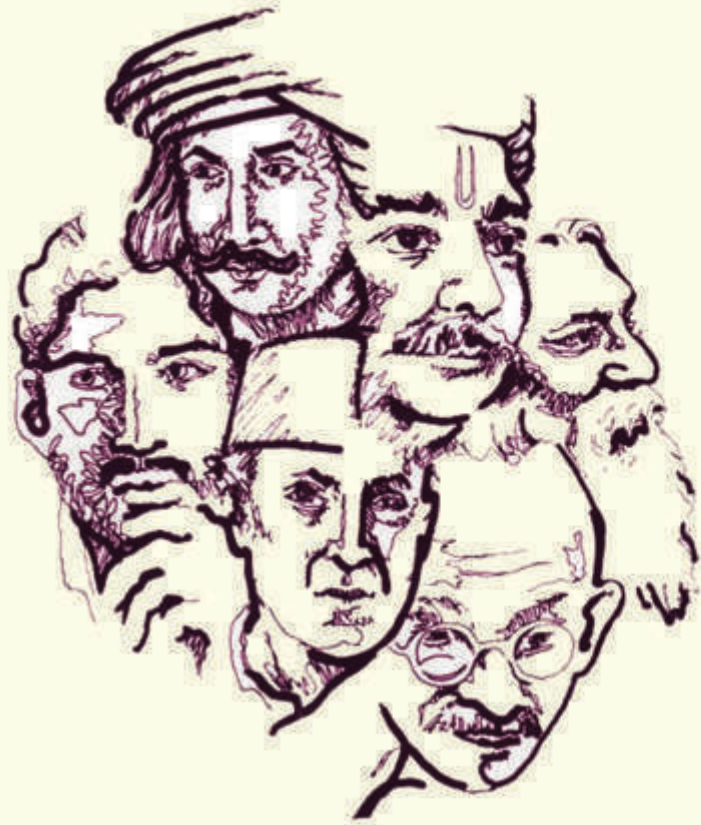


**GAUHATI UNIVERSITY**  
Institute of Distance and  
Open Learning



**Semester- I**



**Paper - II**  
**Political Thought in Modern India**

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Guwahati - 781014 (Assam)

**MA in Political Science**  
**(under CBCS)**

**POL-05-I-1026**

**GAUHATI UNIVERSITY**  
**Institute of Distance and Open Learning**

**M.A. First Semester**  
(under CBCS)

**POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**Paper: POL-05-I-1026**  
**POLITICAL THOUGHT IN MODERN INDIA**



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**May, 2022**

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**BLOCK I :**  
**REFORMIST AND LIBERAL**  
**CONSTITUTIONALISM**

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## **UNIT: 1**

### **Origins of Reformist ideas and liberalism in modern period**

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#### **Unit Structure :**

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Backdrop of the Reform Movement: Causes and Analysis
- 1.4 Social and Religious Reform Movements
  - 1.4.1 Raja Rammohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj: His Social Reforms
  - 1.4.2 Henry Vivian Derozio and Young Bengal Movement
  - 1.4.3 Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
  - 1.4.4 Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj
  - 1.4.5 Jyotiba Phule and Satyashodhak Samaj
  - 1.4.6 Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh Movement
  - 1.4.7 BalshastriJambhikar
  - 1.4.8 Pandit Ramabai
  - 1.4.9 Sarojini Naidu
  - 1.4.10 Swami Vivekananda and the Ramkrishna Mission
  - 1.4.11 Prarthana Samaj
  - 1.4.12 Debendrnath Tagore
  - 1.4.13 The Sikh Reform Movement
- 1.5 Characteristics of Social Reform Movements
- 1.6 Social Legislations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century
- 1.7 Contributions and Significance of Social reform movement

1.8 Weakness and Limitations of Social Reform movement

1.9 Summing up

1.10 References and Suggested Readings

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## **1.1 Introduction**

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The conquest of India by the British during the 18th and 19th century exposed some serious weaknesses and drawbacks of Indian social institutions. The socio intellectual revolution that took place in the nineteenth century in the fields of philosophy, literature, science, politics and social reforms is often known as Indian Renaissance. An important part of this Renaissance was reforming Hinduism from within on the basis of Post-Enlightenment rationalism. The Renaissance was especially focused in Bengal and is popularly known as the Bengal Renaissance. However, the use of ‘renaissance’ is slightly problematic as in European history it is used to refer to the “rebirth” or revival of Greco-Roman learning in the fifteen and sixteenth centuries after the long winter of the dark medieval period. But in Indian context, it implied rediscovering rationalism from within India’s past.

A distinct feature of the 19th century India was the urge for social and religious reforms which cut across castes and communities. India had a long tradition of religious reforms and social dissent. During the ancient period, an urge for reform can be seen in Upanishadic texts, Buddhism, Jainism, Vajrayan, Tantricism etc. During the medieval age, the popularity of the Bhakti and the Sufi saints is well known. Attempts to explore India’s past by the first generation of British rulers helped to sharpen educated classes consciousness of their own existence.

The major social problems which came within the purview of the reform movements were: Emancipation of women in which sati, infanticide, child and widow marriage were taken up Casteism and untouchability Education for bringing about enlightenment in society. In the religious sphere the main issues were: Idolatry, Polytheism, Religious superstitions, Exploitation by priests. Reform movement started in different parts of India in different period but having considerable similarities. They were link with one region or one caste. It was clear to them that without religious reformation, there cannot be any social reformation.

Reform movements of the 19th century set a strong background for the national liberation movement against the British imperialism. Some women reformers also played a prominent role in the social life of the 19th century. One may mention such names as Pandita Ramabai in western part, Sister Subbalaksmi in Madras and Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain in Bengal. Reform movements helped the growth of a modern middle class which was conscious of its rights.

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## 1.2 Objectives

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This unit is planned and designed with a view to understand and have knowledge about the origin of reformist ideas and liberalism in India during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the end of this unit one shall be able to:

- Discuss about the background of the Reform ideas and movements in India.
- Analyze the various significant socio-religious reform movements along with the social reformers during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in India.
- Describe about the features, contributions along with the limitations of the social reform movements.
- Discuss about the key social legislations of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in India.

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## 1.3 Backdrop of the Reform Movement: Causes and Analysis

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The earliest expression of reform was in Bengal, initiated by Rammohun Roy. He founded the Atmiya Sabha in 1814, which was the forerunner of Brahmo Samaj organized by him in 1829. The spirit of reform soon manifested itself in other parts of the country. The PararnahansaMandali and Prarthana Samaj in Maharashtra and Arya Samaj in Punjab and other parts of north India were some of the prominent movements among the Hindus. There were several other regional and caste movements like Kayastha Sabha in U.P. and Sarin Sabha in Punjab. Among the backward castes too reformation struck roots: The Satya Sodhak Samaj in Maharashtra and Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Sabha in Kerala. The Ahmadiya and Aligarh movements, the Sing Sabha and the RehnumaiMazdeyasan Sabha represented the spirit of reform among the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Parsees respectively.

The reform movements of the nineteenth century were not purely religious movements. They were socio-religious movements. The reformers like Rammohun Roy in Bengal, Gopal Hari Deshmukh (Lokhitavadi) in Maharashtra and Viresalingam in Andhra advocated religious reform for the sake of "Political advantage and social comfort". The reform perspectives of the movements and their leaders were characterised by a recognition of interconnection between religious and social issues. They attempted to make use of religious ideas to bring about changes in social institutions and practices.

The reform movements within the Hindu community attacked a number of social and religious evils. Polytheism and idolatry which negated the development of individuality or supernaturalism and the authority of religious leaders which induced the habit of conformity were subjected to strong criticism by these movements. The opposition to caste was not only on moral and ethical principles but also because it fostered social division. Anti-casteism existed only at a theoretical and limited level in early Brahmo movement, but movements like the Arya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj and Rama Krishna Mission became uncompromising. They unambiguously advocated the abolition of caste system, as evident from the movements initiated by JotibhaPhulle and Narayana Guru. The latter gave the call-only one God and one caste for mankind. The urge to improve the condition of women was not purely humanitarian, it was part of the quest to bring about the progress of society. Keshub Chandra Sen had voiced this concern: ' "no country on earth ever made sufficient progress in civilization whose females were sunk in ignorance". The social conditions of the then Indian society were equally depressing. The most distressing was the position of women. The birth of a girl was unwelcome, her marriage a burden and her widowhood inauspicious. Another debilitating factor was Caste. It sought to maintain a system of segregation, hierarchically ordained on the basis of ritual status, hampering social mobility and fostered social divisions. There were innumerable other practices marked by constraint, status, authority, bigotry and blind fatalism. Rejecting them as features of a decadent society, the reform movements sought to create a social climate for modernization. An attempt to change the then prevalent values of the society is evident in all these movements.

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## **1.4 Social and Religious Reform Movements**

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India in the 19th century witnessed a series of reform movements under- taken in various parts of the country. These movements were



oriented toward a re-structuring of the Indian society along modern lines. The reform movements should be seen as a response to the challenge posed by the colonial intrusion. They were indeed important just as attempts to reform society but even more so as manifestations of the urge to contend with the new situation engendered by colonialism. In other words the socio-religious reform was not an end in itself, but was integral to the emerging anti-colonial consciousness. Thus, what brought about the urge for reform was the need to rejuvenate the society and its institutions in the wake of the colonial conquest. This aspect of the reform movement, however, introduced an element of revivalism, a tendency to harp back on the Indian past and to defend, Indian culture and civilization. Although this tended to impart a conservative and retrogressive character to these movements, they played an important role in creating cultural consciousness and confidence among the people.

Reform Movements are linked with different ideas including presence of Colonial government, Economic and Social backwardness of society, influence of modern western ideas, and rise of intellectual awakening in the middle class and poor position of women in society. British rule in India acted as a catalyst to deep seated social changes. Western culture also influenced the Indian Life and thought in several ways. The most important result of the impact of western culture was the replacement of blind faith in current traditions, beliefs, and conventions by a spirit of rationalism.

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### **1.4.1 Raja Rammohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj: His Social Reforms**

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Ram Mohan Roy, the father of Indian Renaissance was versatile genius, who opposed the idolatry, denounced Sati, polygamy and abuses of the caste system, favoured remarriage of Hindu widows. Rammohan Roy was a great patriot, scholar and humanist. He was moved by deep love for the country and worked throughout his life for the social, religious, intellectual and political regeneration of the Indians. In 1814, Rammohan Roy settled in Calcutta and dedicated his life to the cause of social and religious reform. As a social reformer, Rammohan Roy fought relentlessly against social evils like sati, polygamy, child marriage, female infanticide and caste discrimination. He organized a movement against the inhuman custom of sati and helped William Bentinck to pass a law banning the practice (1829). It was the first successful social movement against an age-old social evil. Sambad Kaumudi (founded in 1921) was a Bengali weekly

newspaper published from Kolkata in the first half of the 19th century by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. *SambadKaumudi* regularly editorialised against Sati, denouncing it as barbaric and unHindu. It was the main vehicle of Ram Mohan Roy's campaign against Sati. He started the 'Atmiya Sabha' in 1815 and carried a consistent struggle against the religious and social malpractices. In first philosophical work "Tuhfat-ul-Muwahiddin" he analyzed major religions of the world in light of reason and social comfort. As a reformist ideologue, Roy believed in modern scientific approach and principles of human dignity and social equality. He put his faith in monotheism. He wrote *Gift to Monotheists* and translated the Vedas and the five Upanishads into Bengali to prove his conviction that ancient Hindu texts support monotheism.

Rammohan Roy was one of the earliest propagators of modern Western education. He looked upon it as a major instrument for the spread of modern ideas in the country. He was associated with the foundation the Hindu College in Calcutta (which later came to be known as the Presidency College). He also maintained at his own cost an English school in Calcutta. In addition, he established a Vedanta College where both Indian learning and Western social and physical science courses were offered. He sent petitions to the government to adopt a wider system of public education in English.

Rammohan Roy struggled persistently against social evils. He argued that ancient Hindu texts the Vedas and the Upanishads upheld the doctrine of monotheism. To prove his point, he translated the Vedas and five Upanishads into Bengali. In 1849 he wrote *Gift to Monotheism* in Persian. Rammohan Roy was a staunch believer in the philosophy of Vedanta (Upanishads) and vigorously defended the Hindu religion and Hindu philosophy from the attack of the missionaries. He only wanted to mould Hinduism into a new cast to suit the requirements of the age. In August 1828, Roy founded the Brahma Sabha which was later renamed Brahma Samaj. It opposed idol worship and stayed away from practice of priesthood and sacrifice. The worship was performed through prayers, meditation, and readings from the Upanishads. Great emphasis was laid on "promotion of charity, morality, benevolence, and strengthening of the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds. The role of the Brahma Samaj as the 'first intellectual movement which spread the ideas of rationalism and enlightenment in modern India' cannot be over-emphasized. Its liberal approach to social and religious questions won the approbation of Europeans and Indians alike. Its educational and social reform activities instilled a new confidence which, in turn,

contributed to the growth of national movement. A number of Brahma Samajists were later prominent in the struggle of Independence.

Rammohan Roy was a pioneer of Indian journalism. He himself published journals in Bengali, Persian, Hindi and English to educate the public on various current issues. He was also a firm believer in internationalism. He held that the suffering and happiness of one nation should affect the rest of the world. He took a keen interest in international events and always supported the cause of liberty and nationalism. Rammohan Roy represented the first glimmerings of the rise of national consciousness in India. He opposed the rigidity of the caste system because it destroyed the unity of the country. The poet Rabindranath Tagore has rightly remarked: "Rammohan was the only person in his time, in the whole world of men, to realize completely the significance of the Modern Age."

To sum up, Rammohan Roy from Bengal was the most notable reformer of the modern times. He was among the first to bring political questions in the ambit of public debate. His Atmiya Sabha, founded in 1814, discussed important social and political questions of the time. He wished to purify Hinduism by removing all kinds of evils that had crept into it over centuries.

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### **1.4.2 Henry Vivian Derozio and Young Bengal Movement**

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The establishment of the Hindu College in 1817 was a major event in the history of Bengal. It played an important role in carrying forward the reformist movement that had already emerged in the province. A radical movement for the reform of Hindu Society, known as the Young Bengal Movement, started in the college. Its leader was Henry Vivian Derozio, a teacher of the Hindu College. Derozio was deeply influenced by the revolutionary ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. He was a brilliant teacher and within a short period of time, he drew around him a group of intelligent boys in the college. He inspired his students to think rationally and freely, to question authority, to love liberty, equality and freedom and to worship truth. By organising an association for debates and discussions on literature, philosophy, history and science, he spread radical ideas. The movement started by Derozio was called the Young Bengal Movement and his followers were known as the Derozians. They condemned religious rites and the rituals, and pleaded for eradication of social evils, female education and improvement in the condition of women.

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### **1.4.3 Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar**

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Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was a towering personality of the mid-19th century who was born in a poor Brahmin family of Bengal in 1820. He was a renowned Sanskrit scholar and became the Principal of the Sanskrit College in 1851. The Sanskrit College conferred on him the title of 'Vidyasagar' because of his profound knowledge of Sanskrit. He was determined to break the priestly monopoly of scriptural knowledge, and for this he opened the Sanskrit College to break the self-imposed isolation of Sanskritic learning. The great scholar and reformer, Vidyasagar's ideas were a happy blend of Indian and western thought. He believed in high Moral values and was a deep humanist and was generous to the poor. Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was both a scholar and a reformer. He was a great humanist and had deep sympathy for the poor and the oppressed. He dedicated his entire life to the cause of social reform which he thought was necessary for modernizing India. By admitting non-Brahmin students to the Sanskrit College, he dealt a severe blow to the prevalent caste system.

Vidyasagar was a staunch supporter of women's education and helped Drinkwater Bethune to establish the Bethune School, the first Indian school for girls, in 1849. As Inspector of Schools, Vidyasagar opened a number of schools for girls in the districts under his charge. Vidyasagar's greatest contribution lies in the improvement of the condition of widows. Despite opposition, Vidyasagar openly advocated widow remarriage. Soon a powerful movement in favour of widow remarriage was started. At last, after prolonged struggle the Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856. Through his efforts, twenty-five widow remarriages took place. The first lawful Hindu widow remarriage was celebrated in Calcutta in 1856 under the inspiration and supervision of Vidyasagar. He was also a crusade against child marriage and polygamy.

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### **1.4.4 Dayanand Saraswati and Arya Samaj**

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The most significant reform movement in the late 19th century India was the Arya Samaj which was founded by Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83). It started in the western India and the Punjab, and gradually spread to a large part of the Hindi heartland. He attacked puranas, polytheism, idolatry and domination of the priestly class and adopted Hindi for reaching out to the masses. He also opposed child marriage and fiercely opposed to multiplicity of castes which he thought was

primarily responsible for encouraging conversion of lower castes into Christianity and Islam.

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### **1.4.5 Jyotiba Phule and Satyashodhak Samaj**

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Jyotirao Phule played a prominent role in bringing about social reforms in India. He fought for improving the condition of women, the poor and the untouchables. Jyotiba Phule belonged to the Mali (gardener) community and organized a powerful movement against upper caste domination and brahminical supremacy. Phule founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society) in 1873, with the leadership of the samaj coming from the backward classes, Malis, Telis, Kunbis, Saris, and Dhangars. People from all castes and religions were allowed to join the association. He was opposed to the domination of the Brahmins and started the practice of conducting marriages without Brahmin priests.

The main aims of the movement were Social service, Spread of education among women and lower caste people. Phule's works, Sarvajanik Satyadharma and Ghulamgiri, became source of inspiration for the common masses.

