

ROLE OF INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

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Abstract: - Indian national movement was a grand and prolonged struggle launched against British imperialism. Nationalism was main ideology and instrument with whose help this struggle was launched. It was a series of political efforts from mid 1880s to 1947 that took place in Indian subcontinent. The whole movement took place in various phases. The movement combined constitutional reforms mass mobilization , revolutionary activities, and civil disobedience shaping modern India. It plays a pivotal role in India's independence.

Keywords: - Moderate, Extremist, Gandhi, Congress, Britishers

Introduction: -

Indian National movement evolved in various phases. But there are three main phases of Indian national movement.

- (1) Moderate phase(1885-1905)
- (2) Extremist phase(1905-1917)
- (3) Gandhian phase(1917-1947)

The first nationalistic movement took root when Indian national congress was formed in 1885. prominent moderate leaders of INC were staunch believers of liberal and moderate politics. Their political activities include constitutional agitation within confines of law and showed a slow but orderly political progress. Their main demands include like constitutional reforms more political and democratic power in legislature, more economic rights etc. Their long term objective was democratic self government. They followed the policy of prayer, petition, and agitation to achieve their demands.

The first quarter of 20th century saw the emergence of militant national politics that came to be known as extremist phase. The prominent extremist leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghosh etc. There are many reasons behind emergence of extremist politics like attitude of government , growth of education, international influences, dissatisfaction with achievement of moderates etc. they raised patriotism from a level of academic pastime to one of sacrifice and service for country. Its advocate ranges from open members and secret sympathizers to those opposed to any kind of violence. its leaders had different perception for their goals. For Tilak swaraj means sort of self government while for Aurobindo it meant complete independence from foreign rule.

Toward the end of first world war various forces were at work in India and on the international scene after the end of war there was resurgence of nationalist activities in India the Indian struggle took decisive turn toward abroad based mass struggle with the emergence of Gandhi on the Indian political scene Gandhi already had a past of struggle in south Africa. Gandhi evolved the technique of Satyagraha during his stay in south Africa. It was based on truth and non violence. His whole journey of struggle in India include series of satyagrahas and other constructive programmes like Champaran satyagraha ,Ahmedabad Mill strike Kheda satyagraha ,Non Cooperation Movement, civil disobedience movement Quit India movement etc.

Thus the Indian freedom movement that gained momentum from protest against partition of Bengal (1905) that exposed the limit of reformist agenda of moderate leaders to the non cooperation movement (1919-1922)

that saw demand for non cooperating with colonial authorities. Through the civil disobedience movement(1929-1931) that called for active disobedience to the colonial government to the Quit India movement(1942) that categorically demanded the end of British rule in India, the independence movement gathered momentum steadily and ultimately resulted in transfer of power in 1947.

The Indian independence movement was in constant ideological evolution essentially anti colonial. it was supplemented by visions of independent economic development with a secular democratic, republican and civil liberation political structure. After the 1930s the movement took a strong socialist orientation it culminated in Indian independence act 1947 and partitioned British India into dominion of India and Pakistan. On 26th January 1950 the constitution of India establish republic of India.

Background: - The first European to reach India via sea route was Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama on 17th May 1498 in Calicut. Later on Portuguese establish trading factories in Cannanore, Calicut etc. Cochin was their main stronghold. Later on they transferred their capital to Goa. They earned enormous profit by engaging in trade of Indian goods like spices, black pepper, indigo, cotton, silk and controlling trade routes that connect India to Europe and West Asia. Huge lure of also invoked other European companies like Dutch, British, France etc to engage in trade of Indian goods. Dutch East India company which was formed in 1602 was mainly involved in trade of spices, black pepper and redistributive trade of indigo, rice, opium, saltpeter, silk etc. they captured many strongholds from Portuguese in India but they were not interested in empire building. Later on they were defeated by British East India Company. Another important European company was French East India company formed in 1664 by Colbert a minister of King Louis. They established their factories in Surat and Masulipatnam and Pondicherry was their capital. However they suffered final defeat by Britishers in Third Anglo French War and confined to small commercial enclave. This war was decisive in establishing British rule in India because it left no European rivalries for Britishers in India.

