadership of Jatindranath Mukhopadhyay (Bagha Jatin) aided by the Germans in the period of 1911-13. In 1915 in the war of *Buri Balam* after the self-sacrifice of Jatindranath, Manabendranath took it upon himself to finish the unfinished task of Jatindranath all by himself and to bring arms and amenities from Germany he started preparing to go to Berlin through East Asia and United States of America.

In his stay period away from India in the States, Manabendranath discarded his nationalist self and during his stay at San Francisco in 1916 he changed his family name and came to be known as Manabendranath Roy. In 1917 shortly after his arrival in Mexico the historical October revolution took place in Russia. Manabendranath got entangled in the progressive democratic movement in Mexico and soon got elected as the general secretary of the socialist party of Mexico in 1918. In 1919

under the leadership of Lenin. Comintern was established in Moscow with the goal to speed up the process of revolutionary movement to achieve socialism by establishing communist parties in all countries of the world. In 1920 Manabendranath took up his journey for Europe and centering Berlin he came to be known with many influential communist party leaders of Germany and Holland. In 1920 as a representative of Mexican communist party he participated in the second Congress of the Comintern and here the historical meeting between Lenin and Manabendranath took place and along with the main version of Lenin's thesis on the colonial question, as a supplementary thesis Manabendranath Roy's thesis was also included. This was the starting point of his transition from revolutionary nationalist to Marxism. With the gradual development of his stature in the Comintern there arose difference of opinion resulting in his shedding of ties with the Comintern in 1929. Manabendranath of the 1920s who was a staunch supporter of revolutionary method to defeat colonialism and was certain about the development of socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class, now started to think about the progressive aspect of nationalism. In 1930 Manabendranath returned to India and after a long period of imprisonment was released in 1936.

In this period even though the policies and programmes of the Indian National Congress did not square up with the desires of Manabendranath, nevertheless he accepted the role and importance of the organization. But the compromising attitude of the leadership of Indian National Congress frustrated him. In 1939 he established League of Radical Congressmen which was an effort to link up nationalism with socialism, revolution, etc for an integrated movement. In the context of World War II, Manabendranath changed his earlier approach and he introduced an alternative idea of Radical Humanism. In 1948 he launched Independent India Weekly which came to be known as Humanist from 1949 onwards. Till his death in 1954 Manabendranath was engrossed in explaining, analyzing and campaigning of Radical Humanism.

One can decipher four distinct phases in the evolution of the political thinking of Manabendranath – militant nationalism, Marxism, revolutionary nationalism, new humanism. Manabendranath has never reverted back to the ideology with which he started his political career. But his respect for Bagha Jatin was uncompromising. In an article published on 27/2/1949 in Independent India, Roy wrote "the story of Balasore jungle is indeed theatrical. The play was organized by an organized actor and the grandeur of the epic play was displayed but the main attraction of this play should have been the character, personality and the totality of the actor himself and

not only the accuracy of his target, his successful defense of himself or even his talent to face a majority of opponents with few bullets.”

1.2 Manabendranath on Marxism

During the period between 1920s and early 1930s Manbendranth was a well known and acclaimed Marxist theoretician of the Comintern. He analysed the colonial question and the Indian nationalism from the perspective of Marxism. In 1920 as a complimentary to Lenin's thesis on colonialism, the main argument of Manbendranath's thesis was that anti-imperialist movement cannot be successful if it is kept under the control of the leading struggle for national freedom or nationalism. Nationalist struggle may be an associated movement to begin anti-imperialist movement but if the main aim is the freedom of countries from imperialist powers and to establish a society free from oppression under the leadership of the working class, and alone nationalism cannot lead this movement into success. According to him, nationalism is associated with idea of the dominance of bourgeoisie class and hence the proponents of the idea of nationalism will never be interested in true social revolution. In order to establish their class rule, the bourgeoisie class campaign for nationalism which though a positive act apparently becomes negative in the last analysis. From a class approach, the alternative to nationalism is the socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class. Lenin was not in agreement with Roy's thesis because for Lenin, Roy failed to understand that the working class was not well organized and powerful in the underdeveloped countries and also the influence of the idea of nationalism on the people of these countries was unquestionable. In these countries anti-materialist movements bypassing or ignoring bourgeoisie nationalism was unthinkable. During this period Manabendranath remarked that the movement of Indian National Congress led by Gandhi was reactionary. To him Gandhism came as a sign of idealist traditional folklore structural pattern.

In the 1930s Manabendranth became highly critical of the ultra-left position of the Comintern. He realized that even if plagued with serious limitations, nationalism should not be branded as reactionary. The ultra-leftist position of the Comintern from an ultra-negative approach viewed leaders like Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose as stooge of British imperialism which was absolutely unacceptable to Manabendranath Roy. He could not justify the mechanical criticism of the bourgeoisie nationalism by the Comintern. By shrugging off his earlier negative approach to the Indian National Congress, he talked about bringing it out of the traditional myopic vision of nationalism

and linking it up with the ideology of revolutionary socialism. In 1939 when at the Tripuri Congress Subhash Chandra was forced to resign in the face of antagonistic attitude of the rightists present there, Manabendranth urged him to take up the challenge posed by Gandhi and form the Working Committee according his own choice. Later Manabendranath was also associated with the Left Consolidation Committee organized by Subhas Chandra. Although this organization aimed to unite all left forces of the country, it did not live long. Even with Manabendranth, Subhash Chandra had terrible disagreement and a life-long detachment.

In the Comintern phase, the hard-core Marxist stand of Manabendranath took place in the midst of decline of world capitalists and a slow but gradual explosion of the desire for the rise of socialism in various countries. Manabendranath never wrote any fundamental thesis on Marxism, he was interested in analyzing the practical aspect of Marxism. Though it was true that by taking India as an industrialized country and giving importance to the presence of the working class and talking of direct socialist revolution under the leadership of the working class ignoring the question of agricultural revolution, Manabendranth gave an image of utopian thinking but nevertheless it cannot be denied that he was the first Indian Marxist to oppose the mechanical application of Marxism to understand any event or any country independently of time and place. This was the reason why he was expelled from the Comintern as a 'rightist reformist'. According to one scholar 'the indifference to humanism and dictate of party that plagued the Soviet Communism which was transformed from a war for the welfare of the people to a war for coming to power, pained Manabendranath. This mechanical idea of communism affected the life-philosophy, self-questions and the desire to find the right path to bring welfare to the people. In his words, 'I'm trying to find ways of freedom since I was 14 years old'. Manabendranath could not find in the mechanical analysis and practice of communism the possibility of achieving this very desire and dream for freedom nurtured from childhood.

1.3 Transformation to New Humanism

The description of the radical form of humanism as the New Humanism by Manabendranath to offer an alternative philosophy was based on the ideational pillars of rationalism, individualism and human emancipation. The model followed in Soviet Union to achieve socialism was based on coercion, defence of traditionalism, anti-humanist and against rationalism. While being critical of the mainstream understanding

of Marxism, Manabendranath was beyond doubt about the caring humanism present in a different reading of Marxism that attracted him.

Shibnarayan Roy very correctly said that when in 1945 Manabendranath Roy published the paper 'The Marxian Way' in association with Sudhindranath Dutta Roy's main argument was that as Marxism is a method so it had to be connected with the new horizons of knowledge and discovery and Radical Humanism is the extended image of Marxism in order to develop new potential in man. Thus Manabendranath's criticism and opposition was against the mechanical, ultra-simplified, one-country directed thesis of Marxism. He could not find any reflection of the rationalism present in the early writings of Marx in the Soviet model of socialism. In the name of Party discipline, the free thinking, power of analysis, and emancipation of man, was eclipsed and jeopardised in Soviet Union. Roy could not accept this vulgarized form of socialism in the name of humanism. From his own experience, Roy understood that not economic cordiality but an alternative scientific and rational society can be revolutionary only when it is based on the awareness, rationality and a promising attitude. The main criterion for the establishment of a revolutionary society is the presence of rationality at the level of the soul/spirituality. Roy talked about a new value system at the level of spirituality and renaissance at the level of consciousness and attitude while talking about the prime concern of New Humanism. Manbendranath developed his idea of New Humanism on the basis of the central elements of Marxist approach of universalism. Roy found no contradiction between emotion and rationality, consciousness and scientific attitude. For him these apparently self-contradictory ideas smoothens the path of human emancipation. He never acknowledged any antagonism between romanticism and reason. The kind of mental revolution that Roy talked about was attached with the idea of cultural revolution which was complimentary to the economic programme for the socialist revolution in the Marxist schema. Thus there was no contradiction between a pure form of Marxism and New Humanism.

Manabendranath had not seen the history of New Humanism through the prism of dialectical process. Cultural and religious elements are not determined by the economic structure or the substructure. He accepted Marx's criticism of religion but he did not accept Marx's theory of surplus value. He also rejected the concept of class struggle because he opined that the rule of the proletariat will be seen with some reflection of divinity and thereby individualism will be sacrificed at the altar of class or group. By accepting the significance of the idea of Historical Materialism of Marx, he wrote a letter to Ruth Fisher on 23/10/1949 stating "We cannot entirely turn our back on

the ideals which took us to so many adventures during a quarter of a century. We cannot disown a spiritual kinship with the communists notwithstanding all their stupidities and misdeeds. Was Marx a fool or a malicious liar when he exposed the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie society and the unreality of freedom in the Parliament democracy? Would it be reasonable to cast doubt on the socialist theories and discard the ideal of social emancipation of the exploited masses because Stalin has betrayed them?" Samaren Roy correctly said New Humanism wanted to reinstate the humanist element of Marxism. He was always looking for freedom of thought. He never discarded Marxism, he discarded only the anti-democratic formulations of Stalin. His New Humanism was not entirely unaffected by Marxism as his idea of value-system was not based on any idealist or spiritual norms. To Roy, values and norms do not have any universal character; it depends on the surrounding context and situation. He was firmly placed in materialist logic. According to one critic, Manabendranath's entire philosophy is a scathing criticism of the way in which in the name of the collective consciousness of the downtrodden the communists are taking away individual freedom. His criticism of Marxism was from the point of view of the idea of individual freedom but he never accepted blind criticism of the entire philosophy of Marxism.

1.4 Analysis and Criticism

The entire political career of Manabendranath Roy evolved through several ups and down. Sudipta Kabiraj remarked about him as 'Remarkable failure in the history of Indian national movement' and for this Kabiraj found his Eurocentrism as the prime cause. Many scholars criticize him for being a confused directionless politician but he never deviated from some basic beliefs and values like materialism, normative philosophy, rationality, free thinking and humanism. The frequent changes in his political position and political thinking made him an inconsistent personality but seen from a different perspective this flexibility in thinking is also a reflection of pragmatism. His frequent change of political position can never be seen as an example of opportunism. In his own Memoirs, Manabendranath wrote, "In course of time, experience taught me tolerance and modesty". There can be no doubt about the originality of his thinking but his attempt to link movements based on New Humanism with the humanist philosophy of Marxism did not attract the public at large. The distance that was created between Manabendranath and his countrymen for his prolonged stay at Europe could not be bridged even after his return. He never had a permanent mass face before his countrymen. Manabendranath's western education and culture made him a distant person rather than a close one to his countrymen. The

failure to bridge this distance was the prime reason why New Humanism even if filled with potentialities was limited only to the realm of thinking that could not be transformed into practice.

Renowned scholar Samaren Roy says that Manabendranath was not attracted to Marxism or socialism during his stay in India. The main reason for this was that Indian philosophy had no element reflecting the eagerness to change the world. While describing Manabendranath's approach to Marxism, Samaren Roy writes, "Roy's approach to Marxism was neither political nor economic. It was philosophical. Roy was in agreement with Antonio Gramsci that the philosophical aspect of Marxism needed to be revised so that it could offer something to the idealistically inclined." Pointing toward a massive inconsistency Manabendranath told that even the recognition of the voting rights of all the adults could not guarantee economic equality of all. If that could have been guaranteed it could be seen as an important progress on the bourgeois democratic revolution. In this context the analysis of Samaren Roy is worth mentioning – "Till 1946, Red Napoleonism meant to Roy a liberalizing development recalling Napoleon carrying the gains of the French Revolution to the countries he conquered. But Roy did not want the Russian revolution to be carried by force to Europe." During July 1946 Manabendranath wrote some pamphlets under the title 'If I Were Stalin' whose main argument was that communism should be regarded as a liberal humanist force in Europe.