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### **1.4.6 Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh Movement**

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Syed Ahmed Khan was born in 1817 in a respectable Muslim family and was a loyalist member of the judicial services of the Government. Syed's progressive social ideas were propagated through his magazine Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq (Improvement of Manners and Morals) The Aligarh Movement emerged as a liberal, modern trend among the Muslim intelligentsia based on Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh. It aimed at spreading: - Modern education among Indian Muslims without weakening their allegiance to Islam. Social reforms among Muslims relates to purdah, polygamy, widow remarriage, women's education, slavery, divorce, etc.

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### **1.4.7 Balshastri Jambhikar**

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Balshastri Jambhikar He is known as Father of Marathi journalism for his efforts in starting journalism in Marathi language with the first newspaper in the language named 'Darpan' in the early days of British

Rule in India. He was one of the pioneers in Bombay who attacked orthodoxy and tried to reform popular Hinduism. Other prominent reformers in western India were Gopalhari Deshmukh (Lokhitawadi) and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar who attacked Hindu orthodoxy and criticized blind dependence on tradition and false glorification of past.

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#### **1.4.8 Pandit Ramabai**

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The British Government did not take substantial steps to educate women. Still, by the end of the 19th century, there were several women who had become aware of the need for social reform. Pandita Rama bai had been educated in United States and in England. She wrote about the unequal treatment meted out to the women of India. She founded the Arya Mahila Sabha in Pune and opened the Sarda Sadan for helping destitute widows.

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#### **1.4.9 Sarojini Naidu**

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Sarojini Naidu was a renowned poet and social worker. She inspired the masses with the spirit of nationalism through her patriotic poems. She stood for voting rights for women, and took an active interest in the political situation in the country. She also helped to set up the All India Women's Conference.

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#### **1.4.10 Swami Vivekananda and the Ramkrishna Mission**

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In 1896, Vivekananda founded the Ramkrishna Mission to propagate social welfare. It laid emphasis not on personal salvation but on social good and social service. The Ramkrishna Mission stood for religious and social reform based on the ancient culture of India. Emphasis was put on the essential spirit of Hinduism and not on rituals. Rendering social service was the primary aim of the Ramkrishna Mission. It believed that serving a human being was the same as worshipping God. The Mission opened a chain of schools, hospitals, orphanages and libraries throughout the country. It provided relief during famines, earthquakes and epidemics. A math or monastery was established in Belur near Calcutta. The Belur Math took care of the religious developments of the people.

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### 1.4.11 Prarthana Samaj

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In 1867, the Prarthana Samaj was started in Maharashtra with the aim of reforming Hinduism and preaching the worship of one God. Mahadev Govind Ranade and R.G. Bhandarkar were the two great leaders of the Samaj. The Prarthana Samaj did in Maharashtra what the Brahmo Samaj did in Bengal. It attacked the caste system and the predominance of the Brahmins, campaigned against child marriage and the purdah system, preached widow remarriage and emphasised female education. In order to reform Hinduism, Ranade started the Widow Remarriage Association and the Deccan Education Society. In 1887, Ranade founded the National Social Conference with the aim of introducing social reforms throughout the country. Ranade was also one of the founders of the Indian National Congress.

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### 1.4.12 Debendranath Tagore

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Debendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath Tagore, was responsible for revitalizing the Brahmo Samaj. Under him the first step was taken to convert the Brahmo Samaj into a separate religious and social community. He represented the best in traditional Indian learning and the new thought of the West. In 1839, he founded the Tatvabodhini Sabha to propagate Rammohan Roy's ideas. He promoted a magazine to do a systematic study of India's past in Bengali language. Debendranath Tagore supported the movements for widow remarriage, the abolition of polygamy, women's education and the improvement in the condition of the peasantry.

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### 1.4.13 The Sikh Reform Movement

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The formation of the two Singh Sabhas at Amritsar and Lahore in the 1870's was the beginning of religious reform movement among the Sikhs. The setting up of Khalsa College in Amritsar in 1892 helped promote Gurumukhi, Sikh learning and Punjabi literature. In 1920, the Akali movement which rose in Punjab started the cleansing of the management of the Gurudwaras or Sikh Shrines, from the corrupt Mahants (Priest).

#### Check Your Progress

1. Access the contributions of Raja Rammohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar towards making of modern India.

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## 1.5 Characteristics of Social Reform Movements

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An analysis of the reform movements of the 19th century brings out several common features. Some of them are highlighted below:

- The targets of the intellectual attack were the existing socio-cultural evils and malpractices such as obscurantism, superstitions and irrationality imbedded in the Society. The social reform movement did not, however, attack the social system as a whole; their attack was mainly only on the perversions and distortions that had crept into it.
- The reformers attempted to improve the status of girls and women in society. They all emphasised the need for female education.
- Reformation and not revolution: They did not stand for structural transformation; changes were sought within the framework of the very structure. In a word, they were advocates of reform and not exponents of revolution. The upliftment of the position of women, late marriage, monogamy, widow-marriage, elimination of caste distinctions, monotheism, etc., did not signify any revolutionary change in the society. Even they themselves were not unaware of the reformist nature of their ideas and endeavours. The course they delineated for transformation was to be evolutionary, and not revolutionary.
- All the reformers propagated the idea of one God and the basic unity of all religions. Thus, they tried to bridge the gulf between different religious beliefs.
- All the reformers attacked priesthood, rituals, idolatry and polytheism. The humanitarian aspect of these reform movements was expressed in their attack on the caste system and the custom of child marriage.
- By attacking the caste system and untouchability, the reformers helped to unify the people of India into one nation.
- The reform movements fostered feelings of self-respect, self-reliance and patriotism among the Indians.



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## 1.6 Social Legislations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century

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In the early decades of the nineteenth century there began internal movements within Hindu Society against its own customs and practices. In the light of the changing consciousness among the people, the Government too changed its policies. It was a coincidence that the British initiated social legislation when the Indian reformers created an opinion in their favour. The East India Company proceeded very hesitantly and cautiously against the abolition of the custom of Sati till Ram Mohan Roy represented the view of rational Indians against the evil. On 4 December, 1829, by Regulation XVII of the Government, the custom of Sati was declared illegal and punishable by the Criminal Courts. A less significant social measure than the abolition of sati was the introduction of widow marriage. Accordingly, on 26th July, 1856, the Act XV was passed legalizing widow marriage and giving the status of legitimacy to the children of the married widows. After the Widow Marriage Act 1856, the Bengal reformers became desirous of abolishing polygamy by legislation. In June-July 1856, petitions signed by fifty thousand men and women were submitted to the Government to abolish polygamy. In spite of the Act, the cause of remarriage of Hindu widows did not make much headway. Pandit Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar in Bengal and Vishnu Shastri in Western India put their heart and soul into propagating this reform. A Widow Remarriage Association was started in Bombay in 1866. Prof. D. R. Karve founded the Widow Home in Poona in 1896. Several legislations, starting from 1807, forbade slavery and slave trade and keeping slaves or trafficking in them became an offence under the Indian Penal Code, enacted in 1860.

Several important measures were also taken in the cause of female education. The initial efforts in this direction were made by the Christian missionaries. But the social reformers also greatly contributed towards the growth of female education. A mention ought to be made in this regard of the efforts of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar who opened nearly 35 girl's schools in 1857- 58 in Bengal. Prof. Karve founded several educational institutions in Maharashtra, the most notable being India's first Women's University in Bombay in the early 20th century. The spread of female education led to several other social reforms of great consequences, such as, the abolition of purdah, which further led to the participation of women in the freedom struggle. In the twentieth century, policies regarding social change mainly resulted from Indian opinion rather than from British interests. The progress of western education and the growth of political consciousness created a new atmosphere in the country affecting

various socio-economic problems. The press played a useful role in giving appropriate prominence to these issues. The Child Marriage Restraint Act XIX of 1929 (popularly known as Sarda Act) was a long awaited social measure in favour of which opinion had been growing for many years. It came into force on 1 April, 1930.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **List of Legislative Measures for Women :**

Bengal regulation (1829) banning sati

Bengal Regulations (1795, 1804) declaring infanticide illegal

Hindu Widow's Remarriage Act, 1856

Age of Consent Act, 1891

Sarda Act, 1929

Special Marriage Act, 1954

Hindu Marriage Act, 1955

Hindu Succession act, 1956

Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act

Maternity Benefits Act, 1961

Equal Remuneration Act, 1976

Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

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## **1.7 Contributions and Significance of Social reform movement**

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In spite of the opposition from the orthodox sections of the society, these movements contributed towards liberating people from the exploitation of priests. The religious texts were translated into vernacular languages; there was more emphasis on interpretation of scriptures and simplification of rituals, thus making worship a more personal experience. The movement gave the upcoming middle class cultural roots and reduced the sense of humiliation that the British powers had created. Modern, rational, secular, and scientific outlook was promoted realizing the need of the modern era. Many reformers like Dayanand Saraswati and Vivekananda upheld Indian philosophy and culture. This instilled in Indians a sense of pride and faith in their own culture. Female education was promoted. Schools for girls were set up. Even medical colleges were established for women. The

cultural and ideological struggle taken up by the socio-religious movements helped to build up national consciousness. They, thus, paved the way for the growth of nationalism.

The reformers aimed at modernization rather than outright westernization. A favorable social climate was created to end India's cultural and intellectual isolation from the world. It was greatly due to the constant endeavours of the reformers that abolition of Sati and legalization of widow-marriage were achieved during the nineteenth century. The ideas and activities of the intellectuals were directly or indirectly related to the task of nation-building and national reconstruction. The social reform movement, as a matter of fact, was not an isolated phenomenon in fact; it was loaded with wider national political and economic considerations. Thus, the social reform movement was a prelude to nationalism.

### **Objective Questions**

1. Mention three significant features of socio- religious reform movements in India during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
2. Mention five notable social legislations during the 19<sup>th</sup> century in India pertaining to the social evils prevalent in the society during that time.

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## **1.8 Weakness and Limitations of Social Reform movement**

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As every rose has its thorn like there were some limitations and weaknesses in the social reform movements too. It may be mentioned here that only the educated and urban middle class was involved in some of the social reform movements while the needs of vast majority of peasants and the urban poor were ignored. Movement did not reach rural India. Given the situation of widespread illiteracy in the rural areas and because of the absence of modern and diversified communications network, they were doomed to have a very limited audience, mainly urban-based. Thus even in terms of its practical appeal the movement remained urban, besides its other limitations. Casteism remained strong. Caste distinctions remained strong and the religious and social practices did not die away. Caste and customs proved to be hard to eradicate from Indian consciousness.

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## 1.9 Summing up

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The 19th century reformers undertook a two-fold task. A critique of the Indian society was made. Institutions like caste, Sati, widowhood, child-marriage etc. came in for a sharp attack. Superstitions and religious obscurantism were condemned. An attempt was made at the modernization of the Indian society and appeals were made to reason, rationalism and tolerance. The scope of their activities was not confined to religion only but included the society as a whole. Although they devised different methods and were also separated by time, they showed a remarkable unity of perspective and objectives. They gave a vision of a prosperous modern India and subsequently this vision got incorporated in the Indian National Movement.

### Check Your Progress

1. Mention some of the significant reform movements undertaken in various parts of the country during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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### Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the significance of the socio-religious reform movements in India during the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

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## 1.10 References and Suggested Readings

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## Unit 2

### Raja Ram Mohan Roy: Social Reform

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- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Life Sketch of Raja Rammohan Roy
- 1.4 Social Ideas and Reforms of Raja Rammohan Roy
  - 1.4.1 Abolition of Sati
  - 1.4.2 Champion of Women Liberty
  - 1.4.3 Opposed Caste System
  - 1.4.4 Voice against Idolatry
  - 1.4.5 Supporter of Western Education
  - 1.4.6 Opposition to Kulinism
  - 1.4.7 Economic Development
  - 1.4.8 Brahmo Samaj
- 1.5 Summing up
- 1.6 References and Suggested Readings

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#### 1.1 Introduction

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The story of Raja Rammohan Roy's life is the story of India's transition from the medieval to the modern age. It is necessary to stress the significance of his life as a turning point in the history of India as a whole, for this significance is likely to be obscured if Raja Rammohan Roy is merely admired as a special glory of Bengal, or venerated as the founder of a reform movement within Hinduism. It is a pity that our knowledge of the many facts about Rammohan's life is very inadequate. Many events of his life are still shrouded in mystery and his greatness, like that of most other Indians renowned in history, is partly legendary.

The social and political thought in modern India had its beginning with Raja Ram Mohan Roy who emphasized the need of religious and social reforms on rational principles. He was an intensely admired and beloved leader dedicated to the service of mankind, a great multifaceted personality, the Father of Renaissance of Modern India, a profound religious scholar, a mighty social reformer, a champion of regeneration and upliftment of India. Raja Rammohan Roy inaugurated the Modern Age in India and stood for the introduction of new ideas and ideals in order to raise the country to the height of civilization. He strongly advocated for the cause of social, religious, political, administrative and economic reforms.

Raja Rammohan Roy was born at a time when India had lost touch with her ideals and stood subjected to unreason and dogmatism. He is the great path maker of the country, who has removed ponderous obstacles that impeded our progress at every step and initiated us into the present era of worldwide co-operation of humanity. Indeed he heralded a new era of social and religious reforms, persuading his countrymen to give up the gross superstitions and evil practices with which Hinduism had become associated during the preceding centuries and to realize the true spirit of ancient religion as taught in the Vedas and the Upanishads. As such in the dark gloom of India's degeneration, he rose up as a luminous star on the horizon of India's history.

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## 1.2 Objectives

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This unit is designed with a view to understand and have knowledge about one of the most prominent socio-political reformer of India during pre-independence period. By the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Discuss about the life sketch of Raja Rammohan Roy
- Analyze his major social ideas and reforms
- Describe about Brahma Samaj

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## 1.3 Life Sketch of Raja Rammohan Roy

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He was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1772 in an orthodox Brahmin family to Tarini Devi and Ramakanta Roy of Radhanagar, then a part of the district of Burdwan and later a part of the Arambagh sub-division in the district of Hooghly in West Bengal. His early education included

the study of Persian and Arabic at Patna, where he read the Koran, studied the Islamic metaphysics and other outstanding works of Sufi poets. This made him critical of idolatry and polytheism. After completing his Islamic Studies at Patna he went to Banaras where he studied Sanskrit and learnt about the ancient Indian scriptures specially the Vedas and the Upanishads. Returning to his village at the age of sixteen he wrote a rational critique of Hindu idol worship which greatly displeased his father and as an aftermath he had to leave his home. His wanderings took him to Tibet where he secured a first hand knowledge of Buddhism, the tenets of Buddhism. Raja Rammohan Roy also studied Hebrew, Greek, Latin as well as English which resulted in development of a very liberal outlook in him.

A short while after the death of his father in 1803, he went to Murshidabad and renewed his Arabic studies. There he wrote 'Tuhfat-ul-Muwahhidin (a gift to the monotheists) in Persian with an 'Introduction' in Arabic' in his introduction to the book he attempted to show the general unity of thought among mankind regarding the existence of One Being. He tried to bring out the fact that faith in the unity of Reality and recognition of human values are the cardinal principles of all religions. Subsequently, the acceptance of the fundamental unity of all religions becomes a leading feature of the Indian Thought. This is quite evident in the writings of Vivekananda, Tagore and Radhakrishnan.

Rammohan Roy's impact on modern Indian history was a revival of the pure and ethical principles of the Vedanta school of philosophy as found in the Upanishads. He preached the unity of God, made early translations of Vedic scriptures into English and founded the Brahma Samaj. The Brahma Samaj played a major role in reforming and modernizing the Indian society. He successfully campaigned against Sati i.e. the practice of widow burning. He also sought to integrate Western culture with the best features of his own country's tradition. He established a number of schools to popularize modern system of education in India. It was he who first introduced the word 'Hinduism' into the English language in 1816. For his diverse contributions to the society Raja Rammohan Roy is regarded as one of the most important figures in the Bengali Renaissance. His efforts to protect Hinduism and Indian rights by participating in British government earned him the title 'The Father of the Indian Renaissance'.



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## **1.4 Social Ideas and Reforms of Raja Rammohan Roy**

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Raja Rammohan Roy is a great historical figure who made numerous efforts to transform India and dared to defy the age old Hindu tradition. He undertook various social reforms to change the society and worked to uplift the status of women in India. He was a great scholar who translated many books, religious and philosophical work and scriptures into Bengali and also translated Vedic scriptures into English. He was an Indian socio-educational reformer who was also known as 'Maker of Modern India' and the 'Father of Indian Renaissance'.

As Raja Rammohan Roy saw a close link between the political and social progress, he held that no improvement in the political and social progress, he held that no improvement in the political condition of the people could take place unless improvements were effected in their social conditions. He therefore tried to bring about social and religious reforms. Firstly, he attacked idolatry, which he considered as the root cause of all the evils prevailing in Hindu Society. Through his researches he tried to establish that idolatry was not sanctioned by the Vedas and Upanishads and was only a later addition. Secondly he tried to get the inhuman practice of Sati (burning of widows on the funeral pyre of dead husband) abolished, which has been prevailing in the Indian society for decades. He carried out incessant agitation against this evil and created a powerful public opinion in favour of its abolition through his writings and discussions. Ultimately, he succeeded in getting this evil abolished through a law enacted by Lord William Bentick. Thus he became the pioneer of the social reform movement in India. His significant social reforms and ideas have been discussed below:-

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### **1.4.1 Abolition of Sati**

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Practice of Sati during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century was an outrageous social evil. Raja Rammohan Roy raised his voice against the Sati system. It was a system in which in the funeral pyre of the deceased husband, his wife was mercilessly thrown if she did not enter into the flame voluntarily. Her sacrifice was considered as an act of deep love and attachment for her deceased husband and was termed as Sati. It was an age-old phenomenon which afflicted more or less every society at different points of time. The Brahmins and other higher castes in the society encouraged it. Roy opposed this evil practice which was barbarous and inhuman. It was a cruel custom

based on an irrational philosophy. His sound argument was considered to be an onslaught on Hinduism. Describing the practice of Sati as heinous, he treated it as murder as the widow was forced to commit it. He therefore requested the government to stop this practice. He was opposed by the fundamentalists who argued that the custom was bound up with the religion of the Hindus and any kind of interference would offend the religious sentiments of the people. He paid a heavy price for his progressive policies as he was humiliated and ridiculed by orthodox members of the society. Finally all his efforts bore fruits and this practice was stopped by an act passed in 1829 during Lord William Bentinck. Thus a long prevailing ugly practice of the Hindus was uprooted.