When Francis Drake completed his voyages all over world. The Britishers came to know about the huge profit earned by Portuguese from India. Thus a group of merchants calling themselves Merchant Adventurers formed a company in 1599. On December 31 1600 Queen Elizabeth issued a charter with rights of exclusive trading to company named the Governor and the Company of Merchants of London Trading into East Indies. Gradually the British East India company established three major presidencies in India Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The company also defeated their European rivalries in India. The company adopted both military as well as diplomatic tactics to impose their power on various Indian princely states and finally consolidate their own rule over entire India.

Early resistance to company rule: In the context of people's resistance against British rule the word people encompasses several sections of Indian society who were affected by alien rule. The Peasants, tribals, artisans, ruling classes, military personnel(those under company as well as demobilised soldiers of ex rulers). People's resistance took three broad forms: civil rebellion, tribal uprising, peasant movement. There was no one to hear their problems. The company was merely interested in extracting revenue. The colonial law and judiciary safeguarded the interest of government and its collaborators. Thus the people had left with no option chose to take up arms and defend themselves.

Civil uprising: the uprising that is not related to military but it includes those uprisings which is generally led by deposed native rulers or their descendants, former zamindars, landlords, poligars in South India etc.

Important civil uprisings: (1) Sanyasi Revolt (2) Revolt of Momtaz-ud-Daula (3) Civil Uprising in Gorakhpur, Basti and Bahraich (4) Revolt of Raza of Vizianagaram (5) Resistance of Kerala Varma Pazhaya Raja (6) Poligar's Revolt of South India (7) Diwan Velu Thampi Revolt (8) Wahabi Movement (9) Kuka Movement

Important Peasant movements: (1) Narkelbaria Uprising (2) The Pagal Panthis (3) The Faraizis Revolt

Important tribal movements of mainland: (1) Pahariya Rebellion (2) Chuar Uprising (3) Kol Mutiny 1831 (4) Ho and Munda Uprising (5) Santhal Rebellion 1855-1856 (6) Khond Uprising 1837-1856 (7) Bhil revolt (8) Ramosi Uprising

Tribal movement of North East : (1) Khasi Uprising (2) Jaintia Rebellion etc.

Sepoy Mutinies: There was rising discontent among sepoys against British rule due to following reasons

- (1) Discrimination in payment and promotions
- (2) mistreatment of the sepoys by the British officials
- (3) refusal of government to pay foreign allowance
- (4) religious objection of high caste Hindu sepoys to

Lord Canning's general services enlistment act ordering all recruits to be ready for service both within and outside India

The Revolt Of 1857

The revolt of 1857 was a crowning achievement in India's long fight against British colonial rule. It consisted of major events in the history of India which starting in Meerut on 10th May 1857, quickly spread throughout north and central India totally uprooting British rule from a vast territory. The cumulative effect of British expansionist policy, economic exploitation and administrative innovation over the years had adversely affected the position of all rulers of Indian states, sepoys, zamindars, peasants, traders, artisans, pundits, maulvis etc. the simmering discontent burst in the form of violent storm in 1857 which shook the British rule in India.

However the period between 1757 and 1857 was not all peaceful and trouble free, it was a series of popular outbursts in the form of religious political violence, tribal movements, peasant uprising and agrarian riots and civil rebellion.

Major causes of 1857 revolt: The causes of revolt of 1857 like those of earlier uprising emerged from all aspects- socio-cultural, economic and political of daily existence of Indian population.

Economic causes- The colonial policies of East India Company destroyed traditional economic fabric of Indian society. The Peasantry was never really overcome disabilities imposed by new and highly unpopular revenue settlement, impoverished heavy taxes extortion by moneylenders etc. the Indian mercantile class was deliberately crippled by British by imposing high tariff on Indian products to discourage them in Indian as well as foreign market. Zamindars were evicted from their land

Political causes: The East India Company greedy policy of annexation accompanied by broken pledges resulted in loss of faith and political practice in mind of Indian ruling classes through policies such as ring fence, subsidiary alliance, doctrine of lapse.

Administrative cause: rampant corruption in company's administration especially among police, petty officials, and lower courts was a major cause of discontent.