By criticizing communism in his philosophy of New Humanism, Manabendranth said that 'the philosophy of society or programme and planning for social reconstruction that does not recognize the supremacy and sovereignty of the individual, ignores the individuality and the idea of emancipation of the individual-self as meaningless and hollow, that philosophy or planning cannot be seen as truly progressive or revolutionary.' He also that even if democracy remains absent in the economic sphere, political democracy is possible. But if there is no political democracy then economic democracy cannot be attained. By anticipating the dark days ahead through his insight, Manabendranth said that 'Once in power, totalitarianism does not want to be dethroned. Under the Victorian Empire when culture, industrialization and trade started to get managed in a planned manner, in the name of increasing work opportunity, efficiency and collective consciousness with the promise of quick development, individual freedom was curtailed. Thus the promise of a higher form of democracy through socialism also becomes impossible. The promise on which totalitarianism is founded becomes unattainable because of totalitarian system itself.' These comments of Manabendranath were in the aftermath of his experience with Stalin's

implementation of raw totalitarianism. Even Rabindranath Tagore in his 'letters from Russia' also indicated the dangerous implications of totalitarianism in Russia.

In the New Humanist philosophy of Manabendranath the main point discussed was the ways in which social emancipation of the individual is made possible from the clutches of the oppressed and fraud class. He gave importance not to the kings and elites but to common aware individual in the making of new history. It is written in the Communist Manifesto that – 'The class and class antagonistic bourgeoisie society will be replaced by an organization autonomous development of each will be determined by the autonomous development of all'. Manabendranath was not in agreement with this position and he held that communist society is not a true revolutionary or progressive society because it reflects contradictions- as to provide freedom by taking away freedom is meaningless, in the same away by sacrificing individual at the altar of class and society and then to make arrangements for their freedom is equally meaningless. According to Manabendranath the production system and planning that is determined not by the profit motive in the market but by the demands and needs of the people can be made possible through democracy and securing individual autonomy. Here one can find similarity between Rabindranath's idea of cooperative based economy and Manabendranath's idea.

1.5 - Summary

Manabendranath Roy was a colourful character whose political thinking has changed time and again in the light of changing circumstances. In the early phase of his life he was nationalist, the he became Marxist theoretician, thereafter he became engrossed in modified version of nationalist thought and in the last phase of his life he became a proponent of New Humanism. Manabendranath was a highly intellectual and talented political thinker but his theory was not well received or influenced the public at large because he failed to make connections with his fellow countrymen because of his prolonged stay in Europe and his Eurocentrism. Nevertheless one has to accept that the elements of being a fundamental political thinker were present in full scale in Manabendranath. When Manabendranath use Transformed from nationalist to a Marxist and then again to a New Humanist, in this entire journey he never got detached from the fundamentals of Marxism. Manabendranth and his fundamental theory of society never was in clash with the fundamentals of Marxism, only he did not find the path in which socialism was practiced under Stalin in Soviet Russia as the true path for human emancipation. He wanted to establish Marxism in the true ideal of humanism.

Manabendranath wanted to profess New Humanism as an alternative model of philosophy of state that was based on a mixture of rationalism, scientific attitude, materialism and romanticism.

1.6 – Sample Questions

1. Analyse the ways in which Manbendranath got transformed from nationalism to Marxism.
 2. Did Manabendranath's New Humanism develop by discarding Marxism?
 3. What were the reasons for the difference of opinion between Comintern and Manabendranath?
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1.7 Suggested Readings

Gauripada Bhattacharya, Evolution of the Political Philosophy of M.N. Roy

Sibnarayan Roy (ed.), M.N. Roy: Philosopher Revolutionary

Sibnarayn Roy (ed.) Selected Works of M.N. Roy

Nirmal Chadra Bhattacharya, Social and Political Ideas of M.N. Roy

Sibnarayn Roy (ed.), For a Revolution from Below: An M.N. Roy Commemorative Volume.

Unit-3 □ Socialist Thought of Jawaharlal Nehru

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Brief Life-history
- 1.2 Nehru's ideas on democracy and socialism
- 1.3 Nehru as the proponent of planned economy
- 1.4 Nehru on Marxism
- 1.5 The changing dimensions of Nehru's socialist ideas
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Sample Questions
- 1.8 Suggested Readings

Objectives

In this unit Jawaharlal Nehru's socialist thinking is presented in the following structured manner:-

- a) Life and Works of Jawaharlal Nehru
- b) Early influence of Marxist socialism on Jawaharlal Nehru
- c) Jawaharlal's views on democracy and socialism
- d) Transformation of Jawaharlal from Marxian Socialism to Mixed Economy

1.0 Introduction

After independence the ideological basis of the state formation of India was based on the political ideas of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was the symbol of modern outlook of independent India. This outlook developed in him during his days of leading the anti-imperialist freedom struggle for independence. The ideas that germinated during the days of freedom struggle were developed later on but Nehru also altered his ideas and principles to suit the changing period. This flexibility was present in him throughout and as such he can be seen as a follower of pragmatism. He played an important role in India's freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Even if he had

difference of opinion on many issues with Gandhi he did not have the courage to revolt which was shown by Subhas Chandra. However as the leader and Prime Minister of independent India did he totally rejected the ideas of Gandhi. Not only he reject Gandhism but he also underwent internal transformation as the very Marxism on which his socialist ideas germinated was treated by him as irrelevant. There is a striking difference to be noticed between pre and post independence Nehru. One can find traces of his political thinking in his autobiography titled- An Autobiography and in his two books- The Discovery of India and Glimpses of World History. Moreover in his numerous speeches, letters and articles one can find reflection of his thinking. In the critic circle there has been a lot of discussion about the extent to which revolutionary achievements were attained by the person who once along with Subhas Chandra appeared as the leader of the forum for leftist struggle within the Congress. Whether till the end he was able to work together with Subhas Chandra is also a matter of serious debate. Thus it is not only necessary to analyse the political thinking of Nehru - the architect of modern India but it is also important to have a reappraisal of his role.

1.1 Brief Life-history

Nehru was the son of an affluent Kashmiri Hindu Brahmin family whose father was a barrister -Pandit Motilal Nehru. He was born on 4th November, 1889 at Allahabad. A major part of his student life was spent in England. In the tender age of fifteen his father sent him to Harrow for further education. After finishing his schooling from there, Jawaharlal joined Cambridge University to study Science. After passing Bar at Law in 1910 he returned to India. After spending some years as a lawyer of Allahabad High Court he joined the freedom struggle. He was elected as a member of All India Congress Committee in 1918. Jawaharlal's political career started to gain momentum from the period of Non-Cooperation Movement of 1920-21. In 1929 in the Lahore session of Indian National Congress he was elected as the party President. Before that in 1927 session at Madras he along with Subhas Chandra raised the issue of 'total independence'. During 1926-27, Nehru went to Europe and in February 1929 at Brussels he actively participated in the Congress against Colonization, Oppression and Imperialism. He was impressed and influenced by the united stand of socialist and Third World nationalist forces at the Congress. From this point of view Nehru started to be influenced by Marxism. In the Lucknow and Faizpur session of Indian National Congress in 1936 and 1936, his socialist tendencies were reflected well enough through his Presidential addresses. In 1938 when Subhas Chandra Bose

became the President of Indian National Congress he formed the National Planning Committee and made Nehru the Chairman of the Committee. Nehru was an enthusiastic supporter of national economic planning. Later on as the Prime Minister of independent India he made efforts to realize the Five year plans. At this time Nehru took up the path of mixed economy and he followed neither the path of Marx nor Gandhi.

As a leader of non-alignment/bloc-neutral politics Nehru sought for alternate paths. Without entangling independent India either into the capitalist bloc led by the United States or the socialist bloc led by the former Soviet Union, Nehru adopted a policy of equi-distance. However during the 1962 Sino-Indian war, the United States explicitly and the Soviet Union implicitly supported the cause of India. The defeat of India in this war devastated Nehru mentally. Nehru realized that in order to retard India's growing importance in world politics China attacked India in order to dampen India's image worldwide. This particular motive of China was not successful and the voluntary reflection of sympathy across the world for India proved this point. After few years of the Sino-Indian war Nehru died on 27th May 1964.

1.2 Nehru's ideas about Democracy and Socialism

During the years of freedom struggle Nehru was an ardent follower of leftist ideas within the Congress and he continued that approach when he was made President for three terms of Congress and in each of these terms he talked about India's progress in the path of socialism from the chair of the President of the Congress party. At the same time however it is a fact that to achieve socialism he dared to stride in any form of revolutionary or radical path. In the 1936 Lucknow Congress session Nehru praised socialism and advocated the linking of workers and peasant organizations with the Congress to form a united anti-imperialist front. However in this particular session resolution for achieving socialism as a goal was not passed and the other resolutions were passed before the end of the Presidential address but Nehru did not resign in order to uphold the unity of Congress party. He said, "I see no way of ending the poverty, the vast unemployment, the degradation and subjection of the Indian people except 'through socialism which' is a vital creed which I hold with both my head and heart." Finally however the rightist faction of the Congress party prevailed in the Lucknow session and on 20th April 1936 industrialised Ghanashyamdas Birla wrote to Purushottamdas Thakurdas that "on the one hand the speech of Jawaharlalji was thrown as a junk paper in the dustbin as the resolutions passed were totally against the main principles of his speech. He could have fractured the party by resigning but

he from doing that. Jawaharlalji is just like English democrats who take defeat in a sporting spirit. He is eager to raise his own ideology but realizing that the situation is not in favour he did not pressurize for its attainment." Nehru had an utter disgust for Fascism. In 1935 through a note Nehru said that there are two alternatives before the world- communism and Fascism and he is totally in favour of the first. On this issue there was difference of opinion between Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. On 28th March Subhas Chandra wrote to Nehru – "It is no use championing lost causes all the time and condemning countries like Germany and Italy and giving a certificate of good conduct to Britain." On 19th March 1935 Jawaharlal wrote in his personal diary that 'Subhas seems to be writing a great deal of nonsense. He can only think of himself in terms of being a Mussolini.' Nehru viewed fascism as the destructive image of imperialism and he never met with Mussolini. His clear policy was not to have any relation with the fascists or in other words No truck with Fascism.

1.3 Nehru as the proponent of Planned Economy

Since the Faizpur session of the Indian National Congress Nehru campaigned for planned economy and during the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha on 14th to 17th August a specialist committee was appointed to form to draft plan for all India industrial development. There is a debate among scholars whether Nehru or Subhas Chandra is the first architect of national planning in India. Under the Presidentship of Subhas Chandra of the National Congress in 1938 the National Planning Committee was formed and Nehru was made the Chairman of the Committee. It is true that Nehru conceived of national planning much earlier than Subhas Chandra but it is also a fact that National Planning Committee was formed during the tenure of Subhas Chandra's Presidentship of Indian National Congress and he gave legitimacy of the Congress party to the idea of national planning even realizing that it may lead to opposition from Gandhi. In his book, *Discovery of India*, Nehru talked about National Planning Committee in detail but did not mention a word about the contribution of Subhas Chandra in this regard. Nehru had many differences of opinion with Subhas Chandra but on the question of national planning both strode the same path. Jawaharlal was doubtful of becoming the chairman of the Committee as he knew that the leadership of Congress party viewed such committee's as 'unwanted interference'. Ultimately Nehru decided to take up the post and for this even Rabindranath was elated. On 28th November Anil Kumar Chanda, secretary of Rabindranath communicated to Nehru that Rabindranath was impressed by the ideas of Dr. Saha on scientific development planning. Rabindranath also expected a lot

from this Committee. Rabindranath saw two persons with modern outlook in the Congress party – Jawaharlal and Subhas Chandra. In place of traditional outdated cottage industry based approach, Jawaharlal and Subhas Chandra brought modern and scientific approach.