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### **1.4.2 Champion of Women Liberty**

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Raja Rammohan Roy advocated liberty for women. He was determined to give women her proper place in the society. Besides abolishing Sati, he advocated in favour of widow remarriage. He also told that like the sons, daughters have also their right over parental property. Women were not only forced to become Sati, but also debarred from inheriting any property from their parents or husbands under the then existing Hindu law. They were forcibly deprived of the means of sustenance; they became a liability for those on whom they depended. Therefore, their physical extermination had its financial advantages. This was the bitter and gruesome truth that lay beneath the killing of the widows in the name of religion. Protesting against the practice of denying the right to women, Roy wrote a pamphlet entitled “Modern Encroachment on the Ancient Rights of Hindu Females according to the Hindu Law of Inheritance” in 1822. It was said that it was an unjust practice to deprive the women from enjoying property as a matter of right. It was the result of deliberate distortion of traditional Hindu law.

He also influenced the British government to bring necessary modifications in the existing law. He raised voice against child marriage and polygamy. He was also the advocate of women education. Roy had a tremendous respect for women. He ridiculed those who believed that women by nature were inferior to men mentally without resolution, unworthy or trust, subject to passion and void of virtuous knowledge.

### Objective Questions

1. When was the practice of Sati prevalent in India?
2. When was the practice of Sati stopped?
3. Mention one significant writings of Raja Rammohan Roy in regard to women inheritance over parental property.

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### 1.4.3 Opposed Caste System

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The caste system was very ugly practice prevailing in Indian society right from the later Vedic age. Indian society was fragmented by the name of different castes. Roy strongly opposed this ugly system. To him everybody was a son or daughter of God and as such no differences should be made among them. According to him caste system in the Indian society was not only a divisive and destructive force but it also had a deleterious effect on the political life in India. The distinction of castes with innumerable divisions and subdivisions among them had entirely deprived them of patriotic feeling. He even encouraged inter-caste marriages.

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### 1.4.4 Voice against Idolatry

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Raja Rammohan Roy raised his voice against idolatry. In his book Tuhfat-ul-Muwahidin he championed the cause of Monotheism. He criticized idol worship by the Hindus and advocated Monotheism or unity among Gods. He also advised people to be guided by the conscience and appealed all to observe the principle of unity of God. From 1809 to 1814 he lived at Rangpur (a town in Northern Bengal); and there he came into contact with the Jains and studied Kalpasutra and other religious books of the Jain philosophy. While at Rangpur, he also took a keen interest in the political development in England and Europe. He studied all the journals and newspapers that could be made available to him, and was attracted towards political liberalism prevailing in Europe at that time.

In 1814 Rammohan Roy resigned from the service and settled down in Calcutta. By that time he was fully equipped with the knowledge of philosophy and religions of the world. He therefore decided to take up his life's mission to salvage India's deepest realizations covered up for centuries by ritualism, superstitions and customs and to harmonize

them with the living thought currents of the world. With that purpose in view, in 1815 he founded Atmiya Sabha- a sort of discussion club for scholars of religion and philosophy. Its members were soon drawn into social and religious controversies, and Rammohan Roy started his campaigns against the evils of Hindu society, particularly against the custom of Sati. A year later he published his Vedanta Sara in which he pleaded for the adoption of monotheism in place of the prevailing religion which was largely polytheistic and ritual-ridden. In 1821, he established the Calcutta Unitarian Association, the object of which was to work for an all round development of the Indian masses. Such an object was amazingly modern and also strikingly indicative of the fact that although Rammohan was a deeply spiritual man, he did not ignore the material and economic aspects of life. According to him, a perfect life cannot be possible without an inherent unity of its different aspects. Likewise, the salvation of man cannot be piecemeal but has to be total.

#### **Stop to Consider**

Raja Rammohan Roy views on Religion was quite different from the views which were prevalent among the people of his time. Unlike his father, he was logical and heterodox. He differed from his father on fundamental issues. The monotheism of Muhammedan theology and the Brahma knowledge of the Hindu sacred books changed his mind. He opposed the idol worship and criticized the superstitions. He felt that spiritual purity had been polluted by the superstitions and blind beliefs. His parents were therefore unhappy with him.

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### **1.4.5 Supporter of Western Education**

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Raja Rammohan Roy was a great scholar having sharp intellect in the Vedas, Upanishads, Quran, Bible and several other holy scriptures. He very well realized the importance of English language and could visualize the need of a scientific, rational and progressive education for the Indians. He supported the move of Lord Macaulay and championed the cause of the English system of education in India.

Opposed to all kinds of social injustice, he felt that people should be given education on the British model as this could help them in rebuilding a modern society for India. A master of many languages, he felt the importance of the English language as it was not only relevant but also the need of the day. Impressed by Western art, culture etc., he

laid emphasis on science-oriented education. As such he always supported education undertaken by the missionaries. His motto was to take Indians the path of progress. He established an English school in 1816 and Vedanta College in 1825. He wanted to introduce modern system of education in India but he could not live to see the introduction of English system of education in 1835. However his efforts and dreams were materialized into reality even after his death.

### **Objective Questions**

1. Since when the evil practice of caste system has been prevailing in Indian society?
2. Name the book in which Roy championed the cause of Monotheism?
3. In which year Vedanta College was established by Roy?
4. When was the system of English education started in India?

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### **1.4.6 Opposition to Kulinism and Polygamy**

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Kulinism and Polygamy were other evils that existed in the contemporary society. Kulin Brahmins were placed on the highest pedestal of the caste structure as they were treated with utmost respect. A girl married to a Kulin Brahmin was considered to be very lucky. 'Caste' was the only factor that was taken into consideration for solemnizing any marriage. Physical ability, height, age, education, wealth etc were secondary and caste was the primary factor. Rammohan Roy was deadly opposed to this Kulinism and its concomitant on this problem. As the Kulins occupied the highest position in the hierarchy of castes they were much sought after. As a result, they exploited their position to their own advantage. They married as many wives as possible, invariably for monetary consideration. In some cases the age gap between the husband and wife ranged from 30-70 years.

Through Press as well as in various platforms he articulated his views on this problem. He argued that anyone who wanted to go for a second marriage or more than that during the life time of his first wife should be allowed to do so only on proving before competent legal authority that the conditions under which polygamy was permitted by the Hindu shastras were fulfilled.

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### **1.4.7 Economic Development**

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Raja Rammohan Roy was a liberal economic thinker. He wanted the state intervention to protect the property of the individuals. He advocated the right of Hindu women over property. As a liberal economic thinker he was deeply concerned with the economic strangulation of the poor in the country. That is why he had resented strongly against the existing revenue system of the country whose first preys were the landlords.

Roy believed that with the help of Western technology and financial assistance, India could be in a position to improve her economic conditions. But he was deeply distressed when he found that India was exploited by the British regime. Nevertheless he had a tremendous faith in the people. He felt that they should be educated so that they could grow with a new vision, a new thinking and a new attitude. As a true patriot he strived for all round development of the country i.e. educational, social, political, economic, administrative etc.

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### **1.4.8 Brahma Samaj**

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The most important event which brought fame to Raja Rammohan Roy was the establishment of Brahma Samaj in 1828. The purpose of the Samaj was 'the worship and adoration of the eternal Unsearchable and Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the Universe'. Since Roy believed that every religion believed in existence of the Supreme Being as the creator and preserver of the universe along with a moral code necessary for social peace and happiness, the Samaj was widely acclaimed by the people. It was directly or indirectly responsible for giving rise to a great movement called Indian Renaissance or new awakening, which stood for a national reorganization of society and rediscovery of the ancient Indian heritage.

In Brahma Samaj no designation or title was to be given to the Supreme Being. No image was to be placed and no sacrifices to be offered to God. The Samaj was open to men of all castes, creeds, colour etc. without any distinction. The Samaj sought to promote bonds of union between men of different religions and promote qualities of piety, virtue and benevolence among the members. He laid the foundations of the principle of religious tolerance and put forth the concept of universal religion. The ideas of the Brahma Samaj gradually spread far beyond Bengal and created an atmosphere of

liberalism, rationalism and modernity which gradually influenced Indian Thought. “ If there is ever to be a new religion in India,” said Max Muller about half a century later when the Brahmo Samaj was already being shaken to its foundations by schisms, ‘it will, I believe, owe its very life blood to the large heart of Rammohan Roy and his worthy disciples, Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chundra Sen.’” But Marx Muller’s prophecy could not be fulfilled, because the condition attached to it- the emergence of a ‘new religion’ in India.- was impossible of realization. Hinduism proved strong enough to counteract the growing influence of Brahmoism as it had done in the case of Buddhism. In other words, Hinduism gradually raised superior to Brahmoism.

The Brahmo Samaj as conceived and founded by Rammohan Roy brought into existence a common and universal platform of organized public worship which emphasized besides the cult of the One Supreme God, the ideal of service to humanity. Raja Rammohan Roy wished that this institution i.e. Brahmo Samaj to be a meeting ground of the people of all religious denominations who believed in one God, who is formless, eternal, unsearchable and immutable. Roy called himself a follower of the Universal religion. He told one of his friend that after his death the Hindus would claim him as their own, the Muslims would do the same and as also the Christians, but he belonged to no sect as he as the devotee of Universal Religion.

The philosophy of Brahmo Samaj left its decisive influence on the Indian thought. Today its followers are few in number but that is because the needs that necessitated its origin and growth have been fulfilled. Since its mission has been accomplished during the course of time through the efforts of many distinguished persons and devout social reformers, it has now lost its importance. But about a century back it did a commendable service to the Hindu society and to the country at large.

### **Objective Questions**

1. When was Brahmo Samaj established by Raja Rammohan Roy?
2. What was the main aim and objective of Brahmo Samaj?

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**1. Discuss about Raja Rammohan Roy as a Progressive and Liberal thinker?**

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**1. Critically discuss about Raja Rammohan Roy as a Socio-Cultural reformer?**

### **Stop to Consider**

Raja Rammohan Roy showed keen interest in the subjects of Law and Morality. His interests were confined not only to the problems relating to freedom and democratic rights of the individuals and peoples throughout the world, but he also expressed his views on the subjects like law, custom and morality. Although Rammohan Roy was not a jurist, he had a clear grasp of the fundamental principles of law and its relation to custom and morality on the other. This grasp is revealed at its best in his papers on 'Modern Encroachment on the Ancient Rights of Females According to the Hindu Law of Inheritance and the Rights of Hindoos over Ancestral Property According to the Law of Bengal.

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## **1.5 Summing up**

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Raja Rammohan Roy was a remarkable figure with vision and foresight, a dedicated spirit with deep love towards mankind and God; bold, courageous, sincere, honest and fearless to preach his convictions. He can be regarded as an early feminist in modern India and a social reformer to the core. Symbolizing the spirit of new India; fighting against ignorance, superstitions, social and cultural decadence in Eastern India; arguing for a deeper unity through the synthesis of monotheism and social reform. Providing a rational basis for religion, he condemned all irrationalities found in Hinduism. He did his best for the revival of Hinduism. In other words he tried to free the individual from the tyranny of blind customs and superstitions. His significance



lies in the fact that the social and religious reforms inaugurated by him inspired the subsequent leaders of Brahma Samaj in Bengal and other organizations like Prarthana Samaj in Bombay, the Theosophical Society in Madras and Arya Samaj in Punjab and U.P to work for further reforms. Raja Rammohan Roy thus dealt with various problem of his day and led the country to progress and modernity. He stands in history as the living bridge over which India marches from her unmeasured past to her incalculable future. He was the arch which spanned the gulf that yawned between ancient caste and modern humanity, between superstition and science and between despotism and democracy. He died on 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1833 at Stapleton Hill near Bristol (England).

### **CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

1. Elaborately discuss about the social evils prevalent during the time of Roy in the Indian Society and the steps initiated towards curbing those evils?

### **Points to remember**

- Raja Rammohan was a great reformer, a champion of social and intellectual emancipation who inaugurated the modern age in India.
- Rammohan Roy was a strong supporter of women. According to him, women are not inferior to men but rather they are as competent as men. He even succeeded in abolishing Sati and as such he was strongly criticized by his critics.
- Roy fought against the social evils prevalent in Indian society during this time. He stood for assimilation of culture, an architect of modern India, a lover of humanity who exposed superstitions found in Hinduism.

### **Significant dates and events of Roy's Life**

- 1772 : Born on 22 May at Radhanagar.
- 1818: Published his first tract on Sati.
- 1826: Founded Vedanta College.
- 1828: Established Brahma Samaj.
- 1833: died on 27<sup>th</sup> September.

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## **UNIT: 3**

### **Raja Ram Mohan Roy: Political Ideas**

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- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Raja Rammohan Roy as a Political Reformer
- 1.4 Political Ideas and Reforms of Raja Rammohan Roy
  - 1.4.1 Love for Liberty
  - 1.4.2 Freedom of Press
  - 1.4.3 Views on Spheres of State Activity
  - 1.4.4 Views on Education
  - 1.4.5 Civil Rights
  - 1.4.6 Nationalism
  - 1.4.7 Internationalism
  - 1.4.8 Father of Indian Journalism
- 1.5 Summing Up
- 1.6 References and Suggested Readings

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#### **1.1 Introduction**

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Raja Rammohan Roy born in 1772 in an orthodox family in West Bengal had a towering personality who inaugurated the modern age in India. In his childhood he had a strong liking for Persian literature and as such he went to Persia when he was twelve year old. He also went to Banaras where he learned Sanskrit. On one hand he was very logical and heterodox while his father was a devout and an orthodox person. As such often the relationship between the two turns out to be bitter due to their ideological differences. He was a strong believer of 'One God' and criticized idol worship and superstitions. He is often regarded as the Father of Indian Renaissance. He favoured science-oriented education and laid stress on economic development and on self-governing India.

Roy opposed colonialism and favoured internationalism. According to him an international organization needs to be set up to solve the problems faced by different countries. He was a champion of liberty and freedom and supported the struggle for freedom and democratic rights. Roy supported freedom of press which was opposed by the British government. He was very distressed to see the conditions in which press functioned. However, he was against the absolute freedom of press. He was a remarkable figure, a man of vision who fought against the social evils and stood for assimilation of culture. He had a vision of League of Nations.

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## **1.2 Objectives**

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This unit is planned and designed with a view to understand and have knowledge about Raja Rammohan Roy's political ideas and his contributions towards the reformation of India in the political sphere during the pre-independence period. By the end of this unit one shall be able to:

- Discuss about Raja Rammohan Roy as a Political Reformer.
- Analyze Roy's political ideas and reforms.
- Describe about his role as a progressive political thinker of India.

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## **1.3 Raja Rammohan Roy as a Political Reformer**

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Rammohan Roy was not only the pioneer of religious reform and the first advocate of social reconstruction in India, he also labored on the educational, economic and political problems of his time and for the valuable contributions, which he made to the intellectual and political development in the country, he is known as the father of all progressive movements in modern India. He rendered a great service to the cause of education in India. He realized that without a radical reform of the educational system prevailing in India at that time, it would not be possible to awaken the nation from the slumber of centuries. The entire educational system needed to be overhauled.

Roy was very keen that scientific education be introduced in India, so that people by the study of science might throw off superstitions, bred of ignorance and take to the path of enlightenment as was being done in the countries of Europe where scientific education was replacing the educational system of the Church. Although the pleading for the

introduction of the teaching of scientific education bore fruit long after his death, there is not a ray of doubt that it was he who initiated the movement for the introduction of the Western Education in India.

Rammohan Roy felt unhappy to see the miserable economic plight of the Indian people under the rule of the East India Company. He even fought against the monopoly of the salt trade by the servants of the East India Company. About a century after, the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru raised its voice and fought against the economic exploitation of the Indian people by the British rulers. But Rammohan Roy was the first to draw the attention of his countrymen to the economic drain of India carried on systematically by the British rulers. At the same time he had not the slightest doubt in his mind that the changes that he wanted to bring about in the religious, social and educational systems of his country would exert beneficial influence on the political advancement of India. He fully recognized that the inter-relation between religious reformation and political and social progress. Although he was not a politician who was to shine in the Indian firmament after him, he was a keen student of politics and thoroughly understood the politics of Europe, particularly England. His contributions to the political awakening of India were immense.

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## **1.4 Political Ideas and Reforms of Raja Rammohan Roy**

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Raja Rammohan Roy was one of the pioneers to enunciate the rights and privileges of the people and in the name of the nation to speak to the government of their duties and responsibilities as the Sovereign power. He championed the struggle for freedom and democratic rights not for India alone but for every country of the world. Some of his significant political ideas and reforms are highlighted below:-

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### **1.4.1 Love for Liberty**

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Raja Rammohan Roy was a champion of liberty and freedom; which is indeed a priceless possession of human being. His love for liberty and freedom was the basis of all his social, political and religious activities.