Socio-religious causes: racial overtones and superiority complex characterizes the British administrative attitude towards native Indian population. The activities of Christian missionaries compound with government decision to tax mosque and temple lands and making laws such as religious disability act

Discontent among sepoys: the conditions of service in the company's army and cantonments increasingly came into conflict with religious beliefs and prejudices of sepoys. Restriction on wearing of caste and sectarian marks were interpreted by Indian sepoys as interference in their religious affairs. To the religious Hindu crossing sea means loss of caste, In 1856 Canning passed general services enlistment act that requires all recruits anywhere their services required. The Indian sepoys were unhappy with emoluments and discontinuance of foreign service allowance (bhatta).

Beginning and spread of revolt

The spark:- The reports about mixing bone dust in atta, introduction of Enfield rifles and the greased cartridges made of beef and pig fat had to be bitten off before loading.

Start at Meerut – The revolt began at Meerut on May 10 1857. Even before Meerut incident a sepoy of 34th Native Infantry Battalion Mangal Pandey killed his two officers in Barrackpore, Calcutta and he was executed on April 8 and then came explosion of Meerut incident. On April 24 ninety men of 3rd Native Cavalry refused to accept greased cartridges then on May 9 eighty five of them were dismissed, sentenced to jail. The very next day on May 10 they released their imprisoned comrades, killed the officers and set off for Delhi. In Delhi local infantry joined them and killed their own European officers. Delhi was soon became centre of revolt and Bahadur Shah Jafar was chosen symbolic head of revolt

Storm centers and leaders of revolt: (1) Delhi- Bahadur Shah Jafar along with Bakht Khan of Barilly (2) Kanpur- Nana Sahib, adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao (3) Lucknow- Begum Hazrat Mahal along with her minor son Brijis Quadir (4) Barilly- Khan Bahadur (5) Bihar- Veer Kunwar Singh (6) Jhansi- Rani Laxmi Bai (7) Faizabad- Maulvi Ahmadullah. Sacrifices were also made by common masses, the name of Shah Mal (a local villager in Baghpat U.P.) was most notable. He organised headmen of 84 villages to rebel against Britishers. He was killed by Dunlop.

Suppression of revolt: The revolt was finally suppressed. The Britishers captured Delhi on Sept 20 1857, John Nicholson leader of siege died. Bahadur Shah Jafar was taken into prison and sent to exile in Rangoon. One by

one all leaders fell. Sir Colin Campbell occupied Kanpur on Dec 6 1857 while Lucknow in March 1858. Nana Sahib escaped to Nepal while Tantia Tope was executed in 1859. The Rani of Jhansi died on June 18 1858 while fighting in Gwalior. By 1859 Kunwar Singh, Bakht Khan, Khan Bahadur, Ahmadullah all were dead.

Causes of revolt failed: (1) All India participation was absent (2) all classes did not join (3) poor arms and equipment (4) uncoordinated and poorly organized (5) no unified ideology

Views on nature of revolt of 1857: (1) Sir John Seeley – a wholly unpatriotic and selfish Sepoy mutiny with no popular support (2) Sir James Outram and Taylor- Hindu-Muslim conspiracy against Christians.

It was beginning of 20th century that 1857 revolt came to be interpreted as planned war of independence by V.D. Savarkar in his book Indian war of independence. He described it as first war of independence. Dr. S.N. Sen in his book Eighty Seven considers revolt as having begun as a fight for religion but ended as a war of independence.

Indian National Congress: foundation and moderate phase

Indian National Union was founded by retired English civil servant A.O. Hume during viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin in 1884. Later it was renamed as Indian National Congress. The first session of Indian National Congress was held at Gokul Das Tejpal Sanskriti College Bombay under presidentship of W.C. Banerjee in 1885. It was attended by 72 delegates from India.

Era of moderates (1885-1905)

The national leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozshah Mehta, W.C. Banerjee, S.N. Banerjee dominated Congress policy during early period. The moderate political activity involved constitutional agitation within confines of law. To achieve their goals they followed the policy of prayer, petition and agitation. Their major contributions include economic criticism of British imperialism, constitutional reforms and propaganda, protection of civil rights etc.

Era of extremist phase (1905-1909)

The main leaders of extremist phase were Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Aurobindo Ghosh etc. They followed the policy of militant political actions. They raised patriotism from a level of academic timepass to one of service and sacrifice for country. Their major political events were anti-partition movement of Bengal (1905) and Swadeshi movement. They led a series of campaigns against partition through newspapers, meetings etc. On Aug 5 1905 a Swadeshi resolution was also passed in Calcutta town hall. However partition of Bengal took place on Oct 16 1905. The extremists also gave call for passive resistance and boycott of government institutions. To curb the pressure British government brought Morley-Minto Reforms which introduced separate electorate for Muslims and expanded central, provincial legislative council.