1.4 Nehru on Marxism

During the pre-independence period Jawaharlal had much faith on Marxist theory. On 18th June 1938 he wrote to Basanta Kumar Mallick – “I accept generally speaking the Marxist analysis of history though & think in relation to India, it does not lay sufficient stress on certain features of our past. That does not however falsify our analysis to any marked degree. I also accept the general communist goal of a classless society.” In his autobiography Jawaharlal wrote – “I dislike dogmatism and Karl Marx’s writings as revealed scriptures and the regimentation and heresy hunts which seem to be a feature of modern Communism. But still I incline more towards a Communist philosophy.” Moreover on 17th January he wrote to Lord Lothian – ‘Marx’s interpretation of history is the only one which does explain history to some extent and gives it meaning.’ From these writings it is clearly established that even if he had some doubts on certain issues of Marxism, in general Nehru accepted the Marxist worldview. On 5th June 1936 Nehru in a Press release told that he preferred to use the word socialism in place of communism. He realized that Communism was not suited for India. Nehru presented himself both as a socialist and an individualist. On 28th March 1939 Subhas Chandra in a letter to Nehru insinuated at this contradiction – “How a Socialist can be an individualist beats me”. Subhas Chandra also said that without the organizational structure of a party no country in this world could realize socialism and so Nehru as the president of Congress party could have been more successful if he had a party organization rallying behind him like Gandhi. On 3rd April 1939 Jawaharlal in his reply to Subhas Chandra wrote ‘I am intellectually a Socialist and by temperament and training, an individualist’. Nehru saw no tension between socialism and individualism.

Nehru did not possess any blind faith on Marxism but he had no doubt about the correctness of Marxist theory in general. So he wrote in his autobiography that – ‘Marx may be wrong in some of his statements. But he seems to me to have possessed quite an extraordinary degree of insight into social phenomena. This method applied

to past history as well as current events, helps us in understanding them far more than any other methods or approach.'

In his book, *Glimpses of World History*, Nehru regarded *Das Capital* as scientific essay and wrote - "Marx has dealt with the development of history and economics dispassionately and scientifically avoiding all vagueness and idealism." The Well known writer John Gimther correctly said that 'Nehru's general approach was Marxist'. Renowned intellectual Hirendranath Mukhopadhyay also talked about Nehru's general approach towards Marxism.

1.5 The changing dimensions of Nehru's socialist ideas

Though Nehru in his early political life accepted the general usefulness of Marxism, in his later political life he had drastic changes in his thinking. On 28th February 1952 he went to the extent of saying that 'I think Marxism is out of date'. In this context one comment of Jawaharlal is important to note - 'Marx was a great man and everybody could profit by his name, but am I to be told that what he said about England a 100 or 150 years ago is to be applied to India or any other country?' It becomes clear from his that he was not rigid in his earlier position on the relevance and usefulness of Marxism.

In the post independence period with Nehru as the Prime Minister a kind of state capitalism emerged. The first fifteen years after independence witnessed 9% to 10% of Gross Domestic Product coming from private sector. In 1965 from a survey done by Prasanta Mahalanabis it was known that twenty business organizations had a controlling influence over national economy.

In 1948 the amount of foreign investment was 2,176 million rupees and in 1946 it was raised to 6,185 million rupees. In this period Jayprakash Narayan sarcastically commented on Nehru by saying that - 'You want to go to socialism but you want the capitalists to help you'. Sarbapalli Gopal also said 'Socialism lost its ideological edge for Nehru'.

In 1957 the Tata Electrical Company donated a sum of 3, 00,000 rupees to the Congress party fund. During the election of 1962 Tata and Brila Company together donated one million rupees to the election fund of the Congress party. Cement Company also donated five lakh rupees. From these facts it becomes clear that Congress had not taken any socialist programme. In 1965 in a sarcastic comment

Birla told that he had full faith on the socialist policies of the Congress fully knowing that Congress will never adopt any revolutionary socialist programmes.

1.8 Summary

In the political thinking of Nehru one can find high influence of internationalism. In his early life he was attracted to Marxist idea of socialism and in his autobiography he recorded his faith on the Marxist philosophy though he did not accepted Marxism in its entirety. At the same time he also said that 'The success or failure of the Russian social experiments do not directly affect the validity of the Marxian theory'. While writing his book, Glimpses of World History, Nehru had similar ideas. However in his book, Discovery of India, Nehru slightly belittles his obsession with internationalism. Jawaharlal was close to Rabindranath so far his international and universal outlook is concerned but Rabindranath at the last instance hailed Subhas Chandra as the hero of the nation as Rabindranath understood that for a colonized country, internationalism is nothing but a luxury to be thought about. At the end of his life Nehru also had this realization.

Subhas Chandra had serious difference of opinion with Nehru on the question of communism and fascism and Subhas accused Nehru of criticising countries like Germany and Italy while certifying imperialist countries like Britain. This criticism was not well founded as Nehru himself wrote in his autobiography – 'Indeed I have always wondered at and admired the astonishing knack of the British people of making their moral standards correspond with their material interests and of seeing virtue in everything that advances their imperialist designs. Mussolini and Hitler are condemned by them in perfect good faith and with righteous indignation for their attacks on liberty and democracy and in equal good faith similar attacks and deprivation of liberty in India seem to them as necessary and the highest moral reasons are advanced to show that true disinterested behavior on their part demands them.'

There is a drastic change on Jawaharlal's socialist ideas in the post independence period. He advocated mixed economy in India which was just the other name for state capitalism. The influence of capitalists like Birla on the Congress party started growing and ideologically Nehru started to drift away from the path of socialism. Even while hailing socialism Nehru failed to take up any revolutionary programme to actualize socialism in India. Moreover being a representative of the left faction within Congress, Nehru had to concede defeat time and again to the rightists faction

in the debates on policy matters within the party. The dominating influence of Gandhi in his political career became illustrative. But he had not taken post independence India in the direction that Gandhi visualized. At this point his earlier fascination with Marxism also ebbed down and at some point he rejected Marx. It is important to mention that Nehru was an atheist and in his autobiography he wrote that he did not want to take recourse to the world of religion and spiritualism but the same Nehru in order to understand his turbulent life was influenced by some kind of other worldly spiritualism. This may be one of the possible reasons for Nehru's disenchantment with Marxism. Thus the history of post independence period is the history of the transformation of Marxist Nehru.

1.6 Sample Questions

- 1) Analyse the socialist ideas of Jawaharlal Nehru
 - 2) Was Jawaharlal Nehru influenced by Marx?
 - 3) Did Jawaharlal Nehru drift away from his socialist position in the post independence period? Discuss with suitable reasons.
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1.7 Suggested Readings

B.R. Nanda, Jawaharlal Nehru: The Rebel Statesman

Hiren Mukherjee, The Gentle Colossus

Michael Brecher, Nehru: A Political Biography

Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography

Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India

Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History

Jawaharlal Nehru, A Bunch of Old Letters

Unit - 4 □ Jayprakash Narayan – Marxism, Gandhism, Socialism

Structure

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Brief Life-history

1.2 Jayprakash on Marxism

1.3 Jayprakash on Democratic Socialism

1.4 The change of perspective in Jayprakash –transformation to Gandhism

1.5 Analysis and Evaluation

1.6 Summary

1.7 Sample Questions

1.8 Suggested Readings

Objectives

In this unit the structure of socialist ideas of Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan has been phased out in the following sections –

- a) Brief history of the life and activities of Jayprakash Narayan
- b) The early phase of Jayprakash's obsession with Marxism and opposition to Gandhism
- c) Transformation of Jayprakash from Marxism to Gandhism
- d) Jayprakash's firm self-involvement in democracy

1.0 Introduction

In the history of political thinking of modern India the name of Jayprakash Narayan is worth remembering. He was on the one hand a political theorist and on the other a political activist. He had some fundamental thinking in the context of India on the concept of state, power, social change and reconstruction, without being a trained philosopher or political scientist. Sacrificing his opportunity to study abroad,

Jayprakash Narayan decided to join India's freedom struggle. Since then he was associated with politics in India till death. During the last stage of his life he voluntarily joined the sarvodaya movement based on the ideas of Gandhi and propagated the ideas of 'total revolution' and 'party-less democracy'. In his political life one can see many shifts and changes. To the critics even now Jayprakash is seen as a negative symbol. Some scholars have described him as a 'soul with shifting tendencies', others have seen him as a confused person and to some he was full of contradictions. Even for some scholars he was a symbol of fascism. However Jayprakash was inclined to the ideas of freedom, peace, brotherhood and equality throughout his life. His one and only goal was freedom of the people. To one scholar there was an unflinching democratic tendency in Jayprakash. He treated the citizens of the entire country as a part of his family and believed that they had the right to criticize him for all his ideologies, beliefs and activities. Though he immersed himself in public service throughout his life he was not interested in taking any government job or office but he helped the government servants while they faced problems. Dr. Rammonohar Lohia described him as a 'limitless personality'. In a discussion Jayprakash said that democracy has remained for the citizens and it has not yet been transformed into the rule by the citizens themselves.

1.1 Brief Life-history

Jayprakash was born on 11th October 1902. As a student he was very meritorious. He went through the Hindi version of Bankimchandra's novels in his youth. In his student life he joined the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi though this particular political involvement was short lived for him. However his distaste for foreign rule started from that time only. After that for higher education Jayprakash went to the United States. Spending seven years at the States Jayprakash returned to India in 1929. While staying at America he came to be attracted to the ideas of egalitarianism through a Polish Jew named Abram Landy. He was also introduced to Das Capital and other texts of Marx. He also got influenced by the writings and discussions of Manabendranath Roy on Indian politics and economics. Under the influence of Marxism, Jayprakash realized that unless poverty and inequality were eradicated from society freedom in reality will not be achieved and for that what is required is a social revolution. After coming to India in 1929 Jayprakash however joined the Congress party and not the communist party. The negative approach of the communist party to the Indian National Congress also did not have support from him.

Experience of Jayprakash within the Congress party was not satisfactory. Even if he was not attracted to Soviet brand of socialism, he had deep faith in Marxism. Gandhi's politics of class compromise failed to appeal to Jayprakash and thus in 1934 along with Acharya Narendra Dev, Meher Ali, Rammonohar Lohia, Achhyut Patyabardhan and others, he formed the Congress Socialist party. They had amongst themselves ideological differences and many joined this party as members of Communist party.

Immediately after independence Jayprakash changed his political position. At that time he came under the influence of Democratic Socialism in place of Marxism. At that time in 1948 Socialist Party was formed whose first President was Narendra Dev and Jayprakash was the Secretary. After the first general election in 1952 Socialist party and J.B. Kripalani's K.M.P got merged to form the Praja Socialist party (P.S.P). After Gandhi's assassination in 1948 it dawned on Jayprakash that elimination of poverty and attainment of freedom is impossible by using state power. Alternatively by creating social eagerness through a change of heart a permanent social revolution is made possible. He also joined in the Bhudan movement of Vinobha Bhave. He announced the promise to form Sarvodaya Society. In 1957 he shed all ties with party politics. But he was well aware about the contemporary political happenings. In 1976 Indira Gandhi declared emergency and the Janata Party was formed under the leadership of Jayprakash and it came to power by defeating Indira Gandhi in the 1977 election. However this Janata government also failed to achieve the 'total revolution' idea of Jayprakash. On 4th October 1979 Jayprakash died and in the next year Janta party lost power to the Congress at the centre.