He was the first Indian to emphasize that India must cultivate a rational outlook so that it could grow into a nation. He said that a nation might not have one religion but it must have one State with

common economic and social objectives seeking welfare of all its citizens, it must have political freedom to pursue its objectives in any manner its people

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### **1.4.2 Freedom of Press**

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Press plays a vital role in a society as it creates, influences and shapes public opinion and provides information to people on various aspects. Without information there would be a communication gap which might prove disastrous to a society. It acts as a deterrent to the arbitrary rule. Because of its role and importance, it has been rightly described by Edmund Burke, Carlyle and others as the Fourth Estate.

Raja Rammohan Roy laid emphasis on freedom of Press, rights of women and separation of executive and judicial functions. He made a strong plea for freedom of press in his Memorial submitted to the Supreme Court against the Press Ordinance which prohibited the publication of a newspaper or other periodicals without previous license from the Governor-General in Council. He argued that freedom of press was conducive to the good of both the government and the governed. It is good for the government because it enables it to acquit itself with the views and wishes of the people concerning the various measures adopted by it. He remarked that if it is denied to the people, the government shall not be able to know the shortcomings of its policy and injustice will be done to the people. he refuted the argument advanced by the government that free press has never yet caused a revolution in any part of the world because while men can easily represent the grievances arising from the conduct of local authorities to the supreme government and thus get them redressed, the grounds of discontent that excite revolution are removed; whereas where no freedom of press existed and grievances consequently remained unrepresented and unredressed. However it may be noted that Roy never pleaded for absolute freedom for the press and permitted reasonable restrictions on the exercise of this freedom.

The British Government in India did not tolerate the role of the Press during the freedom struggle. Roy argued that Press was beneficial to the governed as to the government. Excellence in government and greatest virtue and enlightenment in the society could be secured only when the Press is free. He never argued for the absolute liberty of the press. He anticipated many of the arguments of John Stuart Mill on behalf of liberty in his appeals for protection of Press freedom. He always emphasized that a free Press has never yet caused a revolution

in any part of the world. He believed that it was only a despotic government that always wanted to suppress a free flow of knowledge and information as it considered the spread of knowledge dangerous to the existence of all kinds of authorities. Bold, fearless and courageous, he said that the publication of truth, the natural expression of men's sentiments, through the medium of the Press, does not pose any problem to the state. As such there should be no restrictions from the government.

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### 1.4.3 Views on Spheres of State Activity

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It may be mentioned that Raja Rammohan Roy sought state intervention to bring about social reforms, which clearly shows that he did not believe in the principle of 'Laissez Faire'. However, it would be wrong to assume that he was a socialist and stood for full control of the state. He stood for right to private property and insisted that it was the duty of the state to protect the existing titles to property. But he wanted to protect the cultivators from the oppression of zamindars and insisted that the Zamindars should not have any right to increase the rent.

#### Objective Questions

1. When and where was Raja Rammohan Roy born?
2. Rammohan Roy favoured absolute freedom-True or False
3. Did Roy believed in the principle of "Laissez Faire"?

#### Stop To Consider

##### Relation between Men and Women

In 1818, Rammohan Roy wrote a Pamphlet in his native Bengali opposing the practice of asking Hindu widows to immolate themselves on their husbands funeral pyre. In the same year, he published an English version entitled, 'A Conference between an Advocate for and an opponent of the Practice of Burning Widows alive'.

Women are generally considered inferior to men in regard to merit, knowledge and wisdom. But the male part of the community taking advantage of their corporeal weakness have denied to them those excellent merits that they are entitled to by nature and afterwards, they are apt to say that women are naturally incapable of acquiring those merits. Women are always denied of the fair opportunity of exhibiting their natural capacity. If after instruction in knowledge and wisdom a person cannot comprehend or retain what has been taught to him, we may consider him as deficient but as women are kept void of education and acquirement, it will not be in justice to pronounce on their inferiority.

With regard to their worthiness if we look minutely into the conduct of both the sexes we may be enabled to ascertain which of them is the most frequently guilty of betraying. If we enumerate such women in each village or town as have been deceived by women it is presume that the numbers of the deceived women would be found ten times greater than that of the betrayed men. Men are in general able to read, write and manage public affairs, by which it means they easily promulgate such faults as women occasionally commit but never consider as criminal the miscount of men towards women.

The accusation of their want of virtuous knowledge is an injustice. At marriage the wife is recognized as half of her husband but after marriage they are treated worse than inferior animals. For the women is employed to do the work of a slave in the house, such as in her turn, to clean the place very early in the morning whether cold or wet, to cook food, to wash the floor and other household chores. While doing so if they commit the smallest fault they are entitled to insults and rebukes. After all the male part of the family has had their meals to their fullest, the women have to satisfy themselves with whatever is left over. As long as her husband is poor she suffers every kind of trouble and when he becomes rich she is altogether heart-broken. Where a husband takes two or three wives to live with him, they are subjected to mental miseries and constant quarrels. Even this distressed situation they virtuously endure. Sometimes it happens that the husband from a preference for one of his wives and behaves cruelly to another. Among the lower classes and those even of the better classes who have not been associated with good company, the wife on the slightest fault or even on bare suspicion of her misconduct is characterized as a thief. Respect to virtue and their reputation generally makes them forgive even this treatment. If being unable to bear such cruel treatment, a wife leaves her husband's house to live separately from him, then the influence of the husband with the



magisterial authority is generally sufficient to place her again in his hands and in revenge for her quitting him; he seizes every pretext to torture her in various ways and sometimes even puts her privately to death.

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#### **1.4.4 Views on Education**

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Raja Rammohan Roy has been a strong critique of the existing Indian educational system and has often been condemned for his zealous advocacy of the western system of education. Opposed to all kinds of social injustice, he felt that people should be given education on the British model as this could help them in rebuilding a modern society for India. A master of many languages, he felt that the importance of the English language as it was not only relevant but also the need of the day. He was very much impressed by Western art and culture and laid emphasis on science-oriented education and as such he always supported education undertaken by the missionaries. He considered the western system of education based on study of Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Anatomy, Natural Philosophy etc as superior to the existing Indian system and pleaded for the adoption of the same for the advancement and progress of the country. However, he had great admiration for the rich treasures of ancient Indian philosophy and religion and wished to place them before the common man by transiting the Vedantic literature in Indian languages.

He was the first Bengali writer to write religious philosophical literary and historical books in Bengali for the enlightenment of his compatriots. He remained firmly rooted in the spirituality of India. However, it cannot be denied that Roy played an important role in getting the controversy raging between the oriental and western system of education, in favour of the latter. According to Vivekananda, Raja Rammohan Roy was ‘the first man of a new regenerate India.’

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#### **1.4.5 Civil Rights**

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Raja Rammohan Roy was a strong advocate of Civil rights and political liberty. He held that the British rule was a divine-boon because it assured greater civil and religious liberty of the subjects. Though Roy did not specify the liberties made available by the British rule, he obviously had in mind civil liberty right to life and liberty, the right to property, freedom of opinion and freedom for religious

worship. He also suggested the means for the attainment of civil rights. According to Dr. B.B.Mazumdar for securing life and liberty Raja Rammohan Roy demanded 'codification of laws', separation of powers, integrity, efficiency and independence of judges, introduction of the jury system and the Habeas Corpus Act, and the legal responsibility of officials. He held that the civil and criminal laws should be codified in such a way as not to require any explanation by a reference to any other book or authority, either Mohammedan or Christian. Separation of powers was to him a cardinal principle of good government. He strongly protested against the union of magisterial and judicial power with the office of the Collector.

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### **1.4.6 Nationalism**

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A staunch nationalist, Roy loved everything that was Indian and did his best to promote the country's progress and prosperity. Right type of education, national in character and austere in make-up, should be imparted. Emphasizing nation's rights and privileges, he suggested that steps should be taken to remove socio-economic backwardness from the country. He believed in the political freedom of man. He advised Indians to have self freedom in thought and action.

Since the Indian society was multilingual and multi-religious, people professing different religions should co-exist together with perfect harmony. Political stability, social advancement and economic progress could be achieved in a society only when it was free from social evils like polygamy, caste system, child marriage, Sati system etc. to achieve his goal, he struggled very hard. As a true nationalist, he did not desist from adopting any means to achieve his goal. He believed that customs, traditions and usages responsible for the schism or division among the people should be scrapped and a new social morality based on social justice and economic equality evolved. To him, the purpose of religion and politics should be to establish a welfare society.

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### **1.4.7 Internationalism**

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Raja Rammohan Roy was a strong believer in the freedom of the human race. He regarded the whole world to be one large single family and all nations its members. He felt that the economic conditions of the downtrodden living in different countries of the world should be

improved. A man of very broad and clear ideas, he was a true internationalist. He keenly felt the need of an instrument that would ensure and guarantee peace in the world. As an individual needs the help of his neighbour to resolve his family or domestic problems, so also a nation at the time of crisis should seek the help of other nations. He wanted that people belonging to different races, speaking different languages and professing different religions should live together so that peace and happiness would be established. He believed that religion could bring peace to mankind. He also suggested that a central organization or a Congress of all nations should be formed so that it could amicably resolve all crises that confronted the nations. He in his own limited way conceived an idea of a League of Nations or United Nations. According to him, all the disputes affecting different nations should be settled by an international organization. He was the champion of internationalism. He wanted universal religion synthesis of human culture and ideas, end of imperialism and peaceful co-existence of nations. He really advocated the principle of collaboration of mankind.

The end of the First World War and the Second World War witnessed the formation of the League of Nations and the United Nations respectively. These shows how progressive were his political ideas and how prophetic he was. He was indeed the first man of the eighteenth century who was in true sense of the term 'an internationalist'. He strongly believed that not isolation but interdependence and interaction among the individuals and the nations would enrich the culture and strengthen as well as ensure a civilization of high order. Due to his love for internationalism and freedom he supported the British Reform Bill. Probably the same spirit motivated him to support the people involved in struggle for their independence. He supported the people of South Africa who fought against their colonial master Spain and the people of Greece who wanted to throw off the Turkish Yoke. He strongly criticized and condemned the British occupation of the Ireland. All this illustrates how deeply he was involved in international politics but also of the whole world.

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### **1.4.8 Father of Indian Journalism**

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Raja Rammohan Roy was the 'Father of Indian Journalism'. He believed in the freedom of press. He edited a newspaper in Bengali named 'Sambad Kaumudi'. He was also the editor of Mirat-ul-Akbar. When restrictions were imposed on the publications of newspapers, he reacted sharply and criticized the British authorities vehemently. In his

editorials, he reflected important social, political, economic, religious and other problems with which the Indians were grossly entangled. This brought public consciousness. His writings were so powerful that people were moved by this.

**Objective Questions**

1. Who said that Raja Rammohan Roy was the first man of a new regenerate India?
2. What was the name of the international organization formed aftermath the First World War?
3. What was the name of the international organization formed aftermath the Second World War?
4. What was the name of the newspaper that Rammohan rRoy edited and it was in which language?

**Check Your Progress**

1. Discuss the contributions of Raja Rammohan Roy in the political sphere of India.

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**Check Your Progress**

1. Do you consider Rammohan Roy as an Internationalist? Is so how.

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**Check Your Progress**

1. Freedom of Press is conducive to the good of both the government and the governed. Explain.

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## 1.5 Summing Up

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Rabindranath Tagore made a remarkable observation on the impact of Raja Rammohan Roy on the modern age in India:- “ It takes time to understand and appreciate any rare personality who comes at an age when his country has lost itself and contradicts its own majesty. His voice sounds painfully discordant only because the people have allowed the strings of their own instrument to slacken and fail to make them harmonize with the music of truth which once originated in the sublime height of their nature.” In a similar manner, Sophie Dobson Collat, the English biographer of Roy made a brilliant estimate of the life and contributions of Roy in the following manner- “Rammohan stands in history as the living bridge over which India marched from her unmeasured past to her incalculable future. He was the arch which spanned the gulf that yawned between ancient caste and modern humanity, between superstition and science, between despotism and democracy, between immobile custom and a conservative progress, between...Polytheism and Theism. He was the mediator of the people, harmonizing in his person, often, by means of his own solitary sufferings, the conflicting tendencies of immemorial tradition and of inevitable enlightenment. Roy embodied the new spirit which rose from the compulsory mixture of races, faiths and civilizations. He embodied its freedom of inquiry, its thirst for science, its large human sympathy, it’s pure and gifted ethics, along with its reverent but not uncritical regard for the past, and prudent disinclination towards revolt.

He was a genuine outgrowth of the old Hindu society in a soil watered by new influences, and in an atmosphere charged with unwanted forcing power, but still a true scion of the old stock. He was no merely occidentalized oriental, no Hindu polished into the doubtful semblance of a European. He was just a spiritual Eurasian.” Thus Raja Rammohan Roy, presents a most instructive and inspiring study for the New India of which he was the type and pioneer. There can be little doubt that whatever future the destinies have in store for India, that future will be largely mapped by the life and work of Rammohan Roy, and the future of India alone.

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## Unit-4

### Dadabhai Naoroji: Economic critique of colonialism

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- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.4 Naoroji's Economic Critique of Colonialism
- 1.4 The Drain Theory
- 1.5 Dadabhai Naoroji's political nationalism and Self-rule or Swaraj:
- 1.8 Summing up
- 1.9 References and Suggested Readings

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#### 1.1 Introduction

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Dadabhai Naoroji was an Indian social political leader and one of the foremost patriarchs of Indian nationalism. He was born on September 4, 1825 in Bombay Presidency. As a fighter for Indian causes he took the initiative to establish India's first political association, the Bombay Association in 1853. Educated at Elphinstone College, Bombay, he was appointed as professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in the same college in 1854. Dadabhai Naoroji, the leading nationalist was the founder member of Indian National Congress, established in 1885. He was the first Indian to be elected as a member of British House of Commons in 1892 from Central Finsbury to represent the cause of India in England. Known as the 'Grand Old Man of India', Naoroji became popular as a professor, businessman, administrator, member of British Parliament and President of Indian National Congress (three times in 1886, 1893 and 1906). This great political figure and a spokesman for Indian nationalism died on June 30, 1917.

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#### 1.2 Objectives

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This unit is an attempt to analyze the economic and political ideas of Dadabhai Naoroji. After reading this unit you will be able to-

- *explain* his views on economic nationalism

- *discuss* his critical views on colonialism
- *explain* his drain theory
- *discuss* his ideas of political nationalism.

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### **1.3 Naoroji: Economic Critique of Colonialism:**

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Dadabhai Naoroji was a critique of British economic policy in India. In his famous thesis, “Poverty and Un-British Rule in India”, he presented ‘a vivid, authentic and critical account of the poverty in India and the reasons behind its occurrence.’ Although Naoroji was influenced by liberalism and an admirer of western political values, he soon realized that British rulers were not interested to fulfill the aspirations of Indian people. ‘Because of his western education, Naoroji had become an admirer of those rationalist principles which the British political philosophers had evolved from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. These implied that a government is not entitled to govern simply because it wields immense power. Its right to govern the people is based on the fact that it protects their life, liberty and property and enhances their happiness; that is why people owe their affectionate loyalty to the government.’ (Gaubha, 2021). However, Naoroji believed that an alien rule is not preferable. As the condition for self-rule was not present in India he expected that British rule with their intense love of liberty, nobility of soul transform India into a modern state. “But a closer analysis of the situation revealed that the British government had not cared to fulfill its obligation. It had set aside all the promises that it had made to the subjects of its colony. It was engaged in the blatant exploitation of the natural and human resources of India. This had led the colossal drain of India’s resources to England’ (Gaubha, 2021).

#### **Stop To Consider**

##### **Liberalism**

Liberalism is a political philosophy which insists on ‘liberty’ of individual as the first and foremost goal of public policy. It promotes freedom of individual from all restraints. It believes in non-interference of state in the life of individual and upholds the principle of free-market economy. The basic philosophy of liberalism is to protect individual’s right to life, liberty and property by the state. As a political ideology it was evolved in the seventeenth century in the west



to protect the natural rights of people. The core principles of liberalism can be found in the writings of John Locke, Adam Smith, J. S. Mill, Jeremy Bentham, T.H. Green, Hobhouse, Laski, Spencer, Hayek, Nozick, Friedman and many others.

Naoroji's nationalism was guided by the economic explanation of the colonial exploitation of Indian resources under British rule. Colonialism was responsible for all miseries and poverty of Indian People. The foreign rule imposed heavy political and economic burden for India with huge public debt and expenses for running the colonial administration both in India and England. For this reason Naoroji pledged for the check of drainage of wealth from India for which in his view Indian's were deprived of natural rights. It can be better understood by analyzing his drain theory which became the symbol of Indian nationalism.

### **Stop To Consider**

#### **Nationalism**

Nationalism implies an ideology that believes in a sentiment of an individual's attachment to his nation. It is a doctrine which involves the criterion for the determination of the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively of its own, for the legitimate exercise of power in the state and for the right organization of a society of states. Briefly, the doctrine holds that the humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government.

### **SAQ**

Why did Dadabhai Naoroji admire the British political tradition?

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**Check Your Progress:**

1. How many times Dadabhai Naoroji was the President of Indian National Congress?
2. In which year Dadabhai Naoroji was elected as a member of British Parliament?
3. Write true or false.
  - a. Dadabhai Naoroji opposed liberal political tradition
  - b. Dadabhai Naoroji demanded for the check of drainage of resources from India to England.

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**1.4 The Drain Theory:**

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In his “Poverty and Un-British Rule in India”, published in 1901, Dadabhai Naoroji spoke about the wealth drain with statistical analysis. Naoroji launched a campaign against the drain which he regarded as the fundamental evil of British rule in India. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the drain of wealth from India to England took the form of unreturned surplus of export over import. ‘The drain of India’s economic assets retarded the growth of capital formation in the country and led its ever-growing poverty’ (Naoroji, 1901).