Phase of revolutionary activities (1907-1917)

After decline of extremist phase, the activities of revolutionary heroism started as byproduct of growth of militant nationalism. Main revolutionary activities:- (1) Bengal (formation of Anushilan Samiti, formation of Ugarantar party, attack on judge in Muzaffarpur by Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki, Alipore conspiracy by Ghosh brothers, a bomb attack on Lord Hardinge in Delhi etc.) (2) Maharashtra (Ramosi movement by Vasudev Balwant Phadke, murder of Rand and Amherst by Chapekar brothers, organization of Mitra Mela and Abhinav Bharat by Savarkar brothers etc.) (3) Punjab (revolutionary activities were carried out by Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh)

Home Rule League programmes: Tilak set up Indian Home Rule League in April 1916. Its first meeting was held at Belagum. Poona was headquarter of league. It had six branches. Annie Besant, an Irish woman set up all India Home Rule League in Sept 1916 in Madras. It had 200 branches.

Emergence of Gandhi (1917-1947)

Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi was born on Oct 2 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat. Having studied law in England Gandhi in 1893 went to South Africa where he faced racial discrimination. Thus he carried out struggle against racial discrimination faced by Indians in South Africa (1894-1914). He evolved a unique technique of Satyagraha. He returned to India in 1915. During 1917-1918 he carried out three major struggles named Champaran Satyagraha, Ahmedabad Mill Strike and Kheda Satyagraha.

Champaran Satyagraha- first civil disobedience in India (1917)

Gandhi was requested by Raj Kumar Shukla, a local man to look into problems of indigo planters in context of tinkathia system in Champaran, Bihar where peasants were forced to grow indigo in 3/20 part of their land.

Gandhi joined by Rajendra Prasad, Mazhar Ul Haq, J.B Kriplani and other leaders reached Champaran but authorities ordered him to leave but he defied .finally authorities permitted Gandhi to make enquiry and appointed a committee to go into matter. Gandhi convinced authority to abolish tinkathiya system. He won first battle of civil disobedience in india

Ahmedabad Mill Strike – first hunger strike (1918)

In march 1918 Gandhi intervened in a dispute between cotton mill owners of Ahmedabad and workers over wage hike . The workers demanded 50 percent wage hike while owners were ready to give 20 percent . The workers approached Anshuya Sarabhai. She appealed Gandhi for help who asked workers to demand 35 percent wage hike. Gandhi himself went on hunger strike which created pressure on mill owners who submitted disputed to tribunal and tribunal awarded 35 percent wage hike.

Kheda Satyagraha- first non cooperation movement (1918)

Because of drought crop failed in Kheda district of Gujrat. According to revenue code if yield was less than one fourth of normal produce farmers were entitled to remission but government refused. Gandhi asked farmers not to pay taxes .Gandhi was spiritual leader while main leadership was provide by Sardar Patel and others who organize tax revolt. Ultimately government was forced to suspend tax for that year and decrease tax rate.

Rowlatt satyagraha- first mass strike (1919) and Government of India act 1919

The British government passed Government of India act 1919 which introduced responsible government to some extent on the other hand Rowlatt act was brought by lord Chelmsford which empowered British government to arrest and imprison suspect with out trial. Gandhi gave a call for satyagraha on April 6 1919.Jallianwala Bagh Massacare was a major incident happened in connection with Rowlatt Satyagraha which alienated Indians from British rule.

Non cooperation and Khilafat Andolan

During (1919-1922) the British were opposed by two mass movements Khilafat and Non Cooperation. khilafat was organized by Ali brothers- Shaukat Ali and Mohammed Ali to oppose mistreatment meted out to turkey by Britain during first world war. At special Calcutta session in Sept 1920 congrss resolved in favour of non cooperation movement and defined swaraj as ultimate aim.The movement envisaged(1) surrender of titles and honorary offices (2) refusal to attend durbars and official functions (3)boycott of British courts and refusal to military and government jobs. It was successful in major parts of country but Gandhi withdrew this movement on Feb 12 1922 due to Chauri Chaura Incident.