1.2 Jayprakash on Marxism

While staying at the United States of America, Jayprakash experienced the crisis of capitalist economy in the context of the Great Depression of 1930. At that time the development of the Russian economy made him doubtless about the supremacy of Marxism. He saw the reason for the Russian success in the scientific truth of Marxism. Jayprakash accepted the fact that Marxism developed around the idea of historical materialism. To him socio-economic reconstruction was the major issue than socialism or individual freedom. Even if the stateless society is the ultimate goal, Jayprakash accepted the Marxist logic that to establish socialism the usurpation and use of state power is necessary and he also accepted the necessity of Proletarian dictatorship. He made no fundamental contribution to the Marxist perspective of Jayprakash. He accepted the main principles of Marxism without much argument. Jayprakash gave

a coherent shape to his Marxist ideas in the 1936 published pamphlet called Why Socialism. However by abandoning the path of blood-shedding revolution and violence he propagated revolution a peaceful and rational manner.

1.3 Jayprakash on Democratic Socialism

Marxist Jayprakash was against the policy of the Comintern from 1930s itself to colonized country like India but his faith on the Soviet model of socialism and the fundamentals of Marxism was intact. However from the first half of the 1940s he started changing his attitude towards Soviet Russia. The curtailment of democratic rights, the coercive silencing of the opposition party the all-engulfing power of the state and such other features of the Soviet model made Jayprakash critical of the model. In this context he started raising questions against the fundamental tenets of Marxism and its mainstream understanding and analysis. In this phase beside economic equality, Jayprakash started to pin his faith on political freedom, change in democratic ways, and social enterprise in place of state enterprise. My Practice of Socialism(1946), The Transition of Socialism(1947), The Ideological problems of Socialism(1948) are some of the books that highlight the changing direction of the political thought of Jayprakash.

1.4 The change of perspective in Jayprakash –transformation to Gandhism

In his 1946 published article in Janata paper title My Picture of Socialism, Jayprakash accepted Marxism as a scientific attitude and declared himself a Marxist. At the same time however he clarified that as there was no place for ultimate truth in science, similarly Marxism cannot be taken as a symbol of any ultimate truth. The major contribution of Marx, according to Jayprakash, is that he has provided for the coming generation a particular scientific method to analyse history and society correctly. Marxism is not an endless truth but a method to understand society in different times. If Marxism is regarded as science then there is no place for dogma. In Marxism there are many half-truths which need to be corrected in the light of new information. Jayprakash got so scared about the experience of the socialist model of Soviet Russia that he rejected any presence of a universal model of socialism. In his article titled Transition to Socialism he said that the path to transformation to socialism cannot be the same in all countries. The prevailing situation in a particular country

will determine the method and the form of revolution. It is not possible to mechanically follow the strategies of a successful revolution of one country into another.

Once upon a time Jayprakash was a staunch critique of Gandhism. Gandhism was to him not revolutionary but reformist. Jayprakash ridiculed Gandhi's idea of Ram Rajya. Gandhi's idea of trusteeship was confusing to Jayprakash. Gandhi's proposal for withdrawal of all heavy industries and machine did not get support from Jayprakash. In an overall analysis Gandhism appeared to him as a dangerous theory. However with his disenchantment with Marxism he slowly and gradually transformed his position and came close to Gandhism. In the post independence he found in Gandhi an image of a fundamental socialist. Though Jayprakash never took a rigid position on the distinction between violence and non-violence, he ultimately drifted towards peaceful method. He also said that, "The method of violent revolution might conceivably lead to a socialist democracy but in the only country where it has been tried, it has led to a bureaucratic state, in which democracy does not exist. I should like to take a lesson from history." At this point he doubted the usefulness of the path followed by Vinoba Bhave and was forced to return to the path of peaceful mass resistance.

Jayprakash took the idea of individual morality very seriously from Gandhian philosophy. In a Conference Jayprakash said that in Gandhism the question of value and morality has not been highlighted to a large extent. From this it can be deduced that a socialist movement is nothing but a politics for socio-economic structural change. One cannot find a reflection in the socialist movement of the idea that a change in the value system of the individual will make socialism a success. This is the reason why despite having a grand ideology there are so many instances of corruption in communist countries. In Soviet Russia one can find the development of state capitalism.

When Jayprakash shifted from socialism to sarvodaya he never took traditional socialism as the path to be followed. In order to eradicate poverty, eliminate oppression, realize happiness and progress of human beings, socialists give importance to material growth. According to Jayprakash, it is true that in an underdeveloped country like India material development and growth is important but when it is seen as the sole goal then competition, violence, tension become inevitable and peace gets hampered.

!The only way of agitation is to have control over the use of consumerist products through self-control and inter-personal cooperation and implementation of socialist

principles. By taking recourse to the path of Sarvodaya and Gandhism in general Jayprakash had a life-long detachment with Marxism. The answer to the question why human beings should be altruist cannot be found in idealism but had to be found in spiritualism and consciousness. Jayprakash wanted to place sarvodaya system on the basis of party-less democracy. As against the Western democratic model of party based parliamentary democracy Jayprakash propagated the idea of party-less democracy as to him political parties divide communities. Through the sarvodaya system of decentralized political model where the importance of the political parties will decrease, Jayprakash wanted to establish communitarian democracy. The base of the political structure in this sarvodaya was the Gram Sabha whereas the implementing authority of this model was the Gram Panchayat. In the subsequent stages the Gram Panchayats will form the Gram Samiti's and the Panchayat Samiti's of a district will unite to form a Zilla Parishad which will in turn form the state assembly and ultimately the state assemblies will unite to form the national assembly/ parliament.

The main aim of sarvodaya economy is not to produce for profit motive but for the welfare of the people and the society. The basis of economy is cooperation and not competition, oppression and antagonism. From his experience and insight Jayprakash realized that by keeping intact the features of Western economy and by only changing the ownership to the hands of the state in the name of socialism will not eliminate the fundamental errors of modern economy. He was for the abolition of market economy and said that the production system will be such that the individuals will not be a slave to the machines but they will themselves control the machines. He also talked about protecting the dignity of labour and labourers. According to him due to over-specialization of the production system the labourers get alienated. The one who is alienated from the happiness of creation in the modern production system in turn enjoys in the diversity present in the presence of both agriculture and industry in all the villages of the sarvodaya society.

From the above analysis, it is proved that at this point there was a death of Marxist Jayprakash and the rebirth of Gandhian Jayprakash. The idea of party-less democracy that he talked was a total negation of the Marxist model of socialism. Moreover he declared jihad against the mechanical model of Soviet socialism and its over-dependence on principles. At this point one can find a similarity between Rabindranath and Jayprakash, because in his Letters from Russia, Rabindranath criticized the repressive policies in the national life of Russia. During this time Jayprakash got totally transformed into Gandhism.

1.5 Analysis and Evaluation

There has been so many shifts in the political career of Jayprakash that many scholars see him as a symbol of contradictions. However the truth is that he was an open minded person and no single ideology or position came to him as the ultimate truth. At one point of time he had so much faith on Marxism that he considered all Marxists as a thinking person. By getting entangled in the dream of socialist movement by Manabandranath Roy and his followers and communists, Jayprakash opened the door of his Congress Socialist Party to them but they were much concerned about strategy than principle and ideology. For this inclusion made by Jayprakash, leaders of C.S.P like Achhyut Pattabaredhan resigned from the working committee. In South India the C.S.P organization was given to be lead by communist leaders like EMS Namboodripad and Ram Murty with the result that when communists were expelled from C.S. P in 1940 then the C.S.P organization in South India faltered without any leaders. For this Jayprakash indulged in self-criticism and seek forgiveness from the part members. When Gandhi was deserted by leaders known to be close to him like Nehru and Sardar Patel, Jayprakash immersed himself in the preaching of Gandhi. In 1950 the Conference of C.S.P was held at Tamil Nadu and Jayprakash in his address as the Secretary said that socialism did not arise from the texts of Marx. It is there in the soil of India and unknowingly it is there in the blood of all Indians. Indian democratic socialism should be understood not in the light of European mentality but in the history and revolutionary evolution of India. Socialism is not merely anti-capitalism or state-centrality. Nationalisation of industries and collectivization of land though are important elements of socialist economy but are not the only elements. In socialism there will be no oppression of individuals by individuals, no concern for security, there should be fair and equal distribution of resources, services and opportunities. Communism also talks in a similar manner but in reality it gets transformed to party dictatorship and thereby creates conditions antithetical to socialism itself. Socialism desires to build a human social life based on certain values which cannot be bypassed for any theory, any party programme or for gaining any small benefit. Thus socialism is not a mere theoretical appendage; it is a new culture and civilization. These arguments of Jayprakash also got reflected in the new thesis of the Praja Socialist Party. From these it can be deduced without any doubt that there were no alterations in the fundamental political belief, values and dream of Jayprakash. He showed courage and absolutist attitude towards his values but his path of activity and ideology was marked by relativism. This cannot be termed as opportunism. With

regard to value system Jayprakash was entirely rigid while with regard to ideology and the path of action he was entirely flexible. This may be seen as an example of pragmatism or realism.

Before the departure of Subhas Chandra from India, Jayprakash wrote a letter to him in 1940, reflecting his desire and plan to start an alternative an autonomous movement outside the Congress party. He wrote that though Congress is seen as mass organization its leaders had no mass connection. In his words – “the peasant, labour and left national movements have been isolated. In these circumstances it will be a great folly to look at the Congress for mass revolutionary action.” He also wrote that – “The task of destroying what would remain of imperialism and of carrying forward the democratic revolution revolves on the workers, peasants and lower middle classes.” Dreaming of a coming agricultural revolution he said that unlike China there may not be enough strength of the peasants to dismantle the Zamindar-raj but the context of such a struggle must be created by preparing the peasants for revolution. By giving importance to the role of Peasant organization he said that preparing for revolution does not mean that the task of proletarian revolution will be halted. Rather workers movements will run parallel. Jayprakash at this time could not repose faith on the Congress party. He said that – “The Congress no longer remains an instrument for revolutionary action and therefore we must prepare an independent basis for such action.” Subhas Chandra did not pay any heed to this call of Jayprakash for the simple reason that by that time he was determined to leave the country. It is a matter of conjecture of what would have happen if Subhas Chandra had responded to the call of Jayprakash for struggling against the British imperialism without leaving the country, but it is clear from the above mentioned letter that at this time Jayprakash was influenced by the idea of Marxist model of revolution and he had tremendous difficulty visualizing Gandhi leading the Congress as a mass organization.

In the post independence period when Jayprakash talked about total revolution he did not regard Marxism as a doctrine of truth any longer and repeatedly talked about the emancipation of tortured and oppressed people. On 23rd August 1975, Jayprakash wrote in his prison diary that “The question is even larger. It is how to bring about a systemic change in society that is how to bring about what I have called a total revolution, revolution in every sphere and aspect of society.” He continued to write that even after twenty five years of independence there has been no fundamental socio-economic restructuring in India. In his words – “Zamindari is abolished, land reforms acts have been passed, untouchability has been legally prohibited and so on. But the village in most parts of India is still in the grip of the higher castes and even

the bigger and medium land owners. The small and the marginal landowners, the landless, the backward classes and the Harijans form the majority in most villages in most states. Yet their position continues to be miserable.”

Jayprakash wrote that there have been nationalization of some industries, insurances and banks and some government industries have been established. But it had led to smooth the path for state capitalism and large scale corruption. On 15th September in his diary, Jayprakash wrote – “All politics, all education, all privileges are confined to the tiny layer of the society at the top, not necessarily all capitalists, but all privileged, the public sector, leaving out agriculture is perhaps the larger part of the industrial economy.” On 7th October while talking about the necessity of an economic revolution Jayprakash said – “It means revolution in the economic structure of society and its economic institutions, as also their new revolutionary forms. The Economic revolution implies both change and new orientation.” From these quotations it is clear that even after drifting away from the path of Marxism, the necessity of economic revolution and its positive implication was always present in the thinking of Jayprakash.