Naoroji spoke about ‘two types of drain of India’s resources- a) Economic drain and b) Moral drain. Economic drain implied that a huge amount of money earned by the British Government in India was forcibly transferred to England. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, this amount was estimated to be ranging between £ 30 million and £ 40 million a year.’ (Gaubha, 2021). This vast amount of wealth were taken away from India in different forms-

1. Pensions to British officers,
2. Payments to the war office for the maintenance of British troops in India,
3. Expenses of Government of India in England and
4. Earnings sent by British professional classes from India.

This drain of India was financially a destructive process. (Varma, 1992). Heavy taxation was imposed upon the Indians to serve the interest of the colonizers. ‘It virtually neutralized the margin for saving which could under the normal functioning of the economic process, have been retained in the country for the purpose of capital formation. But the capitalization of profits and surplus was not allowed in the country. Without capital accumulation it was impossible to foster the industrial development of the country.’ (Varma, 1992).

### **Stop To Consider**

#### **The statement on drain**

“This drain consists of two elements- first, that arising from the remittances by European officials of their savings and for their expenditure in England for their various want both there and in India; from pensions and salaries paid in England; and from government expenditure in England and India. And the second, that arising from similar remittances by non-official Europeans. As the drain prevents India from making any capital, the British by bringing back the capital which they have drained from India itself, secure almost a monopoly of all trade and important industries, and thereby further exploit and drain India, the source of the evil being the official drain.

Dadabhai Naoroji (1901)

‘The moral drain implied that all appointments to higher positions in the Indian administration were reserved for the British nationals. Indians could at best become clerks, coolies and labours whose income was hardly enough to make both ends meet not to speak of attaining a reasonable standard of living! Under these circumstances, there was little opportunity for Indians to have money accumulation or capital formation. In the absence of indigenous capital and industry, Indians had no chance to have any share in prosperity. Then the British who gained valuable experiences in the course of their career as administrators and professional experts were lost as they returned to England after their retirement.’ (Gaubha, 2021). In his view the ‘devastating British policy of economic and moral drain was draining away the life-blood of India in a continuous stream and the public debt of the country had been constantly widening. Thus the policy of Britain was indeed blood-sucking.’ (Varma, 1992). The exploitation and destruction of the heart of India was carried out under the ‘attractive phraseology’ of ‘civilization, progress and what not’ by the Britishers. (Naoroji, 1901). Moreover ‘the policy of England in India was not only to drain India of her capital but to initiate a policy whereby this same capital would be utilized for the process of further drain. This complicated process of exploitation was bound to lead to the total economic ruin of the country.’ (Varma, 1992).

### **Stop To Consider**

“All experiences and knowledge of statesmanship, or administration or legislation, of high scientific and learned professions, are drained away to England when the persons possessing them give up their service and retire to England.”

Dadabhai Naoroji (1901)

Opposing the drain of Indian resources, Dadabhai Naoroji argued this as injustice to India and it is against the maxims of political economy. In his view, 'India solely needs the aid of foreign capital; but it is English capital that she need, and not the English invasion to come also and to eat up both capital and produce'. (Naoroji). The cruel exploitation of India's resources had subjected millions of people to starvation, famines, disease and death. The British rulers had imposed tax on a thing of common use like salt, and this was responsible for making common man's life miserable. The opium trade was also poisoning bulk of people. (Gaubha, 2021).

Dadabhai Naoroji criticizing the British colonial policy pleaded that the inhabitants of the country should be helped in preparing themselves for developing her resources. He wanted India to be free from all the miseries and poverty. In early period, Naoroji was an admirer of British political tradition based on the notion of justice and liberty. But he was against the system of administration run by the Britishers in India which was destructive and exploitative. He acknowledged the British contributions regarding western education, administration, railways, telegraphs, hospitals etc. However the final outcome of this rule compelled him to write that 'the present system of government is destructive and despotic to the Indians and un-British and suicidal to Britain.' (Naoroji, 1901). He wanted to check the drain and end the 'bleeding'. So he expressed that once the drain was ended India could become a civilized and advanced nation with the help of British modern administration and that would be beneficial for both Britain and India. He wrote, "if it were British rule and not un-British rule which governed us, England would be benefited ten times more than it is'. (Naoroji, 1985).

**SAQ**

What is drainage of wealth?

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**1.5 Dadabhai Naoroji's political nationalism and Self-rule or Swaraj:**

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As a result of his discontentment to the un-British rule in India, Dadabhai Naoroji insisted on granting 'Swaraj' or self-rule to India. He expected that England would honestly, honourably, conscientiously

and faithfully fulfills the promises and pledges that she had made to India. (Varma, 1992). But after years of reconciling effort and persuasion of British authorities, he was disappointed from lack of any reform on the part of British rulers'. (Islahi, 1995). He realized that without the acquisition of the right of self government India could not be saved from the miseries and poverty. He warned that a despotic and autocratic government could not continue as the 'evil system of government' was leading to bankruptcy and ruin. (Naoroji, 1985). It was evident from his speeches in different Congress sessions where he asserted that, 'Without self-government the Indians can never get rid of their present drain, and consequent impoverishment, misery and destruction.'(Naoroji, 1985). Thus he transformed his ideas from economic nationalism to political nationalism without which the former cannot be achieved. He wanted the Britishers to allow India to run her own administration under their superior control and guidance.

In 1906 Congress session at Calcutta, Naoroji declared that 'Swaraj' must be the goal of Indian National Congress. The main political association which led the anti-colonial movement in India aroused the feeling of nationalism among the Indians under the leadership of Dadabhai Naoroji. In the Calcutta session Naoroji 'stressed three important rights of Indian people. The first was the right to the increasing appointment of Indians in the public services and the placing of all departmental administration in their hands. The second was the right to increasing representation of Indians so that India may have legislative assemblies on the model of self-governing colonies. The third was the right to just financial relations between India and Great Britain.' (Varma, 1992). Naoroji advised the Indians to agitate through petitions and meetings against unjust rule, to achieve the goal of self-rule. He had still faith on British conscience and hoped that India would be granted 'responsible self-government in the shortest possible period'.

Naoroji also emphasized on education of people as it generates in the mind of them a consciousness of right. He urged for the concept of natural rights of people. In his view Indian people must enjoy the right to self-rule. He expected that 'spread of education and the accumulation of administrative experiences would hasten the process of attainment of Swaraj. Hence he demanded free and compulsory primary education and free higher education of every kind'.(Varma, 1992).

### Check Your Progress:

1. Write a few lines on Dadabhai Naoroji's economic drain and moral drain.
2. Comment on Dadabhai Naoroji as an economic critique on colonialism.
3. Explain Dadabhai Naoroji's drain theory.
4. Write down of Dadabhai Naoroji's political ideas of self rule.

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## 1.6 Summing up

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Dadabhai Naoroji was a pioneering nationalist who shaped the Indian nationalist movement against colonialism. Being an economic critique of colonialism, Naoroji developed his drainage of wealth theory. His speeches in British Parliament Congress sessions and various meetings reflects his experiences and evolving thought regarding the political and economic circumstances of despotic colonial policies in India. His economic explanation of India's miserable condition and poverty through drain theory, his efforts to speak out for India's causes representing India in British parliament and the radical transformation of his thinking from pro-British outlook to win Swaraj show his wholehearted engagement to fight for Indians throughout his life. He was the person who laid down the economic foundation of Indian politics. This great patriot, having full faith on British liberal principles did not hesitate to criticize the exploitative nature of British policies in India in a non-violent, peaceful way, guided by moral principles.

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## Unit 5: Pandita Ramabai: Social Reform and Women's issues

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**Pandita Ramabai: (April 23, 1858 - April 5, 1922)**

*"It is not strange my countrymen, that my voice is small, for you have never given a woman the chance to make her voice strong."* --

Pandita Ramabai

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### 1.1 Introduction

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Pandita Ramabai was one of the most pivotal social reformers and woman's rights activists in Maharashtra. Ramabai was an educationist and scholar even before she turned 20. Her father Anant Shashtri Dongre, a Sanskrit scholar educated her in Sanskrit texts going against the societal norms. Her knowledge and reading in Sanskrit earned her the titles of 'Pandita' and 'Sarasvati'- the highest titles in Sanskrit learning. Ramabai was drawn into the world of social reform early in life. She travelled widely in Calcutta and Bengal Presidency, addressing women for getting educated and empowered. She worked rigorously for women's emancipation. She and her brother had toured the country to spread awareness about female education and social reform.

When she came to Pune after her husband's demise, in 1882, she founded the Arya Mahila Samaj in Pune, a woman's society which worked for woman's education and against the oppression of child marriage. It showed how inclusive her idea of education was and how committed she was for the cause of social reform. She believed in the idea of 'self-reliance' for real progress of society. Ramabai also got involved in Missionary activity later in life.

Pandita Ramabai, the first feminist thinker and champion of women's right and education was one of the remarkable figures produced by the nineteenth century in the history of India. Ramabai left her mark in the arena of women issue with her ideologies and work during this time when women education was almost non-existent. Being a radical



reformer she always denounced the existing institutions throughout her life which is evident from her inter-caste marriage as well as her refusal to accept conventional widowed life. She became a living legend during her life time with her courage, intellect and hard work. Her contribution was enough to win her a place in the history of India. Pandita Ramabai was fortunate enough as she was born in such a family where liberal views were nurtured at least with regard to women's education and child marriage was also discouraged. Such upbringing quite naturally had great impact on her thinking throughout her life that leads her to appear as the foremost champion of women's rights in India.

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## 1.2 NOT GOING WITH THE MASSES

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Pandita Ramabai was born into the higher caste of Hindu. After the death of her parents, she shocked her community by marrying a lower caste Hindu. There, she was introduced to Christianity by reading the "Book of Luke" from her husband's library. After his death, she moved to America where she wrote *The High Caste Hindu Woman* to shed light on the atrocities against women in India. She dedicated her life to the Ramabai Mukti Mission in India, which provides education, housing, and provisions to widows.

### **Stop to consider**

#### **Educational and missionary activities of Ramabai:**

Ramabai's idea of education was very comprehensive in scope. She propagated the ideas of women's need for social awareness and self-improvement, through the Arya Mahila Samaj. "Self-reliance" was her password for progress which ran through the Stree Dharma Neeti and formed part of the programme outlined at the end of *The High-caste Hindu Woman* and translated into the organisation of the Sharada Sadan and the Mukti Mission. Apart from this Missionary activity was a later phase of Ramabai's career. Although a deep religiosity had served as an anchor to Ramabai's life since her childhood, but Ramabai was very dissatisfied with the Hindu tradition of personal

belief and practice, which tends to be exclusive rather than inclusive. But Christianity inevitably tend to proselytization, because the Anglican Church consciously groomed her for a missionary career in India.

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### **1.3 Thought of Pandita Ramabai:**

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She wrote, “The widow must wear a single course of garment white, red or brown. She must eat only one meal during the twenty four hours of a day. She must never take part in family feasts and jubilees with others. She must not show herself to people on auspicious occasions. A man or woman thinks it unlucky to behold a widow’s face before seeing any other object in the morning. A man will postpone his journey if his path happens to be crossed by a widow.” These terrible plights of widowed directly force her to appear as the chief architect of women’s rights in India and she throughout her life continued her battle against the humiliating and unjustified rules that it inflicted upon widowed women and tried utmost to revive their status. In order to free the Indian society from the shackles of age-old faulty customs and traditions such as child-marriage and prohibition of widowed re-marriage she laid the foundations of women’s liberation of India.

“Women of high and low caste, as a class, were bad, very bad, worse than demons. And that they could not get Moksha as men. The only of their getting this much desired liberation from Karma and its results that is, countless millions of births and deaths and untold sufferings, was the worship of their husbands. The husband is said to be the woman’s GOD; there is no other GOD for her. This God may be worst sinner and a great criminal; still he is her God, and she must worship him”.<sup>5</sup> She through her writings, publishing pamphlets, and lectures strongly denounced the oppression of women legitimized by these ancient sacred scriptures totally based on patriarchal norms and told the people what should be accomplished so that women would be able to have more freedom and lead a respectable life

She opined that women should be admitted to medical colleges as in gender segregated Indian society the social condition of Indian women

was such that only women could medically treat them. In 1883, Pandita Ramabai along with her daughter Monorama sailed for England with the intention to study medicine wishing to be a physician so that she could be able to return India as a doctor and serve the needy women. In England she stayed for a year and half. Unfortunately her dream to be a doctor could not be materialized because of her alleged defective hearing.

**SAQ**

1. What are the major activities and thoughts of Pandita Ramabai for the emancipation of women? Discuss (60 words)

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2. What were her major contributions for the development of the widows? (40 words)

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### **1.4 Conversion of Ramabai into Christianity**

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In England she was assisted by the Anglican Community of St. Mary the Virgin in Wantage. The sisters not only gave her material support but also helped her in improving her English language. She was made the professor of Sanskrit in the Cheltenham Female College and she also studied higher mathematics, English literature etc. In England she was also attracted to Christianity the seed of which has been sown long ago while she was living with her husband in Silchar, Assam, shortly after her marriage. Ultimately in England she embraced Christianity along with her daughter and baptized. The search for an alternative religion ultimately pushed her towards Christianity Meera Kosambi wrote “Possibly there was a hidden dimension to her conversion, born out of personal loneliness and social isolation, never belonging to a kin group

or caste Community. Ramabai perhaps saw the community of sisters as supportive social structure she had missed all her life.” Her feminism was freely reconciled with the new faith wrote and She came to realize that Christ could truly transform and uplift the downtrodden women of India. Having already lost her faith in patriarchal reading of Hindu scriptures, she found the Bible was a radical instrument Pandita Ramabai–The Forgotten Heroine of India Babli Paul Volume-I, Issue-VII August 2015 88 of change. She expressed that Christ had entrusted her a great job–the job of a sweeper to sweep away the aged old ill practices against women.”

#### **Check your progress**

1. When did Pandita Ramabai born?
2. She was one of the ten woman delegates of the congress session of 1889. (Write True or False)
3. Which year did Pandita Ramabai get the title of Sarasvati?

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### **1.5 Influential leadership of Ramabai:**

Pandita Ramabai is one who knew how to use her own influence, leverage on existing power structures, inspire the creation of new power structures to have her impact continue on people. She knew how to appeal to the best of the human heart to inspire action irrespective of caste, religion, country or race. Like Cicero she understood how to play with “power structures based on virtues like wisdom, justice, courage and seemliness” (Nelson, 2015). She is one who did not allow the painful past and experiences of loss put her down.

It is true that Ramabai in her life time created not only friendship, justice or liberality for the hundreds of the girls and child mothers she empowered, she also created an opportunity, dignity and indeed a life for them. The ten commitments of self-leadership certainly was important to Ramabai among them was spiritual, mental, relational

fitness and mentoring others. This was at a time when these concepts were uncommon, but in many ways she embodied and lived by them.

Gardner speaks of two tasks at the heart of leadership - "goal setting and motivation", although it is not easy to find a leader who embodies all, Ramabai certainly knew how to motivate people and keep them excited about a vision. "This world certainly is motivated by highly motivated people, who believe very strongly or who want something very much" that they will refuse to be spectators.

In addition, she had the capacity and courage to face authorities and those in leadership. Romans says "there is no authority except that which God has established" and through this, she was able to work with the Education Commission of India to better conditions for the girls child in India at her time. In addition to the initiatives that she started.

In the year 1882, the government of India had appointed a commission (The Hunter Education Commission) that was to look into education in India and Ramabai gave evidence before the commission suggesting that the teachers should be trained for their jobs and more women should be appointed by schools. She also demanded that there should be more women in the medical field for some treatments for women required the presence of other women. Ramabai's advocacy for woman's education was so strong that even Queen Victoria took notice of it. She fearlessly testified in front of the British, saying that-

***"I am the child of a man who had to suffer a great deal on account of advocating Female Education..... I consider it my duty, to the very end of my life, to maintain this cause, and to advocate the proper position of woman in this land."***

Ramabai's work earned her a great many followers. In 1887, while she was touring America delivering lectures on woman's education, The American Ramabai Association, was formed by her fan base in Boston. In America, Ramabai wrote the book, ***The High Caste Hindu Woman***, which criticized the Brahminical patriarchy in the state of Maharashtra. Her book helped her collect around 30000 dollar which she used to build a residential school for Hindu widows. In 1889

Ramabai returned back to India and on 11th March, 1889 she established Sharada Sadan , a home of learning for widows, in Mumbai. It was the first organisation to provide widows with a formal school education and vocational training. She started this with an aim to empower young widowed women. She taught the women to read, write, learn history and environment, among others. Sharada Sadan was the first institution in India to provide residential school for Brahmin women, mainly widows, but also unmarried girls. It was the first organisation to provide them formal and regular school education and vocational training. It not only assured economic safety for women, but also social acceptance for their livelihoods. The Mukti mission , another organisation by Ramabai, was set up to extend the work of the Sarada Sadan. Widows were encouraged to be independent, and were taught a variety of skills. Under Mukti Mission of Ramabai, widows were encouraged not only to be independent, but were taught a variety of skills – from carpentry to running a printing press, the kind of skill sets that women were barred from acquiring and learning then. She also designed a remedial curriculum which included subjects like physiology and botany. It also included learning about one’s own body and physical world around them. Industrial training, printing, carpentry, tailoring, masonry, wood-cutting, weaving and needlework, as well as training in farming and gardening was taught.