Swaraj Party (1923)

Swaraj Party was formed on Jan 1 1923 by Motilal Nehru, Chitranjan Das , N.C Kelkar etc.They fought the election held in 1923 and entered into legislature. However after the death of CR Das in 1925 they drifted toward policy of cooperation with government.

Simon Commission (1927)

The government appointed seven member committee to review working of dyrachy government introduced by Government of India act 1919. All members were Europeans. Indian political leaders boycotted Simon commission and raised slogan ‘ Simon Go Back’. It was leading a demonstration against this commission in Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai succumbed to death due to fatal lathi blow.

Lahore Session (1929)

At the annual session of congress held in Dec 1929 presided by Jawaharlal Nehru congress passed a resolution declaring ‘Poorna Swaraj’ to be goal of national movement. On Dec 31 1929 newly adopted tricolor flag was unfurled and Jan 26 was fixed as Independence day.

Dandi March/ salt satyagraha (1930)

To achieve goal of complete independence Gandhi launched another civil disobedience movement. Along with 78 followers Gandhi started his famous march from Sabarmati ashram on march 12 1930 for small village Dandi (Navsari district) to break salt law . Gandhi covered 240 miles in 24 days (March12-April5). On reaching seashore on April 6 he broke salt law by picking up handful of salt. This movement was known for its mass participation.

Gandhi-Irwin pact (March5 ,1931)

It was a pact signed between Gandhi and Lord Irwin where by congress call off movement and agreed to join second round table conference.

Round Table Conferences (1930-1932)

Three round table conferences were held in London between 1930 to 1932 to discuss and consider constitutional reforms proposals made by Simon commission report in 1930.on the basis of the recommendations made by these conferences Government of India act 1935 came into existence.

August Offer/Linlithgow Offer (Aug 8, 1940)

On Aug 8 1940 the viceroy Linlithgow came out with proposals known as August Offer declaring that goal of British government to establish dominion status . However congress rejected this proposal.

Individual Satyagraha (1940-1941)

The CWC decided to start Individual Satyagraha on Oct 17 1940. Vinoba Bhave was first Sayagrahi.

The Cripps Mission (1942)

The British government sent Cripps mission under Stafford Cripps a member of British cabinet to settle dispute with Indian leaders who proposed dominion status after war but Indian leaders rejected the proposal.

Quit India Movement (1942)

On Aug 8 1942 the congress in its meeting at Gowaliya Tank, Bombay passed a resolution known as 'Quit India Resolution' whereby Gandhi asked the British to quit India and gave a call for 'Do or Die'. On Aug 9 1942 all prominent leaders were arrested but leaders like J.P, Lohiya, Aruna ashaf ali Usha Mehta etc. violence spread throughout country , government offices were destroyed and other government machineries were paralyzed .parallel government were also established.

Cabinet Mission Plan (March-June 1946)

The British Prime Minister Atlee made a declaration on March 15 1946 that British cabinet mission would visit India to make recommendation regarding constitutional reforms to be introduced in India. The cabinet mission include Lord Pathick Lawrence, Stafford Cripps and A.V Alexander visited India and met leaders of different political parties. The mission envisaged the establishment of constituent assembly to frame constitution of India as well as Interim Government.

Interim Government (Sep 2, 1946)

On sep2, 1946 an interim government was formed .congress members led by Jawaharlal Nehru joined it but Muslim league did not join it.

Mountbatten Plan (June 3, 1947)

In March 1947 Lord Mountbatten replaced Lord Wavell. He introduced Mountbatten plan on June3, 1947 that divide India into two parts India and Pakistan. Its main aim was to divide India but to retain maximum unity .It laid down the detailed principles for the partition of the country and speedy transfer of political powers in form of dominion status.

The Indian Independence Act (1947)

The bill contain the provisions of Mountbatten plan of June3,1947 introduced in British parliament and passed as Indian Independence Act 1947. The act laid down detailed measures for partition and speedy transfer of political powers.

Conclusion:

Indian National Movement played a key role in in India's independence from British colonial rule. It was a historic and nationwide movement that was geared toward achieving freedom of India by ending British rule. Various stages of National struggle that evolved between 1857 to 1947 that includes a range of strategies such as non violent opposition by Mahatma Gandhi and constitutional campaigns and activities of Indian National Congress. This movement was fueled by political awareness and economic discontent and successfully led to the creation of independent India on Aug 15, 1947.

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