1.6 Summary

In the colourful political career of Jayprakash Narayan one can find frequent changes of position. At first he was a hard-core Marxist, then with his disenchantment with Communism he shifted to Gandhism and centering on Gandhism he became the proponent of Democratic Socialism. Throughout his life Jayprakash was an ardent believer in individual freedom and democracy. He was never enslaved by any ideology and he never took any ideology as the epitome of supreme truth. He prioritized certain values in his life and realized that communism was not a help but a hindrance in the actualization of those values. For this reason Jayprakash drifted away from Marxism and took recourse to Gandhism and searched for the ultimate path for human emancipation. At one time he may have had ridiculed Gandhism but in his later life he took help of that very Gandhism to stride the path of value based socialism which was not a prototype of any western model. Such a visualization of Jayprakash Narayan was consistent with the civilization, culture and history of India.

1.7 Sample Questions

- a) Discuss briefly the way in which Jayprakash viewed Marxism during his early political phase.

- b) Discuss in details the way in which Jayprakash got transformed from Marxism to Gandhism.
- c) Was Jayprakash a proponent of democratic socialism? Give reasons for your answer.
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1.8 Suggested Readings

Ajit Bhattacharya, **Jayprakash Narayan: A Political Biography**

Nitish Dasgupta, **The Social and Political Theory of Jayprakash Narayan**

Bimal Prasad(ed.) **A Revolutionary's Quest: Selected Writings of Jayprakash Narayan**

Bimal Prasad, **Gandhi, Nehru and JP: Studies in Leadership**

Sandip Das(ed.), **Who Was This Man?: Jayprakash Narayan – A Centenary Volume**

to discuss the details of the work in which the student is engaged during the year.
The student should be prepared to discuss the work in which he is engaged during the year.
The student should be prepared to discuss the work in which he is engaged during the year.

1.2. Suggested Readings

The student should be prepared to discuss the work in which he is engaged during the year.
The student should be prepared to discuss the work in which he is engaged during the year.
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MODULE - 4
MOVEMENTS

MOVEMENTS
MODEL - 4

Unit-1 □ Swadeshi Movement

Structure

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Nationalists' Confrontation with Curzon
- 4.3 Boycott and Swadeshi Movement
- 4.4 Concluding Observations
- 4.5 Suggested Readings
- 4.6 Sample Questions

1.01 Introduction :

The Swadeshi movement of 1905-07 brought to the forefront split between two tendencies within the Indian national movement and within the structure of the Indian National Congress Party-known as the moderates and the extremists. In contrast with the moderates a policy of reconciliation and compromise with imperialism, the (extremists) demanded time bound programmes and policy harming the British interests in India. This new school of thought represented an alternative idea challenging the moderates compromising policies of conciliation with imperialism. Disillusioned with the policy of mendicancy followed by the moderates, the extremists believed in selfreliance and sought to achieve "Swaraj" through direct action. The extremists articulated their opposition both to the moderates and the British government. Moreover the extremists also felt the need of being economically self-reliant to fight the British state that gained in strength by exploiting India's economic responses. Swadeshi was not only an economic design but also a political slogan on which Indian was sought to be made strong by being self reliant. The Extremists ruled out the possibility of negotiations with the Mullen for verbal concession. This attitude of the extremists enhanced major confrontation with the British government.

1.02 The Nationalist Confrontation with Curzon

The next confrontation between Lord Curzon the then viceroy and the nationalist intelligentsia, came through three successive measures: (a) Changes in the Calcutta

Corporation in 1899; (b) the Universities Act of 1904, and (c) the Partition of Bengal in 1905. The first reduced the number of elected Indian members, and was a move directly connected with the interests of the Calcutta European business community, which had often complained about delays in the grant of licenses on other favours. The second measure trumpeted by Lord Curzon as a move to raise the standard of education all round. The Act cut down the number of elected senate members and transferred the power of decision making to government officials. Educated Indian opposed this act, on grounds of the Acts undemocratic and restrictive nature. The intention of the British govt. was to curb the student militancy and to strengthen the British defenses against the raging national tide. Curzon's most unpopular measure-the partition of Bengal according to Sumit Sarkar," has also aroused the most controversy among historians with a complogists tending to emphasize administrative convenience as it's Prime motive against contemporary and latter nationalist changes of deliberate 'divide and rule'." (-1983-106), Between December 1903 and the formal announcement of 19th July 1905, a transfer plan and was formed into a full-scale partition by Frasen, Risely and Curzon.

1.03 Boycott and Swadeshi Movement

The plan of partition of Bengal was announced by the government on 19th July 1905 even though the Indians and particularly the people of Bengal had expressed their resentment against it. The government decided to create a new province consisting of Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi divisions of Bengal, the district of Malda, the state of Tripura and Assam. The province was called 'East Bengal and Assam with its capital at Dacca. The people of Bengal opposed the partition of Bengal strongly and it gave rise to what has been called the anti-partition of Bengal movement. This gave birth to Swadeshi and Boycott Movements.

The Boycott movement was first suggested as a protest against the partition of Bengal by the Sanjivani, a Bengali weekly on July 13, 1905 and was adopted at a public meeting at Beraghat. A grand meeting in the town hall at Calcutta on 7th August 1905, resolved that the use of Swadeshi goods and boycott of foreign goods should be adhered to by the people till the partition of Bengal was annulled. A four-fold programme of boycott was pursued It included the following:

- (a) Boycott of English Cloth, Salt, sugar etc.
- (b) Boycott of English language.
- (c) Resigning from honorary offices under the government and from seats in the legislative councils and
- (d) Social boycott of persons purchasing foreign goods.

The government was no silent spectator to these happenings on the one hand, it moved diplomatically and attempted to divide the people of Bengal particularly the Hindus and the Muslims. It extended out all possible support and assurances to the Muslims. Lord Curzon won over Nawab Salimullah and the Muslim league was established by him with the active support of the British in 1906. Meetings were forcibly dispersed, singing of Vande Mataram was banned, newspapers were suppressed, the picketers were lathi-changed, Gorkha Soldiers were deployed at sensitive places and all sorts of threats and intimidations were meted out to sympathizers of the movement.

Yet the movement continued unabated upto 1907. S.N. Banerjee toured all over India to gain the sympathy of Indians in other provinces for the movement.

But the movement was over by the middle of 1908. It failed to achieve its object because the partition of Bengal could not be annulled before 1911. There were several causes of the failure of the movement. The one primary cause was the un-human repressive policy of the government. The anti Partition Movement was spontaneous and no prior efforts were made to organize it. The Congress was split up at Surat in 1907 and the extremists who were the supporters of the Swadeshi, Boycott and the national education were turned out of it. Besides, the extremists lost their leadership as well at that time and therefore, the Swadeshi Movement lost their driving force. The most effective part of the Movement was the boycott of foreign goods which adversely affected the import of foreign goods. Besides, it gave encouragement to Indian industries, many textile Mills, soaps and match factories, handloom and weaning factories and national banks were opened during the course of movement.

The Bengal National College and The Bengal Technical Institute were established during this time. The ideas of Swadeshi and boycott pursued during the movement brought into prominence the great value of passive resistance.

The movement which grew during the Anti-partition of Bengal Movement brought about several consequences which affected the national movement in a positive way.

1.04 Concluding Observation.

The History of boycott and Swadeshi in Bengal vividly illustrate the limits of an intelligentsia movement with broadly bourgeois aspirations but without a yet real bourgeois support. The general sentiment of leading merchant's class in Calcutta was "that it is much easier to make money by an agency in imported goods than by investment in individual enterprise." (Sankar-1983-117)

The Swadeshi mood in general was closely associated with attempts to combine

politics with religious revivalism, which was repeatedly used as a morale-booster for activists and a principal instrument of mass contact. The Swadeshi mood did bring about significant revive in handloom, silk weaving and some other traditional artisan crafts a point emphasized by two official industrial, Surveys in 1908. But it must be admitted Swadeshi could never seriously threaten the British Strong hold over the crucial sectors of Bengal economy.

The Swadeshi and Boycott movement which grew during the antipartition of Bengal movement brought about several useful consequences which affected the national movement in a positive way. It however closed on chapter of Indian Independence Movement but certainly laid down a firm foundation for future.

1.05 Suggested Readings

1. Sumit Sankar-Modern India-1885-1947-MACMILLAN INDIA PVT.LTD-1984, Delhi.
2. A. R. Desai-SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF INDIAN NATIONALISTS-POPULAR PRAKASHANA-Bombay-1976.
3. L.Prasad-Indian National Movement-L.N. AGARWAL, Agra, 1993.

1.06 Sample Questions

1. Write an essay on the Swadeshi Movement. Mention its limitation. (18)
2. Write an essay on Boycott and Partition of Bengal. (18)
3. Examine the difference between the moderates and the Extremints in respect of their aims and methods. (12)
4. Write short notes:
(a) Boycott, (b) Curzon and the nationalist; (c) Limitations of Swadeshi Movement, (d) Emergence of Boycott.

Unit-2(A) □ Peasant Movements

Structure

- 2(A).1 Introduction**
- 2(A).2 Peasant Movement**
- 2(A).3 Conclusion**
- 2(A).4 Suggested Readings**
- 2(A).5 Sample Questions**

2(A).01 Introduction :

The Predominantly organism climates of Indian Socio-economic structure ensured that the country would experience a number of formidable Peasant Movements in both pre-independence times. Such movements were caused primarily by way of protest against the exploitative policies rooted in the inequitable (agrarian) relations reflected in different forms over various phases in history. Initially, the peasant movements appeared to be localised in India. However, with the consolidation of the revivalist movement in the country and the growing predominance of communist element in the leadership of the Peasant Movement the character and intensity of peasant movement underwent subtle transformation and slowly acquired national dimensions.

2(A).02 Peasant Movement

The Indian peasants were the worst sufferers under the British rule. It has been rightly said that worst result of the British rule in India was extreme poverty of the Indian people and among them the worst sufferers were the Indian peasants. Indebtedness, fragmentation of holdings, increase in the number of agricultural labour etc were the problems which concerned the peasants directly. Besides the Govt. the landlords, intermediaries, the local Baniyas & Patwaris exploited them to the maximum. The peasants, well scattered over a vast area, were poor, lacked mobility and being culturally backward depended more on their fate than their self-efforts.

Their sufferings however forced them to rebel against the Govt. landlords or the Baniyas many times. Mostly their uprisings were violent as they were not organized and were suppressed by violence. In 1870 the Bengal tenants refused to pay the revenue

obstructed their eviction from their lands and fought against the Govt. officers. They were suppressed. The only result of their uprising was the Bengal Tenacy Act of 1885. In 1875 the peasants in Maharashtra attacked the houses Sahyaka'ss (money-leaders) burnt the document killed many Sahukars at several places. But the so called deccan riots were suppressed. However the Deccan Agriculturalists Relief Act was passed in 1879. In the last decade of 19th century the peasants revolted in Punjab at many places. The Govt. passed the Punjab Alienation Act to cease the situation. In 1917-18 the Peasants at Champaran in Bihar sought the support of Gandhi against their masters the indigo planters. They were provided some relief, Gandhi also organized the satyagraha movement of peasants in Khaira against the collection of Land revenue which they could not pay due to the failure of crops. It gained some success.

Thus prior to 1918 the peasants fought at many places against the injustice done to them but as their efforts were not organized they could get only meagre concession from their exploiters. The Indian National Congress also paid only scanty attention to the welfare of the peasants. N.G. Ranga the leader of the peasants even criticized Gandhi's agitation in Champaran which according to him failed to solve the main problems of the peasants viz. the excessive rents and exorbitant debts.

It was only after 1918 that the Indian peasants developed politically consciousness participated in the national movement & gradually formed their own organizations when in 1919 the Indian National Congress launched the non-cooperative Movement it gave the slogan of nonpayment of land revenue. Many peasants therefore felt that the struggle for Swaraj meant struggle against the heavy land revenue and they cooperated with the non-cooperation movement. It was their participation in an organized movement.