Being exposed to the patriarchal structures of the Hindu caste society, Ramabai converted to Christianity in 1883. In India at that time Christianity was seen as the religion of whites and Indians of the lowest castes. She received severe criticism from the higher section of society for her decision. This marginalised her from the official histories of western India and especially Maharashtra for betraying her caste and community. Despite the controversies surrounding her work, Ramabai continued to work as a social reformer in 1919, she was awarded the Kesar- E-Hind gold medal for her work. Another important fact is that she was also one of only ten women delegates in the Congress Party, which later led India to Independence.

Pandita Ramabai was a truly remarkable woman who pioneered women's education and rebelliously championed for women's rights and empowerment. She combined ideas she had learned from the sisters and friends of different ethnicity and race at Wantage. Ramabai saw caste as a great flaw in Hindu society. It not only saw physical work and labour as denouncing, but it also led to false ideas of valuing intellect and merit. She also believed that caste associations promoted narrow self-interest and prevented the development of a democratic spirit in the real sense.

Ramabai's work in the educational sector was commendable and greatly impressed her contemporaries, despite her connection to Christianity that irked many prominent personalities in western India. She was of the opinion that all these men were angry at her because her students were from upper caste communities. Had they been from other lower caste communities, they would not have bothered at all, is what she believed.

### **Stop To consider**

#### **Pandita Ramabai as woman's activist and a valiant traveller**

Pandita Ramabai was a valiant traveller as she was in Bengal, Maharashtra, England or in U.S during the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Her journey to U.S from March 1886 to March 1888 was very significant in her life. She became a well-known personality by the time she decided to travel to U.S. She travelled to U.S in order to collect funds for her projects in India focusing on empowerment of widows. *The New York Times* and *Philadelphia Bulletin* published the news of the arrival of this intelligent woman. Once she also got an opportunity to stay with an American family. Ramabai's writings also reflected an interest in Economics. Although she very much admired the norms and practices of American society, but she did not blindly praised the society. She definitely pointed out several faults. Alcoholism and tobacco use, impoverishment of the Native Americans and blacks, gender inequality and superstitious practices in American society found mention in her writings. Although she received funding from generous American citizens and institutions, Ramabai was not afraid to call them out on unfair practices.

Ramabai not only studied the American society but also tried to analyse if their economic model would work in India. She correctly judged and understood the growing economy of U.S and her predictions about the country becoming a superpower turned out to be true in later period.

Interestingly, she did not have a home to return to. But she had a country and absolute fondness towards it. The relationship between her and her country was a unique one. Although she expressed righteous anger against the unjust practices she observed and experienced in India. But her affection toward India are also evident in her travelogue.

There have been many books and scholarly works on the life of Pandita Ramabai by writers and scholars from the east and the west both. Some of the prominent ones being the works of Meera Kosambi and Uma Chakravarti. Feminist scholarship remains in debt to the

Philosophy and work of Pandita Ramabai. Her vision continues to drive the feminist movement and scholarship even today, as it also continues to impact the lives of many women and young girls. She remains one of the most prominent women leader of Maharashtra and India.

**Check your progress**

1. Kesar –I- Hind title for community service in ----- awarded by British Govt. of India to Ramabai?
2. In which year Ramabai established ‘Arya Mahila Samaj’ in Pune?
3. Ramabai’s first Marathi book was (Stri Dharam Niti), published in the year-----?
4. During her Britain tour she converted into Christianity (25<sup>th</sup> September, 1883), she changed her name -----?



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## **1.6 LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM PANDITA RAMABAI**

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### **1.6.1 IT IS PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL:**

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The life of Pandita Ramabai for bring the connections between personal and spiritual. The initiatives to influence are all very personal from a life of oppression and taking all the spiritual lessons imprinted on her to the better the world for a better society. From her I see a person who took personal risk for her reputation to take on large initiative with a strong believe that there is good somewhere to shoulder these risks.

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### **1.6.2 YOU NEED OTHER**

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Even when the projects she embarked on were larger than self she learnt to rely on other. By taking trips abroad she knew well the need to rely on others for the accomplishment of her projects. Several years latter there are other who are trying to fun the flame on her own initiatives.

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### **1.6.3 HAVING FAITH**

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The good book says faith is a “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” To believe passionately in your vision is one thing but to create a buy in yet another. In many ways I know that Pandita Ramabai had the faith to put into action every small things she deed knowing well that the God is in charge.

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### **1.6.4. COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR HEART**

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I once attended an event where The Manila Archbishop Luis Antonio Tangle was a speaker. He said something that really related with Pandita Ramabai. He said “Those that have gone through pain know how to laugh and communicate”. In more than one way one cannot

think of anyone that experienced as much pain as Pandita Ramabai yet has had such a level of influence. To go through pain is to experience self and that enables one communicate with the heart to the heart and attract action.

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### **1.6.5. KNOW THAT IN THE END IT WILL ALL BE FINE**

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I love to watch comedies; I am so sure in this that “in the end it will all be fine.” Pandita Ramabai to me is an example of one what lived her life so simply that other may experience God. Losing her husband and her daughter whom she had tipped to take over her work did not distract her from her focus.

<p><b>SAQ</b></p> <p>1. How did Pandita Ramabai break the stereotype? (40 words) ..... .....</p> <p>2. What social ideas did Ramabai support (50 words) ..... .....</p>
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### **1.7 CONCLUSION**

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To impact our world is to understand, expand and apply the “formal and informal” power by creating not only a “holding environment” but direct attention, test reality, manage conflicts, manage information and channel it for the greater good.

Cyrus the great encouraged leaders to “talk less act more”, mere talk does not breed action, Cyrus knew well that leaders need not talk much but listen and do and be decisive by so rally people towards action. This was well demonstrated as her work attracted interest from people across the world and forever her legacy lives.

Several women's groups were greatly moved by her stories, contributions and sympathized with her cause. Soon the American Ramabai Association was formed to give her financial assistance to materialize her vision to start a home in India where the widows from the high caste families could receive education and become self-sufficient. She was the first to introduce the kindergarten system of education in India and also the pioneer to a vocational bias to give school education in India. The curriculum of Ramabai was also unique.. Literature based on ethical values was supposed to install in pupil the attributes of compassion and sensitivity as well as morality. Physiology and biology was incorporated in the system to inculcate adequate knowledge about the bodily anatomy and the natural world around us. Ramabai was the first woman translator in the world who translated the Bible from its original Hebrew language to Marathi language. She devoted twelve years of her life to this translation and she completed this final drafts only hours before she died in April 1922. Pandita Ramabai was the greatest woman produced by modern India and one of the greatest Indians in all history.

**Check your progress**

1. In which year she wrote 'The cry of Indian woman'?
2. Mention the name of the newsletter she started?

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**BLOCK II :**  
**NATIONALISM AND LIBERATION**

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## **Unit 1: Gandhi: Critique of Modern Civilisation, Satyagraha,**

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- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Sociological Ideas of Gandhi
- 1.4 Gandhi as a Critique of Modern Civilisation
- 1.4 Gandhi's View on Satyagraha
- 1.6 Gandhi on Ahimsa
- 1.7 Summing Up
- 1.8 References and Suggested Readings

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### **1.1 Introduction:**

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In this block we are discussing the modern Indian political thinkers and Mahatma Gandhi is an integral part of modern Indian political scenario. Mahatma Gandhi is the pre-eminent leader of Indian Independence Movement. He has been described as a prophet, a mystic, a saint, a religious devotee, a moral preacher, a social reformer and a non-violent revolutionary. Mahatma Gandhi is not a theorist but a man of action and he is the pioneer of Satyagraha movement. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is commonly known as Mahatma Gandhi or the 'Great Soul' around the world. He is also popularly known as 'Bapu' in India. He is officially honoured in India as the 'Father of the Nation'. His birthday 2nd October is celebrated as 'Gandhi Jayanti', a national holiday in India. It is celebrated worldwide as the International Day of Non-Violence. As a practitioner of ahimsa his aim is to speak the truth and ignite the spirit in others.

This unit makes an attempt to deal with the sociological ideas of Gandhi's political thought. It will mainly analyze his views on women,

untouchability, family etc. He believes that men and women are essentially endowed with the same spirit and therefore they should be treated as equals. According to him, untouchability is a social evil and he wants to remove it from the society. This unit will further try to explain Gandhi as a critique of modern civilization. He opposed the idea of westernization. He also opposed the existing economic system and proposed economic reconstructing emphasizing on promotion of khadi and small and cottage industries. He also criticized the British education system and wanted to introduce a radical education system in India with prime focus on handicraft curriculum. This unit shall also familiarize you with Gandhi's idea of satyagraha. Gandhi termed satyagraha as a moral weapon to fight the evil and unjust. This unit will also deal with Gandhi's views on Ahimsa.

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## **1.2 Objectives:**

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Mahatma Gandhi is the product of Indian culture and civilization and connected with the saintly traditions of India. After reading this unit you will be able to

- analyse the sociological ideas of Gandhi
- understand Gandhi as a critique of modern civilization.
- explain Gandhi's views on Satyagraha
  - examine Gandhi's idea of ahimsa

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## **1.3 Sociological Ideas of Gandhi:**

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Before discussing Gandhi's political ideas it is pertinent to know that Gandhi does not start any 'ism'. He simply expresses his views on political, social, economic and religious matters according to the need of the occasion and political situation. But it can definitely be said that he has a peculiar philosophy of life and on the basis of the philosophy he tries to solve national and international problems. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism have coloured his thoughts and shaped his

actions. His views on women, casteism, prostitution etc. help in shaping his political ideas. In this section we will discuss these sociological ideas.

- **Gandhi on Women**

Apart from being one of the greatest leaders of Indian nationalism, Mahatma Gandhi is noted as a major social and political reformer. He started a crusade for improving the degrading position of women in India. He wanted to eradicate all the social evils of the society and as a part of the project, he tried to develop the conditions of Indian women. Before Gandhi, many reformers dealt with this issue. But Gandhi's approach was different from the rest of the reformers.

Before discussing Gandhi's role in improving the position of Indian women, let us discuss the condition of women during that time. The evils like child marriage, dowry system, the Purdah System etc. were the striking features of the then Indian society. The Purdah system prevented the Indian women from going out of their houses alone. They had to be accompanied by their male guardians. The society regarded the women as inferior to the male members. Moreover, the percentage of women with basic education was minimal. It was because of these degrading and deplorable situations faced by the Indian women that Gandhi started a reform movement to eradicate all these evils from the society.

**Stop To Consider :**

**Life sketch of Mahatma Gandhi**

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi better known as Mahatma Gandhi was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1869 in Porbandar, a coastal town in Gujarat, India. His father Karamchand Gandhi was a Diwan (Prime Minister) of Porbandar state. In May 1883, 13 year old Mohandas was married to 14 year old Kasturbai Makhanji. At his middle school in Porbandar and high school in Rajkot, Gandhi was an average student. His family wanted him to become a barrister. On 4th September, 1888 Gandhi



went to London to study law at the University of London. Gandhi was called to the bar on June 10, 1891 and left London for India on June 12, 1891. After coming to India, he associated himself actively in the struggle of India against British imperialism which ultimately led to India's independence. On 30th January 1948, Gandhi was shot while he was walking to a platform from which he was to address a prayer meeting.

We should remember here that Gandhi never disrespected the tradition of the country, but he felt that some traditions can act as a barrier for the development of women. It is evident from the following quotation of Gandhi.

“It is good to swim in the waters of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide”(M K Gandhi, Navajivan, 28th June)

It needs to be mentioned here that Gandhi took a new approach to the study of problems of Indian women. He considers the women capable of occupying the same platform with men. Again, to him, a woman is the embodiment of virtues like knowledge, humanity, tolerance, sacrifice and faith. But for the proper development of these virtues women need education. He never accepts the view that women are the weaker sex. In contrast, he feels that women have strong and equal mental abilities like men. In this context, he cites the example of Sita, Draupadi etc. He therefore believes that women should be given equal right to freedom. We have already learnt that, according to Gandhi, women play an important role in the political, economic and social emancipation of the country. Gandhi believes that women are more capable than men to carry a non-violent crusade. He guides the Indian women to shoulder critical responsibilities in India's struggle for freedom. Under his guidance women take part in various activities like organising public meetings, picketing of shops, selling khadi etc. They also face the atrocities of the police and are put behind bars. Gradually they become an important part of Indian National Movement and this definitely helps in improving their position. Hence it can be said that

Mahatma Gandhi is certainly one of the greatest advocates of women's liberty. Throughout his life, he has worked hard and led reform movements for the cause of the women. He helped them in boosting their morale and self-esteem. It is evident from the fact that he engages women leaders in many nationalistic endeavours.

**Stop To Consider:**

**Major Works of Mahatma Gandhi**

The major Works of Mahatma Gandhi are as follows

- *My Experiments with Truth*- It is his autobiography which covers his life till 1920. Gandhi does not deal with the 1920 post period as it is well known to the people. Besides he feels that his experiments in this period are yet to yield definite conclusions. He has written this book at the request of Swami Anand. *My Experiments with Truth* appears in the weekly 'Navajivan' during 1925-28. This book is marked with Gandhi's humility and truthfulness. He wants to tell the world the story of his experiments with truth. In 1999, the book is designated as one of the "100 Most Important Spiritual Books of the 20th Century" by Harper Collins publishers.
- *Hind Swaraj*- It is the title of the first complete writing of Mahatma Gandhi. It literally means 'self rule in India'. This small book of about 30000 words is written in November 1909. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi points out that the real enemy is not the British political domination but the modern Western civilization which is luring India into its stranglehold. He believes that the Indians educated in western style particularly lawyers, doctors, teachers and industrialists are undermining India's ancient heritage by insidiously spreading modern ways. Gandhi criticizes railways as they spread plague and produce famine by encouraging the export of food grains. Here he opines swaraj or self- rule as a state of life which can only exist when Indians follow their traditional civilization free from the corruption of modern civilization. Hence the reading of Gandhi's works will give you an idea of his major concerns and socio-economic and political ideas.

- **Gandhi's idea of Individual**

Gandhi believes that the individuals constitute an important part of the society. Therefore, he opines that the happiness of the whole society is based on the happiness of the individuals. According to him, if the individuals consciously submit their wills and voluntarily contribute their possession to the society, it will automatically lead to social welfare. He also argues that, in return, the society shall guarantee the maximum development of the individuals' personality. Gandhi believes that an individual should exercise five rules in his lifetime- truthfulness, brahmacharya, non- violence, non- stealing and non- hoarding. An individual's character is to be built on the foundation of these disciplines.

**Stop To Consider:**

**Gandhi on State**

Gandhi's ideas on state are relevant to understand his political philosophy. He is opposed to the present state because it was based on force and centralization of authority leading to negation of individual freedom. According to him, the state is only one of the means to secure the welfare of all. There is nothing sacred about the actions of the state. His views are apparent in the following lines: "Let no one commit the mistake of thinking that Ramrajya means a rule of Hindus. My Ram is another name for Khuda or God. I want Khuda Raj which is the same thing as the Kingdom of God on Earth." Obviously Gandhi's desire for an ideal society where everybody follows a code of righteous living and meeting all their essential needs is exemplified here. Gandhiji's state is a non-violent democratic state where social life will remain self-regulated. In his state the powers are to be decentralized and equality prevails in every sphere of life.

- **Gandhi on Family**

Gandhi views the family as a divine and consecrated institution. He has suggested that the conjugal relation should be based on true

friendship and equality. He never supports the view that husband is superior in a conjugal relation. In a family, he believes that the children should be devoted to the parents and there should not be any discrimination between the sons and daughters. Both should have equal right to inheritance. He is in favour of self-reliant children and for that he suggests that they should be given proper education. They should be taught the value of honest livelihood. Moreover, he has also said that they should not be made slaves of ancestral property.

**SAQ**

Do you think that equality between husband and wife brings prosperity in the family? Explain. (80 words)

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.....  
.....

- **Devdasis and Prostitutes**

We have already learnt that Gandhi is a pioneer of the development of the status and position of women. While dealing with the issues of status of Indian women, he also considers the issues like prostitution and devdasi. According to him, the devdasi system denotes the use of young girls for the pleasure of the priests in the name of God. For him, it is a crime. He argues that the existence of the institution of prostitution is a shame both for the society as well as man. Gandhi believes that the term devdasi is an indirect expression of prostitution. He considers it as a serious offence in the society.

- **Gandhi on Untouchability**

Gandhi is dead against the concept of untouchability. He is a believer in Varnashrama system. Varnashrama implies for the division according to one's own profession. But in course of time this Varnashrama system had been replaced by the rigid caste system and he was not in support of this rigidity. He considers untouchability as a

social offence and he is not at all happy with the conditions where they are made to stay in. Various restrictions are put against them like denial of entry to the temples, denial of taking water from the village well etc. He calls the untouchables by the name harijans meaning people of God. He also creates the Harijan Sevak Sangha to fight for the removal of this social evil. And for this, he even stayed in colonies meant for the untouchables and fought for their cause.

### Check your progress

1. Gandhi believes that women should be given equal right to freedom. (Write true or false)
2. Mention the five rules advocated by Gandhi for the individuals.
3. Gandhi opines that husband is superior than wife in a conjugal relation. (Write true or false)
4. What is devdasi system?
5. What is the difference between varna system and caste system?

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## 1.4. Gandhi as A Critique Of Modern Civilization

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Gandhi played a major role as a modernizer both in political as well as religious and social field. He was the man behind the vibrant organization of Congress. He introduced concepts like satyagraha in politics. Moreover, the introduction of *Harijan Sevak Sangha* also establishes him as a supporter of modernization. But at the same time he is termed as a radical critique of modern civilization. But you must remember here that his critique of modernization do not want to push back the clock of human history. He simply wants to make people aware of the consequences of modern civilization which according to him might not be very favourable for the human kind. Now let us briefly discuss Gandhi as a critique of modern civilization.

- **Gandhi's Views on Westernization**

Gandhi's views on westernization are based on his practical experiences. He has stayed and studied in England for a long time and

this has helped in shaping his ideas regarding westernization. His visit to South Africa has also influenced him to a great extent. He has pointed out both the positive as well as negative aspects of westernization. He is influenced by the rich literature of the western society. He also borrows the concepts like liberty and democracy from the western society. According to him, the brightest feature of western society is that it is free from some degrading evils like child marriage, caste system, orthodoxy, superstitions, etc. Western culture treats both man and woman as equals. He also likes the scientific temperament of the western society.

But at the same time, he does not embrace western cultures without criticisms. Pointing out the negative aspects of westernization, Gandhi says that the western society is running after wealth which is too dangerous. He also does not like their approach towards the issue of racism. According to Gandhi the western society does not pay any attention to the moral education of the children. Therefore, we can say that though he is influenced by western thought, he does not forget to mention about the negative aspects of westernization.

- **Gandhi's Views On Economic Reconstruction**

By now we all know that Gandhi is a social, economic and political reformer. He is the only political and social thinker who is capable to present a complete economic theory. He has his original explanation about important concepts and terminologies of Economics. He explains that economy does not mean the exploitation of the unlimited use of the resources available in the country. Economy meant the total living of a country that has got the right to survive with co-existence. His economic ideas which cover all the problems that affect our social life are influenced by Ruskin, Tolstoy, Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda. Again, Gandhiji wants the economic emancipation of Indian people. He is an advocate of *Swadeshi* and he advises the boycott of foreign goods, foreign companies and foreign

capital to maximum possible extent. This boycott is not politically motivated. It is purely for the economic betterment of our country. *Swadeshi* avoids economic dependence on external market forces. He appeals the people of India to use home-made goods rather than foreign goods. According to Gandhi, the hand weaving of dresses and development of handicrafts will be a panacea for India's poverty, economic backwardness and unemployment. He feels that all members of a village community must prioritize local goods and services. The villages must build a strong economic base to satisfy most of its needs. He advises the people of India to purchase the rural products only. Every village community of free India should have its own carpenters, shoemakers, potters, builders, mechanics, farmers, engineers, weavers, teachers, bankers, merchants, traders, musicians, artists, and priests. He advocates the use of khadi. He criticized the import of designed clothes from foreign countries as it will create joblessness among the people of India and eventually it will lead to hunger and unhappiness among the people. Gandhi is not an extremist. Being a practical thinker, he accepts the foreign economic relation for unavoidable useful things which cannot be produced in the country. Gandhi is well aware that the boycott of foreign goods will adversely affect British industry. Therefore he applies his economic philosophy as a part of his strategy against colonial rule. He is not against industrial revolution, but he creates a framework keeping in mind the economic condition of India under alien rule. Gandhi has accepted the doctrine of equal distribution. He opposes the exploitation of poor by the rich. In order to solve the problem of economic inequality he advocates the concept of economic equality. He put forwards his scheme of trusteeship for economic equality. According to him, all persons should be supplied with the necessaries to satisfy their natural needs. He subscribes to the Marxian formula 'to each according to his needs'.

Again, he does not support the confiscation of properties of the rich. He wants them to earn more but after satisfying their needs the balance

must beheld by them as trusteeship of the people. Gandhi advises the government to fix the amount the rich can keep to themselves and the rest as the trustee of the people. Gandhi says that the brilliant people should use their brilliance to earn more. But they should not keep to themselves anything more than what is necessary. He advocates for the transformation of the capitalist order of the society into an egalitarian society. Gandhi makes it clear that if the rich by themselves do not accept this offer of trusteeship, the government may be forced to pass a law by which their properties can be confiscated.

**SAQ**

Examine Gandhi's views on confiscation of property. (60 words)

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Again, Gandhi also criticised large scale industrialization and mechanization. He always gives man more importance than machines. He is an advocate of cottage industries. He believes that poverty of people can be less only if they are given work for their spare time so that they can earn. He advocates a reconciliation of large and small scale industries and nationalization of key industries. He opposes to the introduction of the labour saving machines. His view is that the problem of India is to find employment for those who had no work to do and not to restore unemployment as a result of the introduction of the machinery to do the work previously done by the workers. Gandhi accepts some basic industry on large scale like mines, cement, electricity etc. He also encourages big industrialists and big farmers with the expectation that they will develop the attitude of trusteeship.

Gandhi puts emphasis on the ethical aspect of economic problems. He does not draw a distinction between economics and ethics. Gandhi



believes that the economics which hurts the moral well-being of an individual or nation is immoral. He feels that it is wrong to measure the value of an industry by the dividends it pays to shareholders. Rather it should be measured by its effect on the bodies, souls and spirits of the people employed in it. Gandhi emphasises plain living. He believes that it helps in cutting down the wants and ensuring self reliance. Gandhi distinguishes between standard of living and standard of life. He opines that standard of living implies the material and physical standard of food, clothes and housing. A higher standard of life on the other hand, denotes that along with these material advancements, the cultural and spiritual values and qualities should also be adopted. We have learnt that Gandhiji provides us with original ideas regarding economics. He popularizes a unique way of thinking in the field of economics. His idea regarding economic system of the country is the most practicable alternative system against the prevailing economic system. Here we can refer to the village based economy of China and Israel, the small scale industry based economy of Japan which are close to the Gandhian model of economy.

- **Gandhi on Education**

Mahatma Gandhi criticizes the British colonial education system and proposes a radical education system. He believes that education shapes the new generation. It also reflects the fundamental assumptions of the society and its individuals. He also opined that education played an important role in the freedom struggle of India. He is opposed to English education and believes that English education can enslave the minds of the people of India. He is not very happy about the system where all the works are carried out in English medium and the mother tongue is being neglected. He believes that it is not the fault of the British people. It is natural that they want a group of people who can carry out their works in their own language. He blames the fellow Indians for accepting this medium of work. He opines that only after

we get freedom from western education, culture and way of life, we can achieve real freedom.

His proposed education system contains curriculum for handicrafts as the centre point of entire education system. This is a radical change introduced by Mahatma Gandhi. His education system emphasizes on skills like literacy and knowledge acquisition and these skills are the monopoly of the people belonging generally to the higher strata of the caste ladder. And traditionally the works related to handicrafts like spinning, weaving, leather work, pottery, metal- work, basket making, book binding etc are done by people belonging to the lower strata of the hierarchy ladder and mostly the untouchables. By making handicraft the centre point of his education system, Gandhi had challenged the entire social set up. He grants equal status to manual work as well as mental work. Gandhi's education aims at educating the whole person and it is a moral responsibility. He terms his education system as 'NaiTalim' focusing on the fundamental principles of learning by doing. Gandhi emphasizes on free education for all between the age group of 7-14. His scheme of education is compulsory for both boys and girls. He also focuses on making the mother tongue the only medium of instruction as people will find it easier to understand the concepts in their own language rather than in an alien language. His scheme of education is designed to promote collaborative learning, co-operation, tolerance and a sense of responsibility, non –violence etc.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Why did Gandhi consider untouchability a social evil?
2. Write true or false
  - a. Gandhi favoured large scale industrialization and mechanization.
  - b. Gandhi draw a distinction between economics and ethics.
3. What is Swadeshi Movement?
4. Why Gandhi advocated the small and cottage industries?

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## 1.5. Gandhi's Views on Satyagraha

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Gandhi propounded his idea of Satyagraha in his political philosophy. Satyagraha is a natural outcome of the supreme concept of truth. It is initially related to the concept of non-violence. Satyagraha means the exercise of purest soul source against all injustice and exploitation. He opines that evil should be resisted through satyagraha, the moral weapon based on love and soul which is superior to physical source. Satyagraha literally means holding fast to truth. It also means a technique of resisting all that is evil, unjust, impure or untrue by love, self suffering, and self purification and by appealing to the soul of the opponent. Gandhi stood for the practice of satyagraha in domestic and social relationships before its adoption in the political sphere. For Gandhi, satyagraha has certain techniques which may be termed as forms also. Let us now discuss these techniques in brief :-

- **Non Co Operation-** According to him, people can put an end to the injustice by withdrawing cooperation from the government and paralyzing it. Gandhi feels that oppression and exploitation are possible if the people co-operate with it. Even the most despotic government cannot survive without the consent of the governed which is forcibly procured by the despot. But as the subject cease to fear the despotic force, the despot's power is gone. Non cooperation may manifest itself in the forms of hartal, social ostracism, or social boycott and picketing.

- a. Hartal means stopping the business as a mark of protest against the policy of the ruler. Its object is to strike the imagination of the people and government. Gandhiji insisted that such hartal should be voluntary and non- violent. Those are not to be frequent.
- b. Picketing or blocking the path of a person who wants to do a particular thing is another form of non co-operation. In case of

picketing also no force is to be used. Only the persuasive methods are to be employed. Picketing should avoid coercion, intimidation, discourtesy, hunger-strike etc.

c. Another form of non- cooperation is social ostracism or social boycott. It is to boycott those who defy the public opinion. This is to be resorted only in exceptional cases and with restraint.

- **Civil Disobedience-** The participants in the civil disobedience movement declare their intention to disobey the cruel and unjust laws and suffer the necessary punishment for doing so. They carry on their struggle till the laws are replaced by just laws. It must be sincere, respectful and restrained. According to Gandhi, it must rest on the well understood principles and exercised only by a selected few. Gandhi regards civil disobedience as a complete effective and bloodless substitute of armed rebellion. Civil disobedience may be of two types namely assertive and defensive. Assertive disobedience implies the disregard of laws retain to revenue and others. Defensive disobedience implies the formation of volunteer force for peaceful purposes like organising meeting, discussion etc.

**Stop to Consider:**

**Gandhi on Nationalism and Internationalism**

Gandhiji stood for a world of people and wanted to build harmony between nationalism and internationalism. The doctrine of swadharma and swadeshi is the basis of Gandhian nationalism. He was against the nationalism based on violence and aggressive ideas. He relates his nationalism with internationalism. His nationalism was not restricted to India but to humanity at large. He was of the view that one must be a good nationalist in order to become a true internationalist.

**Hijrat-** Hijrat implies voluntary exiles from permanent place of residence. It means that if a person feels that he cannot undertake Satyagraha against the injustice of the oppressor, he should leave his own place. This is done by those who feel oppressed and cannot live

without loss of self-respect in a particular place or lack of strength to defend himself violently.

- **Fasting**- Fasting implies readiness on the part of the satyagrahi to suffer with a view to appeal to the heart of the wrong doer. Fasting can be resorted to only by a person who possesses spiritual fitness, purity of mind, discipline, humanity and faith. He favours it only as a last resort when all other techniques fail. It is not meant for all occasions except rare occasions.

- **Strike**- Strike is the voluntary purificatory suffering undertaken to convert the opponent. The strikers are required to put forward their demands in clear terms. The demands are not to be unjust. In short, the various techniques of satyagraha indicate the individuals abiding the right of opposition to coercive authority. Gandhi has laid down some principles to be observed in the satyagraha. These are behaviour, truth, non-violence, non- stealing, non- possession and celibacy. A satyagrahi should not harbor anger. Satyagraha also depends upon the stage of the moral development of the satyagrahi. Satyagraha aims to secure progress and social justice. The satyagrahi must have humanity and self-respect. Satyagraha is a struggle for righteousness.

### **Stop to consider**

#### **Distinction between Satyagraha and Passive Resistance:**

The concept of Satyagraha differs from passive resistance. Passive resistance is supposed to be a weapon of the weak and is characterized by hatred. It can also manifest itself in violence. Under passive resistance, violence is abjured on account of weakness and passive resistance registered to embrace its opponents into submission. Sometimes passive resistance can lead to the use of violent methods. Satyagraha is based on spiritual force and stands for vindication of truth. It is a courage of dying without killing. In the Satyagraha, there is no place for cowardice. Satyagraha emphasizes the eternal strength. It is a moral weapon based on the superiority of spiritual force over

physical force. In Satyagraha there is no room for effective and determined opposition to injustice and tyranny.

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## **1.6. Gandhi on Ahimsa**

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The core of Gandhi's political thought is non-violence or ahimsa. According to Gandhi non-violence or ahimsa, the heart of all religion is the truth itself. It means avoiding injury to anything. According to him, the function of the state should be based on the principles of ahimsa. Non-violence is a powerful instrument.

Gandhi supports non- violence for the following reasons

- Non-violence is held to be superior to violence, as it is an expression of love leading to acceptance of punishment upon oneself rather than imposing it upon the opponents.
- Non-violence appeals to conscience.
- It is a spiritual force relating to soul and not a physical force.
- Adherence to non-violence is sometimes held to be a commandment of religious faith.

Gandhi refers to three levels of non-violence. The highest form is the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness or the non-violence of the brave. People adopt this kind of non-violence not by painful necessity but by inner conviction based on moral considerations. This type of non-violence is not only confined to political sphere but pervades every sphere of life. It is the non-violence without any mental reservation. It is that kind of non-violence which can move mountains and transform life. The second kind of non-violence is adopted as a measure of expediency and sound policy in some spheres of life. This kind of non-violence is the non-violence of the weak or the passive, i.e. non-violence of the helpless. People use this kind of non-violence because of weakness rather than moral conviction. However, it is not as effective as the non-violence of the brave. It is not based on any conviction but on expediency and consequently permits the use of violence where necessary. The third kind of non-violence is the

passive violence of the coward and the effeminate. A coward run away from danger instead of facing it. It is unnatural and dishonourable. This non-violence of the coward is actually the violence in suspension or inactive violence. If a choice has to be made between violence and cowardice, Gandhi's preference will be violence. To him, vengeance is superior to passive and helpless submission. According to Gandhi, non-violence presupposes the ability, though not the willingness to strike. Non-violence is the quality of the brave and strong and is not possible without fearlessness. There is nothing like failure in non-violence as there is nothing like success in violence. It is essential to understand the implications of non-violence as Gandhi understood them. It is the creed to which he rendered life-long service.

**Stop to consider:**

**Gandhiji on Sarvodaya**

Mahatma Gandhi translates John Ruskin's tract on political economy 'Unto The Last' and named it as 'Sarvodaya'. It is published in the year 1908. The word sarvodaya is a combination of two words 'sarva' and 'uday'. It denotes upliftment of all. It also denotes 'good of all', 'service to all', 'welfare of all' etc. Gandhi's sarvodaya presupposes the socio- economic development of all. The base of this philosophy is commonness i.e. what is done for all. Gandhi's sarvodaya follows the policy of self-sacrifice. He opines that every individual should be ready as well as willing to sacrifice the happiness of his own for the sake of others. Gandhi's sarvodaya again puts emphasis on the development of the villages. He argues that the villages should be given priority while giving aids as these villages form the keystone of Indian democracy. Sarvodaya believes in the principle of equality. Gandhi opines that in sarvodaya raj there should not be any rich or poor, high or low, privileged or unprivileged persons.

The Implications of non- violence are:-

- The people who do not believe in God of love cannot be benefited by non- violence.
- Non-violence can be used for the safeguard of one's self respect and sense of honour. But it cannot always be used in the context of the possession of land or money.
- Truth and ahimsa are two sides of a smooth unstamped metallic disc and are so intertwined that it is difficult to separate them. Gandhi puts more emphasis on truth than on ahimsa because he believes that truth exists beyond and unconditioned by space and time, but ahimsa exists on the part of all finite beings. Ahimsa divorced from truth will be demoralizing. Gandhiji is prepared to sacrifice ahimsa for the sake of truth and not vice versa.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Define non- cooperation as a tool of satyagraha.
2. Mention the two types of civil disobedience.
3. What is meant by hijrat?
4. Distinguish between satyagraha and passive resistance.
5. Explain the three levels of non- violence referred by Gandhi.

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## **1.7 Summing up:**

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In this unit, we have learnt the sociological foundations of Gandhi's political thought. He wants to make the women capable of sharing the same platform with men. Mahatma Gandhi's urge to make the people of India wear khadi garments is not only a call to create self-reliance but also a call to prove the unity of India. He wants to eradicate the social evils like untouchability, the institution of devdasi, prostitution etc. We have also learnt that Gandhi is a crusader who criticized the modern civilization and proposed alternative arrangements. For him the means are as important as the aims. The means must be nonviolent, ethical, and truthful in all spheres. He advocates trusteeship,



decentralization of economic activities, labour intensive technology, and rural India is his first priority. He advocates the development of the rural economy with the development of agriculture and village industries. Here, you have also learnt Gandhi's concept of satyagraha which implies holding fast to truth. You have also been familiarized with different techniques of satyagraha. We have also learnt the concept of ahimsa put forwarded by Gandhiji.

SAQ Do you think non-violence can be used as an instrument of conflict resolution in present day politics? (60 words)

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## 1.8 References and Suggested Readings

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## Unit 2: Gandhi: Swaraj, Religion and Politics

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2.1 Introduction

2.2 Objectives

2.3 Gandhi's view on Swaraj

2.4 Gandhi's view on Religion and Politics

2.4.1. Gandhi's view on Religion

2.4.2 Relation Between Religion and Politics

2.5 Summing up

2.6 References and Suggested Readings

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### 2.1 Introduction

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Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi was a visionary, a leader, a philosopher as well as a socio-economic reformer. In the previous unit of this block we have learnt some of the important ideas of Mahatma Gandhi. We all know that Gandhiji is known as the 'Father of the Nation' whom we fondly call, *Bapuji*. Because of his leadership it was possible for Indians to fight against the British and came out victorious. The world recognizes him as the leader of one of the widespread democratic upsurge of twentieth century against colonial power. As a social reformer he worked for the upliftment of the downtrodden classes of the society particularly for the untouchables whom he called *Harijan* meaning 'Children of God'. His economic ideas reflect on his concept of self-reliance. Moreover, he had also talked about trusteeship.