The struggle of the peasants however continued even outside the fold of the Congress during this period. The Peasants struggled against their landlords in Guntur district and at many places in Karnataka and Delhi. The Moplah rebellion in 1922 was largely a revolt of Muslim peasants against their landlords, the Namboodri Brahmins of Malabar. But all these movements were suppressed.

The process of the formation of independent Peasants organization started after the Non-cooperation movement. Some peasants organizations were formed in Andhra in 1923. Kisan Sabhas were started in some parts of Punjab, Bengal, Bihar in 1926-27. The Andhra Provincial Ryots Association was started in 1921. In 1928 the representatives of Bihar and U.P. Kisan Sabhas also presented a memorandum consisting of their demands to the All parties Conference presided over by Motilal Nehru.

But these organizations were not very much effective. Most of them accepted the leadership of the nationalist leaders of the INC and put up resistance to the Govt. Under them Kisan movements of Bardoli district in Gujrat were led by Sardar Vallabh Bhai

Patel and Mahatma Gandhi respectively. Other moments of the peasants in UP, Gujrat etc. will also led and inspired by the INC. The peasants also participated in large nos in the Civil Disabedience Movement led by Gandhi though he had not included a single specific demand of the Kisans in his clean print demand put before the Govt.

However after the Civil Disobedience Movement quite a large section among the peasantry realized that the Congress would not fight for their specific grievances because capitalists and big landlords were more influential in it. It pointed out to them the necessity of having independent organizations of their own. The Communists, the Congress socialists and even the left Nationalists like Jawaharlal Nehru emphasized the need of forming such associations. It gave momentum to independent kisan movements in the 30's of the 20th Century. It resulted in the formation of Bihar Kisan Sabha in 1927 the provincial Kisan Sabha in U.P. in 1935 the Madras presidency Ryots Association in 1935, the Madras Presidency Agricultures Association in 1937 to train the Kisans in organizational works. Some peasants organizations took their birth on communal basis also. Sir Abdur Rahim organized the Praja Party with a view to mustering the Muslim peasants in Bengal. Many kisan Sabhas gradually sprang in all other parts of the country as well.

In some cases the Govt. yielded to their pressure resulting in the passing of a few laws like debt Relief Act in U.P. in 1934, the money Lenders Act in 1939.

Yet there was no All India organization of the peasants prior to 1935. The 1st all India Congress of peasants met at Lucknow in 1935 and it founded the first all India organization of the peasants named the All-India Kisan Congress. The All India Kisan Congress Carried on Urdu educative propaganda work among the Indian peasant and attempted to harmonize their efforts It also sought collective affiliation to the Indian National Congress but was refused It however provided a united platform for the Indian peasants to express their grievances and put up point demands. The all India Kishan Sabha was formed in 1936 reflecting the new spirit of unity among left, nationalists, socialist and communists on one hand and according on independent shape to the Peasant Movement vis-à-vis the national movement on the other. As a result the peasant Movement instead of getting engrossed into localised issues and demands now evolved a pan-Indian perspective by putting forth general demands such as abolition of zamindari, distribution of surplus land amongst landless formers and so on thus with the formation of the All India Kisan Sabha the peasant movement in the country received a new tempetus.

The Peasants in general supported the INC in its struggle for independence. Therefore when in 1937 the Congress ministries were formed in most of the provinces they expected that something would be done for their welfare. But they felt disappointed as was the

case with the Indian labour class. The Congress governments did not do much except passing a few legislative measures which failed to touch the root causes of the troubles of the Indian peasants. The peasants protested against the indifference of the Govt. to their interests. The Govt. then banned their meetings arrested their leaders and used police force against them.

Thus the fate of the Indian peasants did not improve much by the time India was granted independence. But certainly they were better organized by that time.

During the last phase of the national movement in India led to the growing revolutionary fervor among the peasants. They no longer seemed to be imbued with the Gandhian ideals of non-violence and satyagraha and were prepared to start decisive struggles against the colonial administration as well as native vested interests in the country. Resultantly several significant peasant movements were evidenced during the period of 1946. The most notable of which appeared to be the Tebhaga & Telangana movements. Presumably these movements were in fact the demonstration of the increase desperation among the peasants to get rid of the exploitative land revenue and taxation systems with the anticipated arrival of independence of the country in the near future. For instance the Tebhaga movement was apparently the most formidable affront to the prevailing permanent system of land revenue in Bengal with slogans like 'Tebhaga Chai' (want two-third of crops) manifesting the urge of the peasants for a two-third share in the total land produce among others. The Telegana movement was a movement against absentee landlordism and exploitative land revenue system under the patronage of the Nizam of Hyderabad with peasants demanding vesting of land to the tillers and confiscation and redistribution of excess land to the landless farmers.

For instance the early peasant revolts such as Moplah rebellion of 1920s in Kerala Wahabi resurrection of 1930s in Bengal were portrayed by some scholars as some sort of communal clashes. It was a struggle between Muslim tenants Hindu landlords. Peasants revolted against the exploitation and oppression when their economic condition deteriorated in 3 forms: deterioration of economic condition due to price rise, structural changes which caused an increase in exploitation of peasants and rising aspirations of peasants to improve their condition.

2(A).03 Conclusion :

In conclusion, it suggests that the onset of numerous peasants movements in India has been instigated by a distinct set of issues taking prominence of a particular period of time, though the basic contacts of all such basis remained enmeshed in the structure and functioning of the agraria system indifferent regions.

2(A).04 Suggested Readings

1. A. R. Desai-Social Background and of Indian nationalism-Popular Prakashan – Bombay-1976.
2. R. K. Mukherjee-The Indian working Class-Popuar Prakashan-Bombay-1952
3. Uday Mehta-Pesant Movements in Indian in A. R. Desai (ed.) peasants struggle in Indian-Oxford University Press-New Delhi-1979.

2(A).05 Sample Questions:

1. Describe the evolution of Indian Present Movements in Pre-independence Period (18)
 2. Analyse Whether Indian Presant movement acquired and national character. (18)
 3. Analyse the nature of peasants Movements in pre-independence India. (12)
 4. Write short notes: (7)
- (a) All India Kishan sabha.

Unit-2(B) □ Tribal Movements

Structure

- 2(B).1 Introduction**
- 2(B).2 Typology of Tribal Movement**
- 2(B).3 Phases of Tribal Movement**
- 2(B).4 Conclusion**
- 2(B).5 Suggested Readings**
- 2(B).6 Sample Questions**

2(B).01 Introduction

India is a vast country populated with a large number of indigenous people, who inhabit the mountainous and forest lands of our country. These ethnic groups, with their distinct culture and identity in terms of rituals, values, social structure, dialects lifestyles, festivals, and celebrations are the tribal communities of India, who have faced unjust and exploitative interferences from traditionally settled non-tribal populations of the country, especially at the time of the British rule. There have been popular movements against perceived non-tribal interference both during pre-independence, and post-independence times.

2(B).02 Typology of Tribal Movements:

Tribal movements launched by the people to protest against undue interference in or infringement of their basic rights both by official and non-official agents may be classified under the heads of ethnic movements, agrarian movements and political movements.

The tribal movement in the nature of ethnic movements, usually tended to be resistance movements aimed at opposing the subtle and at times secretive efforts on the part of the non-tribals, both British as well as native people to penetrate into the preserved ethnic domains of the life of the Tribals. For instance, when the tribal people felt certain perceptible threat to the basic components of their ethnic identity such as rituals, values, social structures, life-styles, dialects, they put up a stiff resistance. Such types of tribal movements were dominant in the early phase of the establishment of British rule in India.

Movements in the nature of agrarian movements were those against the exploitative policies of colonial rulers and strong arm tactics of the unscrupulous elements like zamindars, money lenders, who tended to destroy their means of livelihood and put financial burdens on them. The movements launched by Birsha Munda and Tana Bhagat were in the nature of agrarian movements.

Finally, tribal movements arising out political causes drew their inspiration from the anti-colonial struggle being launched in the country, presumably due to the nationalist perspectives of their leaders who wanted to get their problems redressed through the nationalist movement. After independence, tribal movements in the political mould vied for political autonomy for their people and in some cases separate political identities for themselves.

Observing the participants, issues, organization and leadership of various tribal movements, it becomes obvious that these movements did not clearly visualize the basic character of their struggle and became a comprehensive movement seeking to find solution to most, if not all, of the problems of the people. Most of the tribal movements carried within themselves the elements of all the other typologies, given some degree of commonality in the socio-cultural and politico-economic life of these people.

2(B).03 Phases of Tribal Movements:

Tribal movements have a history of more than two centuries in India. Such a long span of tribal movements has been divided various phases by scholars. Suresh Kumar Singh has given three distinct phases in pre-independence times.

Corresponding to the expansion and consolidation of British rule in India, The first phase of tribal movements cover the period 1795-1860, though some scholars go back even further to 1768. This was the time when the British empire was expanding rapidly. Not only were they annexing native states, but extending their administrative structure to areas where the people had enjoyed full autonomy for hundreds of years. Most tribal movements of this period came to conjunction with non-tribal people, given the common enmity of the two against British colonialism. The movements of this phase is a reflection of the anger of a whole region ranging from what is now Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattishgarh and Bengal, rather than a group of people. The Chhotanagpou plateau became the hub of such movements during the 1820s, owing to the common grudge of all people against the designs of the British rulers.

During the second phase (1860-1920), tribal movement began against economic exploitation of the British. The Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis in 1856 opened the flood gates for the zamindars and money-lenders to appear, and seize land and wealth of the tribals like the Santhals. A forest Regulation Act passed in 1865 empowered the British to cut down forests, exploit forest resources, and prevent the tribals from using forest products as they have been wont for countless years. Tribal movements of these times developed an unconventional blend of socio-religious reform on the one hand and political resistance on the other. This was the time when tribal movements started taking messianic overtones with the emergence of a number of pioneers who were regarded as Gods out to save them from the brutalities of aliens. The insurrections of Munda-Oraon Sardar and Birsha Munda, Tana Bhagat are reflective of the major trends in the tribal movements of this period.

The final phase of pre-independence tribal movements (1921-1947) appeared to be imbued by the basic ideas and ethos of the national movement of India. Most of these movements were political in nature and reflected the vision of their leaders on fundamental issues affecting the people. Hence, while most of the tribal movements became valuable associates of the national movement, few of them also tended to take separatist overtones in the course of time. For instance, while in Central Provinces, tribal leaders like Ganjan Korku became a formidable force during the Civil Disobedience Movement, certain parts of the Chhotanagpur plateau became a theatre for separatist movement amongst the tribals.

2(B).04 Conclusion:

In conclusion, it may be said that the trajectory of various tribal movements in India had been varying owing to the distinctness of the basic issues involved in each movement. Complex issues were involved in these tribal movements, ranging from erosion of ethnic identities and socio-cultural distinctiveness of the tribals to economic exploitation, and disappearance of traditional economic rights on forests and land. The final products of all these motivations were the formidable insurrections against colonial and native exploiters.

2(B).05 Suggested Readings

1. L. P. Mathur-The Resistance movements of Tribals of India-Himangshu Publishers-Udaipur-1988.
2. Suresh Kumar Singh-Tribal Society in India: An Anthro-po-historical perspective-Monalisa-New Delhi-1985

3. Ghanshyam Shah-Social Movements in India-A Review of Literature – Sage-New Delhi-1990.
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26.06 Sample Questions:

1. Discuss the Tribal Movements in India before Independence. (18).
2. Explain the nature of Tribal movements in pre-independent India. (18)
3. Describe the different stages of Tribal movements in pre-independent India. (12)
4. Short Notes :
 - (a) Santhal Movements;
 - (b) Tribal Movements arising out of political movements;
 - (c) Tribal movements in the 1921-47 period.

Unit - 3 □ Trade Union (Working Class) Movement

Structure

- 3.01 Introduction**
- 3.02 Trade Union Movement**
- 3.03 Conclusion**
- 3.04 Suggested Readings**
- 3.05 Sample Questions**

3.01 Introduction

Trade Union Movements in India apparently began with the establishment of a number of factories in the port cities of the country during the second half of the 18th century. Initially the workers working in such factories were unorganised and therefore not in a position to raise their voices against the intolerable working conditions and highly inadequate wages paid to them. Some spondaic movements come into existence where main argument was the intervention of the colonial administration to improve working conditions in the factories. The genesis of the Trade Union Movements may be traced back to the spondaic strikes evidenced in certain railways and textile establishments during 2nd half of the 19th century.

3.02 Trade Union Movement

Even against the wishes of the British Government industries grew in India. First in the field were the British financiers and industrialists themselves who found India a secure place for investing their surplus capital. But gradually the Indians also entered the field. Cotton textile and Sugar were the first industries which were set up by the Indians. From 1880 onwards modern industries developed steadily in India. The Swadeshi Movement also helped in the growth of Indian industries. The First World War gave further impetus to industrial development in India. The efforts of the British industries were diverted towards the production of war materials. The Indian industrial class took advantage of it accelerated the pace of production of those goods which will in demand and captured a part of the Indian market. Thus industrial progress in India took place much against the wishes of the British Govt. prior to Independence in 1947.

The Development of industries was bound to create the working of labour class and its movement in India. The Indian working class grew in proportion to the industrial development in India. It primarily constituted the pauperized peasants and ruined artisans who were left with no other means of livelihood. Initially the Indian working class suffered heavily. In industries, plantations factories, the workers were paid very low wages worked under hazardous and insanitary conditions and practically were treated as serfs. The industrialists were not prepared to look after their welfare and a few laws passed by the foreign Govt. like Indian Ports Act of 1931, the Factories Act of 1934 etc proved inadequate. Therefore the working class movement was bound to emerge in India. But its process started late. The Indian working class was illiterate and culturally backward. Therefore it developed national and class consciousness much later than the intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie. Yet from 1918 onwards we find a steady growth in the working class movement in India.

Prior to 1918 the only organized protest of the Indian workers was the general strike of the Bombay textile workers in 1908 when B.G. Tilak was sentenced to imprisonment. But it was a protest in sympathy with a national leader and therefore cannot be grouped with class movements. After the war however certain circumstances helped in the growth of a genuine class movement and organization. The economic depression after the war the democratic movements of several European countries the Russian revolution of 1917 and the general dissatisfaction prevailing in the country were primarily responsible for it.

The year 1918 to 1920 were marked with the outbreak of a series of strikes throughout the country in a number of industrial centres including Bombay, Calcutta, Madras. All these strikes were held with a view to gaining economic advantages to the workers. Besides the workers participated in the demonstrations processions against the passing of the Rowlatt Act. It was beginning of the participation of the workers in the national movement of the country. It was during this period that attempts were made to form different workers Unions in different industries. Very soon a large number of workers or Trade Union were formed at different industrial centres like Bombay and Madras. These efforts culminated in the founding of an all India organization of the workers the All India Trade Union in 1920. It was the result of the efforts of the leaders like N.M. Joshi, Lala Lajpat Raj. The All India Trade Union fixed up coordination of the activities of all organizations of the workers and advance the interest of Indian labour in economic, social and political matters as its goal. The leadership of A.I.T.U. Congress remained in the hands of liberal leaders like N.M. Joshi for a decade. In course of time nationalist leaders like C. R. Das, V. V. Giri also associated themselves with its functioning.

From 1922 onwards socialist and communist ideas started to emerge. A left wing emerged within the All India Congress which had been leading the national movement. That wing was represented by leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhash Chandra Bose. A left wing leadership developed within the Trade Union Movement also. The Communists believe in class struggle. The socialists did not believe in class struggle but were definitely conscious of organizing workers and Peasants parties with a view to serving their economic interests. They were certainly more interested in saving the workers and the peasants from economic exploitation as compared to liberal national leaders. The Socialist and Communist groups therefore organized several workers and peasants parties. Some parties among them organized the workers on the principle of class struggle and thus strengthened the workers' movement. The movement of these parties gradually increased their influence in A.I.T.U. Congress and finally captured its leadership. This left wing within the A.I.T.U. Congress gradually grew aggressive which resulted in its split in 1929. Mr. Joshi had to leave the Congress. He formed a separate organization of the workers called the Indian Trade Union Federation. A further split in the A.I.T.U. Congress took place in 1931 but the two factions joined hands with each other in 1935. The Indian Trade Union federation also decided to join hands with A.I.T.U. Congress which strengthened it further.

The All India Trade Union Congress now came forward with an extensive and bold programme. Its declared objectives now included the establishment of a socialist state in India socialization and nationalization of the means of production, securing of better economic, and social conditions protections of liberties like freedom of speech and even resting to strikes for the working class, participation in the national struggle from the point of view of workers and abolition of privileges based on caste, creed, race or religion. This party of workers succeeded in doing some useful work for them though its membership did not increase much. It was again only after 1927 than the Indian working class began to constitute itself as an independent economic and political force. Workers went on strikes many times including the Bombay textile workers. The workers also participated in the boycott of Simon Commission, in Civil Disobedience Movement and other agitations organized by the Congress. Mostly they did not exclude themselves from the mainstream of the national movement but certainly retained their independent party flags and class programmes. However the communist Party of India organized itself into a separate entity of its own. The activities of the workers particularly those of the communist group disturbed the Govt. It therefore took measures to suppress them. The Trade Disputes Act restricted the rights of the workers to strike while the public safety Bill passed in 1929 gave power to the Government to deposit undesirable persons even outside India.

The Government also arrested a number of labour leaders belonging to the left Wing and framed up a case against them known as the Meerut Conspiracy case.

The success of the All India Congress in the elections of 1937 raised the hopes of the working class. They had been cooperating with the national movement with expectations of benefits to them. But the Congress Ministries mostly belied their hopes. More than the workers the Congress was in the grip of capitalists which resulted in the Bombay Trade Disputes Act police firing on the strikers in Bombay banning of labour meetings and imprisoning of labour leaders-all against the interests of the working class.

The workers movement however did not die out. After 1938 the no of Trade Unions increased in India. The All India trade Union also increased its membership. Yet it can be said that prior to the achievement of independence in 1947 the labour movement in India was far from its goal.

3.03 Conclusion :

In the final analysis it may be (argued) that Trade Union Movements in India did not appear to be a formidable social movements ostensibly due to the fact that the country did not have a big industrial base which would have facilitated the rise of massive working force in the country. Further the scattered industrial base in parts of the country, presumably also did not allow for the rise of coordinated and concerted efforts on the part of the leader of the Trade Unions to organize any all India strike in order to attract the attention of the Government. No attempt were taken by the leaders of the international movement to integrate the demands of the workers in the charter of issues to be focussed by the Congress party. Hence the Trade Union movements remained a sort of (marginalised) and (fragmented) Social Movement in the pre-independence times leaving only limited utility for and getting very negligible support from the mainstream nationalist movement.

3.04 Suggested Readings

- 1 U.B. Kaunik-Indian Trade Unions.-A survey-Bombay-Monakatalas.
- 2 R. K. Mukherjee-The working class-Bombay-Popular Prakashan.
- 3 A. R. Desai-Social Background of Indian national movement-Bombay popular Prakashan.

3.05 Sample Questions:

1. Briefly point out the genesis of the Trade Union Movement in Pre British India. (18)
2. Write on essay on the Indian working class movement since 1935. (18)
3. Trace out the trade Union Movement in India from the revolution of A.I.T.U.C. to I.N.T.U.C. (12)
4. Write Short Notes :
 - (a) A.I.T.U.C.,
 - (b) I.N.T.U.C.,
 - (c) Public Safety Bill 1929;
 - (d) Indian Trade Union Federation.
 - (e) Working mass movements during 1918-1920.

Unit - 4 □ The Dalit Movement in India

Structure

- 4.01 Introduction**
- 4.02 Typologies and Issues**
- 4.03 Organisation and Leadership**
- 4.04 Conclusion**
- 4.05 Suggested Reading**
- 4.05 Sample Questions**

4.01 Introduction

The basis of traditional Hindu Society was the fourfold Varna System, whose distortions gave birth to the immobile and cruel institution of caste. 'Dalits' or the so-called untouchables constituted the lowest section of the caste structure. Dalits one of the so called "avarnos" meaning the ones whose social reckoning lied outside Varna System. Such branding of these people eventually led to a sinister belief among the so-called upper castes people that any kind of interaction with the Dalits would entail impurity for them. So, despite constituting substantive section of the society, Dalits were subjected to such inhuman treatment by other sections of the society that they had no other means to than to start some sort of social movement to meliorate their conditions in India Society.

Initially, Dalit movements secured to be the issue of untouchability. The stinger of being untouchable was so unendurable for the people that their initial movements hovered around the issue of abolition of untouchability and the provision of full fledged participation of these people in all social and religious institutions and processions of the country. Thus the entry test of social emancipation of Dalits come to be reflected in the form of temple entry movements launched in various parts of the country. The galaxy of illustrious and seerless saints like Rammohan, Chaitannya, Kabir, Tukaram and other coming in the wake of the Bhakti movement, provided a well reasoned critique of the existing inhuman practices being followed under the caste system.

Though, Raja Rammohan Roy and His Brahma Samaj and Dayananda Saraswati and his Aryo Samaj attacked the feeling casteism and untouchability among certain sections of the society; the pioneering anti-Brahman and anti-untouchability movement during 1870s happens to begin in the form of "Satya swadhak Samaj" under the

leadership of Jotiba Phule. Jotiba Phule in his early life was subjected to various types of humiliation born out of Brahmanical arrogance which infused a sense of revolt and reform within him. Jotiba found no other method of Securing dignified and respectful place for the members of lower caste and untouchables within the rubric of Hindu Social order than to begin a social reform movement for the same. Jotiba was very critical of the leaders of the Congress for their negligent attitude towards untouchables and lower castes. Jatiba and Satyashadak Samaj acted as the catalyst of anti-untouchability movement in Maharashtra by opening up of schools and orphanages for the women and children belonging to all castes. In latter days the dominant sections of other backward castes coming to dominate the activities of the Satyashadhak Samaj.

Another significant anti untouchability movement was launched by the untouchable caste of "Ezhava" in 1903. Under the leadership of Sri Narayan guru with the setting up of Sree Narayan Dharma Paripalana yogam. In under to provide for a feeling of apparent equality with caste Hindus, the S.N.D.P. built number of temples in Kerala and declared them open to people of all castes. Moreover, S.N.D.P. aimed at sanskritising the customs and rituals of the Ezhava Commiunity.

A comprehensive and intense anti untouchability movements started by Dalits in different parts of Indian in 1920's decade. In Tamil Nadu –prominent movement in this context happens to be the Nadar Mahajan Sangram. Having attained sort of economic influence, this community combined on the path of social alteration of its status by way of Sanskritising it's norms and rituals. Anoher remarkable Dalit Movement in Tamil Nadu during 1920s was led by Ramyaswami Periyar or Nrikar. Known as "self-respect" movement periyar's major concern was not confined only to sanskritise rituals, rather he was of the firm opinion that the plight of the untouchables could not be ameliorated within the feame work of what he called "Brahmanical Hinduism" under the banner of "Justice Party" he launched number of vigorous untouchable movements that not only claimed a higher social –political-economic recognition to the untouchables, but also some saint of reverse adverse treatment to the hitherto dominant upper caste communities. The "ADI-DHARMA" movement in Punjab vie far a distinct set of patterns of treatment was the untouchables which may led to the amelioration of their socio-religious and political conditions in the society. Latter this movement became part of the scheduled castes federation of Ambedkar.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, drawing his descent from the untouchable caste of Mahar in Mahar in Maharastra, began the mahar movement with the aim of eroducting untouchability from Maharastra and this movement attained join degree of success. The 1930s decade from the Dalit Movements throwing acceptance of Ambedkar as their leader. His famous statement addressing the Dalits, "you have nothing to lose,

except your religion" inspired the Dalits of Maharashtra. Further, he was demanding for separate electorate for Dalits. But his demand was opposed by M.K. Gandhi. Later in 1942, Ambedkar set up the Scheduled Caste Federation as a pan Indian party to fight for the cause of Dalit emancipation through the means of agitational and electoral politics.

The scheduled castes (SCs) are known as Harijans, i.e. children of God—a term coined by Mahatma Gandhi in 1933. The Harijan nomenclature is considered pejorative by some leaders of the castes they prefer to be called Dalit i.e. the oppressed occupying the lowest rank in the Hindu caste system, they are called Avarna, those whose place is outside the Chaturvarna system. They are also known as Perial, Panchama, Atishudra, Antyaja or Namashudra in different parts of the country. Their touch and sometimes even their shadows and voices are believed to pollute caste-Hindus. Legally, they are no longer untouchables, though in practice many of them still bear that stigma.

On the whole, the studies on the Dalit or the socio-political conditions are many but there are only a few systematic empirically sound studies on their movements. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Mahar by caste was an all India leader, while bargaining with the British and the caste-Hindus he represented all the Dalits of the country.

4.02 Typologies and Issues

The main issues around which most of the Dalit movements have been centred in the colonial and post colonial periods are confined to the problem of untouchability. They are predominantly anti untouchability movements. The other issues are the same as these related to agricultural labourers. Ghanshyam Shah classified them into-

- (a) Reformatory and
- (b) Alternative Movements

The former tries to reform the caste system to solve the problem of untouchability. Alternative movements are related with socio-economic-political causes. In the context of Dalit identity and ideology Shah has recently classified Dalit movements into-

1. Movements within cultural consensus.
2. Competing ideology and non-Hindu identity.
3. Buddhist Dalits and
4. Counter ideology and Dalit identity.

The first three are based around religious ideologies whereas the last is based on class. Patnagar and Omvedt classify the Dalit movement into (i) caste based and (ii) class based movements.

The neo-Vedantic movements and non-Brahmin movements played an important

catalytic role in developing anti-caste or anti-Hinduism dalit movements in some parts of the country. A major anti-untouchability movement was launched by Dr. Ambedkar in the 1920s in Maharashtra. This has continued in different forms till today. Though the movement is primarily rooted in Maharashtra, it spread to different parts of the country and acquired an all-India character. Dr. Ambedkar emerged as the leader of the untouchables of the country.

Ambedkar saw the possibility of advancement for the untouchables through the use of political means to achieve social and economic equality with the highest classes in modern society. Ambedkar formed the scheduled castes Federation (SCF) in 1954, to fight elections and look after the interests of the SCS. Those interests were confined to reservations of jobs and political positions.

The dalits demanded a separate electorate in the 1930s which led to a conflict between Ambedkar and Gandhi. Gandhi did not think that the problem of untouchability was a political issue. In the early 1930s, Ambedkar concluded that the only way of improving the status of the untouchables was to renounce the Hindu religion. In the early 1950s he found that Buddhism was appropriate as an alternative religion for the untouchables. He preferred Buddhism primarily because it was "an indigenous Indian religion of equality, a religions which was anti-caste and anti-Brahman."

The Dalits of Maharastra launched the Dalit panther Movement in the early 1970s. Initially it was confined to the urban areas of Maharashtra, now it spread to Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and other states. However, Sharmila Rege complains that the Dalit Panther Movement ignored the issue of oppression of Dalit Women (1998). The Panthers condemn and discard the dominant culture and attempt to build an alternative socio-cultural identity for the oppressed classes. The Dalit panthers organized demonstrations against injustices to the SCS. In order to serve their interests the established dominant political parties riijacked the culturally vibrant dalit movement.

At a number of a places in Andhra, Tamil nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, Harijan agricultural labourers participated in the land grab movements of the late 1960s, they also launched struggles demanding higher wages.. Infact harijan agricultural labourers and sharecroppers launched struggles even during the British period. Assention free dalit identity has almost become a central issue of dalit movements. This involves local-level collective action against discrimination and atrocities. Dalit, though very poor enthusiastically contribute to installing Ambedkar statues in their neighbourhood.

4.03 Organisation and Leadership

Ambedkar formed the Independent Labour party and scheduled castes federalism, and there are a number of scheduled caste organization at regional levels. But there is no study focusing on the organizational set up and leadership and their efforts aimed at mobilizing the Scheduled Castes.

The most important leader of the Dalit Movement in India was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar planned his programme to bring the untouchable from a state of 'dehumanization' and 'slavery' into one of equality through the use of modern methods based on education and the exercise of legal and political rights. Besides Ambedkar, there were quite a few all India Harijan political leaders, but so far no study has been available focusing on their role in mobilizing the Dalits.

There was social and economic stratification among the scheduled castes. The leadership of their political movements has come from those jatis of the dalit who had improved their economic conditions. The main participants in the contemporary Dalit Panther movement in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh come from the urban, educated middle class. Different jatis have been more active in different dalit movements. The Jatavs or Chamars of Uttar Pradesh, the vankars of Gujarat, the Malas of Andhra Pradesh etc. are in the forefront of the dalit movements in their respective regions.

Gail Omvedt observes that the post Ambedkar Dalit Movement was ironically only that in the end—a movement of Dalits, challenging some of the deepest aspects of oppression and exploitation but failing to show the way to transformation.

4.04 Conclusion:

The Dalit Movement in India has a history of 100 years. The rise of Dalit movements in India was symptomatic of the growing urge for social emancipation among the sections of people who remained oppressed from centuries. Initially Dalits wanted through their movements to public religious and livelihood places and sources. In the 20th century in addition to political and economic rights Dalit movements started centering around the issues of reservation in the public service jobs and political position, under the leadership of B.R. Ambedkar. On the era of independence Dalit Movements in the country were accommodated with the broad spectrum of the notional movement.

4.05 Suggested Readings

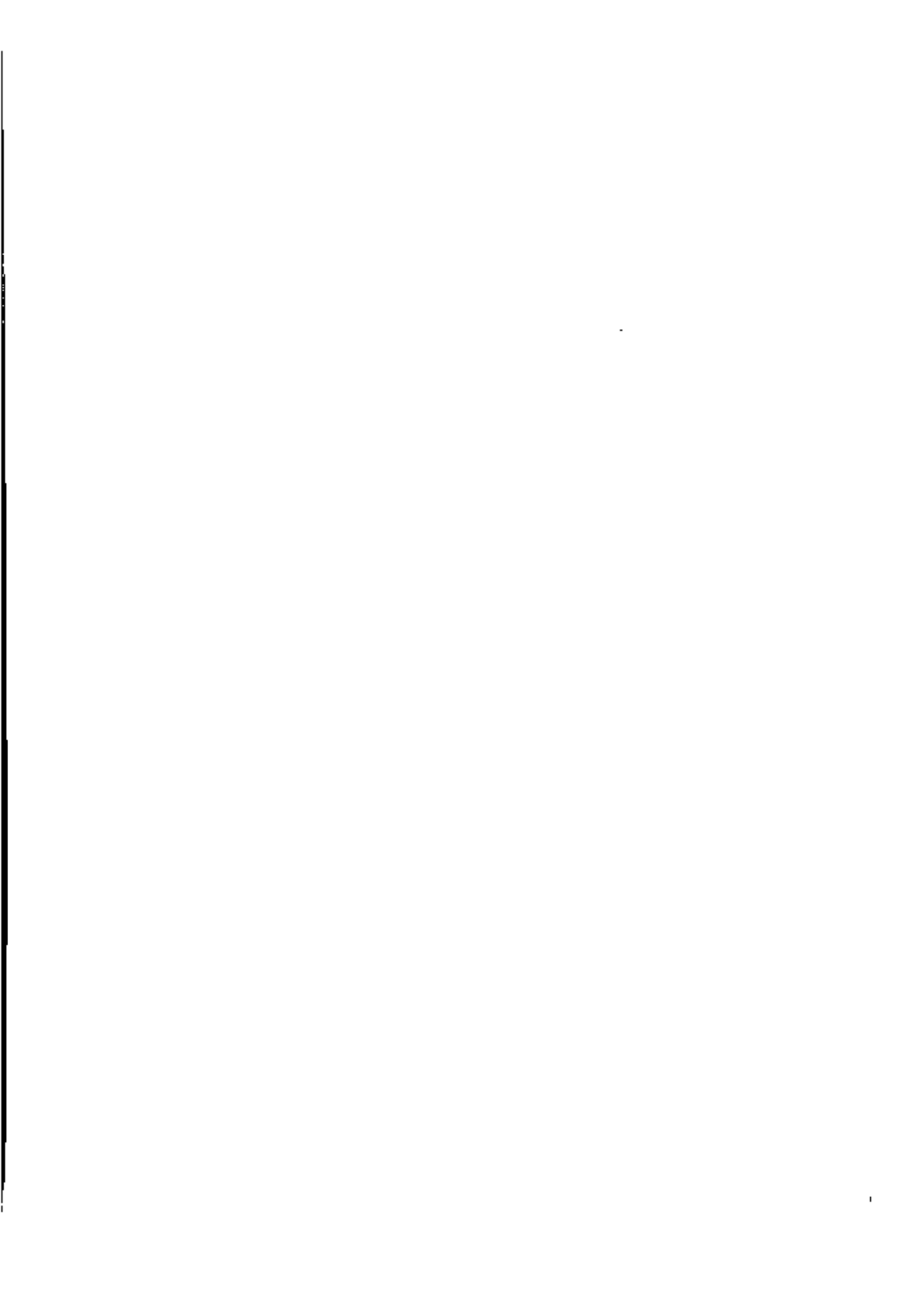
1. L. P. Mathur,-The Resistance movements of Tribals of India-Himangshu Publishers-Udaipur-1988.
2. A. Ri Desai-Social Background of Indian Nationalism-Popular Prakashan-Bombay-1976.
3. Ghanshyam Shah – Social Movements in India – Saya-New Delhi-1990.
4. M.S.A. Rao – Social Movements in India – Volume-I, Monahar – New Delhi-1979.

4.05 Sample Questions:

1. Discuss the Dalit Movements in India. (18)
2. Explain the courses and nature of Dalit Movements. (18)
3. Discuss the issues and typologies of Dalit Movements. (18)
4. Describe the typologies of Dalit Movements. (12)
5. Explain the political rationale of Dalit Movement. (12)
6. Describe the organisational leadership pattern of Dalit Movements. (12)
7. Write short notes – (7)
 - (a) Satyashadhak Movement;
 - (b) Jotiba Phule;
 - (c) Nadar Mahajan Sangram;
 - (d) B. R. Ambedkar;
 - (e) Gandhi-Ambedkar rift.

Notes

Notes



মানুষের জ্ঞান ও ভাবকে বহুয়ের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত করিবার যে একটা প্রচুর সুবিধা আছে, সে কথা কেহই অস্বীকার করিতে পারে না। কিন্তু সেই সুবিধার দ্বারা মনের স্বাভাবিক শক্তিকে একেবারে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়া ফেলিলে বুদ্ধিকে বাবু করিয়া তোলা হয়।

— রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

"Any system of education which ignores Indian conditions, requirements, history and sociology is too unscientific to commend itself to any rational support".

— Subhas Chandra Bose

ভারতের একটা mission আছে, একটা গৌরবময় ভবিষ্যৎ আছে, সেই ভবিষ্যৎ ভারতের উত্তরাধিকারী আমরাই। নতন ভারতের মুক্তির ইতিহাস আমরাই রচনা করছি এবং করব। এই বিশ্বাস আছে বলেই আমরা সব দুঃখ কষ্ট সহ্য করতে পারি, অন্ধকারময় বর্তমানকে অগ্রাহ্য করতে পারি, বাস্তবের নির্ভর সত্যগুলি আদর্শের কঠিন আঘাতে খুলিসাৎ করতে পারি।

— সুভাষচন্দ্র বসু

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