From the previous unit we have learnt about different methods adopted by Mahatma Gandhi for attaining freedom from the British Rule. One of the important methods used by Gandhi in the freedom movement has been the method of non-violence. Satyagraha is one such technique of non-violence resistance. The major goal of his movement was overthrowing the colonial power. But at the same time Gandhi was keen on establishing Poorna Swaraj or complete freedom in India which has much broader connotations than freedom from colonial Power. In this unit we shall attempt to discuss Gandhi's view on Swaraj and also his ideas of Religion and Politics.

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## 2.2 Objectives:

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The Anti-British movement in India has been unique in many ways. As we all know Gandhi adopted an unique way of struggling against Colonial power by following non-violent methods and techniques. After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Discuss Gandhi's views on Swaraj
- Analyse Gandhi's ideas on Religion and Politics.

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## 2.3 Gandhi's view on Swaraj :

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Now in this section let us try to understand the concept of *Swaraj* as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi. In common sense, *Swaraj* means self-rule. The concept of swaraj and swadeshi were new form of self-assertion among the educated middle class in the later part of nineteenth century. You all must have heard the famous statement of Bal Gangadhar Tilak that, "Swaraj is my birthright' However, Gandhi used the term in a wider sense. For him swaraj includes –political, social, economic and moral aspects of individual's lives. Here we must remember that the major goal of freedom movement of India was freeing India from British domination. However, that was not the sole purpose of the movement. He wanted to achieve complete freedom Therefore, Gandhi's swaraj not only means self-rule but Poorna Swaraj. According to him, Swaraj connotes an integrated revolution that encompasses all spheres of life. In the words of M. K. Gandhi, "at the individual level swaraj is vitally connected with the capacity for dispassionate self-assessment, ceaseless self-purification and growing swadeshi or self-reliance."( M.K. Gandhi, 1928).

In Political terms swaraj means self-government, which does not necessarily means the good government because Gandhi believed that self-government may not always be the good government. Again, swaraj also denotes the struggle /effort to be independent of any kind of government control be it foreign or national. Thus, swaraj stands for sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. Gandhi before leading onethemass movements of history, viz, non co-operation movement in 1920 mentioned in Hind Swaraj, "After years of endeavour to put into practice the views expressed in the following pages, I feel that the way shown therein is the only true way to swaraj". Gandhi's Swaraj is influenced by Vedas. By swaraj or self-rule Gandhi wanted to teach himself and the Indians, that only those

who could rule themselves in the sense of self-restraint could rule themselves in the sense of controlling their political universe. (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967)

While discussing the concept of Swaraj put forwarded by Gandhi, we must remember that it has economic connotations too. In the economic sense, poorna swaraj stands for complete economic freedom of all sections particularly the labour class. Thus for Gandhi, swaraj is much broader than freedom from all restraints, “it is self-rule, self-restraint and could be equated with moksha or salvation”. (ibid). Therefore, it is said that the independence India achieved in the midnight of 15<sup>th</sup> August was not something Gandhi had visualized as swaraj (Mukherjee, 2009). By Swaraj Gandhi meant all around awakening which encompasses social, educational, moral, economic and political lives of the human beings.

Gandhi has also discussed extensively how to realise Swaraj. He urged people to have work tirelessly for attaining Swaraj as it would not come from outside. According to him, Swaraj is the fruit of patience, perseverance, ceaseless toil, courage and intelligent appreciation of the environment. (M.K. Gandhi, 1928). Thus, Gandhi’s swaraj has two main connotations : Self –Rule and Self- Control.

Gandhi’s Swaraj as self- control has three different connotations—

- i). Freedom is primarily an individual and not a collective entity.
- ii). It includes freedom of Press, Speech, Religion and association etc.
- iii). Freedom is enjoyed both inwardly and outwardly.

Thus, we can see Gandhi talked about individualism but at the same time he believed that such freedoms are subject to interference. Again he considered fear, weakness, cowardice as negative forces of human spirit. He is of the opinion that self-rule, self-restraint, self-discipline and voluntary self-sacrifice forms the basis of swaraj.

While discussing Swaraj as self- rule Gandhi has advocated for participatory democracy. To quote Gandhi,

*“By Swaraj I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having registered their names as voters....Real swaraj will*

*come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.”* (Young India, 29-1-'25)

Further, Gandhi urged that swaraj means vast organising ability, penetration into the villages solely for the services of the villagers; in other words; it means national education i.e, education of the masses. He said, “Real swaraj will come, not by the acquisition of authority but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, swaraj is to be attained by education the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

According to Gandhi, the precondition for establishing Swaraj is political independence. In India, to establish Swaraj Gandhi worked through an organisation called Indian National Congress. However, at times there were differences of opinion between Gandhi and other leaders like Nehru. Gandhi formulated a development model to be adopted by India known as Hind Swaraj. However, Nehru dismissed it by saying unreal which can never be attained. Gandhi's idea of Swaraj is different from the literal meaning of the term because he visualised an India where democracy and equality prevail. Gandhi was repeatedly saying that India's problem lies not only with foreign domination. Hence, freedom from British Rule would not solve all the evils existing in the country. To remove the evils existing in the society, Gandhi wanted internal cleansing through self-motivation. Therefore, he believed Swaraj must be built from below which may eliminate all kinds of domination, oppression, discrimination through the use of non-violence. For attaining the goals of Swaraj, there is a need of economic regeneration of rural India. He emphasised on the revival of Khadi industries and the village industries for that. To establish swaraj in this sense Gandhi founded voluntary organisations like The All India Spinners Association (AISA), All India Village Industries Association (AIVIA), the Harijan Sewak Sangh etc.

Moreover, here we must remember that Gandhi had also emphasized on Gram swaraj. He was of the opinion that India lived in villages. Therefore, village occupied the centre of his social, political and economic philosophy. According to him, Indian independence must begin at the bottom. Every village would be a Republic or Panchayat with full powers. As such, every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its own affairs.

Gandhi also linked his concept of Swaraj with Satyagraha. For him Swaraj means both self-rule and self-government. Further, he believes that swaraj should be the ideal for an individual as well for the nation. To be a follower of Satyagraha, one must be capable of self-rule. The followers of Satyagraha who lead a disciplined and ethical life are capable of establishing swaraj. Gandhi was of the opinion that Satyagraha is an act of the brave and the fearless. Thus, according to Gandhi swaraj at the individual level where each individual is capable of becoming his own ruler would automatically lead to the establishment of swaraj at the nation.

As mentioned earlier, for Gandhi swaraj does not only have political connotations. It does not mean replacement of British rulers by the Indian rulers with the same with the same western institutions of governance. He had clearly stated that when wrote that such a process “would make India English. And when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englishtan. This is not the swaraj I want.” Thus, he was against western civilization. In his words, “ swaraj for me means of freedom for the meanest of my countrymen. I am not interested in freeing India merely from English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange ‘king log’ for ‘king stork’..” He tried to establish a link between Swaraj, swadeshi and self-reliance.

Gandhi equated swaraj with *Ramrajya* where each individual enjoys freedom without interfering or harming others. In the words of Gandhi, ‘swaraj can be maintained, only where there are majority of loyal and patriotic people to whom the good of the nation is paramount above all other considerations whatever including their personal profit. Swaraj means government by the many. Where the many are immoral or selfish, their government can spell anarchy and nothing else.’ (Young India, 28-7-'21)

Again, in swaraj there will be continuous participation of all the members of the society. Since he equated swaraj with *Ramrajya*, he believed that swaraj will be established once the relationship between the subjects and the rulers will be like father and son and when both of them would inclined towards self-sacrifice and guided by self-control and self-restraint. Moreover, in andhi’s swaraj there is no discrimination on the basis of race or religions. Basis of swaraj will be the principles of secularism and egalitarianism. There is political and economic independence. In Young India Gandhi expressed his view that ‘ the swaraj of my ..our..dream recognises no race or religious destinations. Nor is it to be the monopoly of the lettered persons nor yet of moneyed men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the farmer, but emphatically including the maimed, the starving toiling millions.’

*Young India, 26-3-'31*

**SAQ:**

How Gandhi's idea of Swaraj can solve many problems of contemporary Indian Society? (80 words).

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**Stop to Consider:**

**Gandhi's Philosophy on Economic Reconstruction :**

By now we all know that Gandhi is a social, economic and political reformer. He is the only political and social thinker who is capable to present a complete economic theory. He has his original explanation about important concepts and terminologies of Economics. He explains that economy does not mean the exploitation of the unlimited use of the resources available in the country. Economy meant the total living of a country that has got the right to survive with co-existence. His economic ideas which cover all the problems that effect our social life are influenced by Ruskin, Tolstoy, Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda. Again, Gandhiji wants the economic emancipation of Indian people. He is an advocate of Swadeshi and he advises the boycott of foreign goods, foreign companies and foreign capital to maximum possible extent. This boycott is not politically motivated. It is purely for the economic betterment of our country. Swadeshi avoids economic dependence on external market forces. He appeals the people of India to use home- made goods rather than foreign goods. According to Gandhi, the hand weaving of dresses and development of handicrafts will be a panacea for India's poverty, economic backwardness and unemployment. He feels that all members of a village community must prioritize local goods and services. The villages must build a strong economic base to satisfy most of its needs. He advices the people of India to purchase the rural products only. Every village community of free India should have its own carpenters, shoemakers, potters, builders, mechanics, farmers, engineers, weavers, teachers, bankers, merchants, traders, musicians, artists, and priests. Gandhi is not an extremist. Being a practical thinker, he accepts the foreign economic relation for unavoidable useful things which cannot

be produced in the country. Gandhi is well aware that the boycott of foreign goods will adversely affect British industry. Therefore, he applies his economic philosophy as a part of his strategy against colonial rule. He is not against industrial revolution, but he creates a framework keeping in mind the economic condition of India under alien rule.

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## **2.4 Gandhi's view on Religion and Politics**

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Gandhi wanted spiritualization of politics. He does not want to separate religion from politics rather he wanted a synthesis of two. He feels that there is no politics without religion because politics devoid of religion is a death trap as it kills the soul. His religion is a dynamic force. Before discussing Gandhi's idea on Religion and Politics, Let us first discuss his views on Religion.

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### **2.4.1 Gandhi on Religion:**

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Gandhi defined Religion as that which brings us face to face with our maker. Religion helps in accepting and realizing the God. For him, religion is a personal matter. At the same time, he was of the opinion that Religion is the panacea to many problems which are results of prejudices, passion and aggression. Gandhi advocated faith in religion and God to prevent mankind to slip into the life of misery and treachery. Further, he thought that philosophy, religion and spirituality should go hand in hand. Religion was an integral part of Gandhi's life. In his words, "man without religion is man without roots."

Here we must remember that, Gandhi's religion is not about going to temple or Mosque or Gurudwara. Gandhi did not advocate any particular religion nor uttered the name of any God. His religion is based on morality and humanity. Hence the incorporation of religion in politics means a progressive movement towards justice and truth because a man of religion will never tolerate any kind of exploitation or oppression. According to him, there must be unity between the inner and outer life of a man. Although he wants to strengthen religious basis of politics, yet, he will not tolerate any privilege to any particular group or discrimination against any group on the basis of religion.



Gandhi primarily based all his social and political doctrines on the religious and spiritual views of human life. He, however, does not preach any particular religion. His religion was the service of the community as he strongly believed that there is no religion apart from human activity. Further, he believed that God lives even in the smallest atom and there to love God is to love His creation. Religion is thus a passion for love. Here, we must remember that, though Gandhi did not name any religion, he was nurtured in the tradition of Hinduism. Following the belief of Hinduism Gandhi said that, "Truth is God and there is no other God than Truth." He further states that the Truth can be realized through love and Ahimsa. Hence, here we can say that according to Gandhi, religion meant self-realisation, knowledge of self, where God rules every breath. Moreover, religion guides us to follow the path of non-violence which according to him is eternal, equal to religion and equal to God.

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## **2.4.2 Relation between Religion and Politics**

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For Gandhi, Religion is welfare oriented and therefore mixing religion with politics would bring welfare of all. For him, without religion the idea of polity cannot be imagined. In the words of Gandhi, "I don't accept a politics without religion; polity is a servant of religion, a polity without religion leads to doom as it kills the soul". Thus Gandhi challenged many thinkers by incorporating morality and spiritualism in politics. He believed it can serve all the people of the society and thus its noble ritual. Again, He was of the view that religion affects the social and moral lives of the individuals. Hence, we can say that the chief aim of Gandhiji's Polity was to establish political morality where truth, non-violence and love can reduce the problems in the society.

While discussing the concept of religion and morality, Gandhi was very much influenced by the principle of Buddha and Jesus which spoke about winning over "cruelty with love, false by truth". Religion through morality ultimately establishes a moral polity. Further, he believed that "polity without religion is a phenomenon of great worries". Only a polity with religion can do service to its people. A polity without religion becomes a medium for a few people to satisfy their selfish interests. Such representatives by ignoring the interest of the common people fulfil their own interests. In such a situation polity becomes dirty as the public welfare is neglected there.

To establish a stable polity therefore, Gandhi emphasised on having an ethical basis of politics. Here, religion has a bigger role to play. But we must remember that, by religion, he does not refer to the so-called religions the common people understand. Gandhi's religion, thus also talked about rights and responsibilities. Hence, he urges people not to be selfish and to serve all to serve God. Selfishness may result in violence which creates disturbance and instability in the polity. The

aim of a polity should be to follow humanity and morality and for that religion must be brought into politics. Then only spiritualisation may take place and self-government can be attained in the truest sense of the term. Thus his concept of religion ultimately paves the way for establishing Swaraj in India.

### **Check Your Progress:**

1. Discuss critically Gandhi's idea of Swaraj.
2. Define the concept of Poorna Swaraj advocated by Gandhi.
3. Gandhi's concept of Swaraj has political significance only. (Write True or False).
4. Write a note on Gandhi's view on Religion and Politics.

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## **2.5 Summing up:**

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After reading this unit we are now in a position to analyse Gandhi's view of Swaraj. We have learnt that he had conceptualized Swaraj from a different perspective from other leaders of India. Swaraj, for Gandhi is an all-inclusive concept which takes into account economic, social, moral and political dimensions. During freedom movement Gandhi was putting all efforts to break all the shackles that suppressed the larger section of Indian society. In fact, His swaraj has gone much beyond political interpretation. It has socio-economic implications as well. From this unit we have learnt that though Swaraj aims at establishing self-rule for all the classes of the society, its main emphasis was on to uplift the poorer and downtrodden sections of the society. As pointed out earlier Gandhi's concept of swaraj is a comprehensive one and encapsulates the individual human person and life in a holistic framework. It visualises the progressive liberation of all from all oppressive structures and therefore can be equated with salvation. Reading of this unit has also helped you to comprehend Gandhi's idea of religion and Politics. You have learnt that, Gandhi has put forward a revolutionary idea by establishing a close relationship between Religion and Politics. For him, spiritualisation of politics can bring welfare to the masses. It would help to establish a just society where rights of every individual would be ensured.

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## **2.6 References and Suggested Readings :**

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## **Unit 3: Nehru: Socialism, Secularism**

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3.1 Introduction

3.2 Objectives

3.3 Nehru as an Architect of Modern India

3.4 Nehru's Ideas on Socialism

3.5 Nehru on Secularism

3.6 Summing up

3.7 References and Suggested Readings

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### **3.1 Introduction:**

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Among the modern Indian political thinkers the name of Jawaharlal Nehru deserves special mention. Jawaharlal Nehru is regarded as the architect of modern India. He is a leading figure in Indian Independence Movement and is elected as the first Prime Minister of independent India. He is one of the founders of Non-Alignment Movement. He is also referred to as Pandit Nehru and among the children he is known as Chacha Nehru. Nehru, the creator of modern India is a renowned political thinker as well as a statesman. Jawaharlal Nehru is a revolutionary, internationalist, a democrat, a socialist, a pacifist and an individualist. He is a free thinker and emerges as a man of action who does not indulge in political speculation. He has certain basic conviction and ideology. Nehru believes in anti- fascist ideology and fights against totalitarianism. He believes in human values and the dignity of the individual including civil liberty. The influence of Gandhi can be traced in Nehru. This unit will make an attempt to deal with the ideas of Nehru. We shall discuss Nehru as the architect of

modern India. His ideas on non- alignment, secularism, nationalization of industries, mixed economy, nationalism, internationalism etc. help him contributing towards building a modern India. He never tries to build up political theories but his political ideas can be found in his writings like Glimpses of World History, Discovery of India, and An Autobiography. We shall also discuss his ideas on socialism and secularism.

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### **3.2 Objectives:**

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The objective of this unit is to explain the main features of Nehru's views. After reading this unit you will be able to

- examine Nehru as the architect of modern India
- explain his ideas on socialism
- analyze his ideas on secularism

#### **Stop To Consider:**

##### **Life Sketch of Jawaharlal Nehru**

Jawaharlal Nehru is born in Allahabad on 14th November 1889 to a wealthy Indian barrister and politician Motilal Nehru. He is educated in Britain at the Independent Boy's School, Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge. During his time in Britain, he is known as Joe Nehru. Nehru becomes a leader of the left wing of the Indian National Congress and the Congress President under the mentorship of Mahatma Gandhi. He is a key player in the long struggle for Indian independence. He is eventually recognized as Gandhi's political heir. He is elected as the first Prime Minister of India in 1947. He remains in power till 1964. As one of the founders of the Non-Alignment Movement, he is an important figure in the international politics of the

post-war era. He is also referred to as 'Pandit Nehru'. He died on 27th May 1964.

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### **3.3 Nehru as an Architect of Modern India:**

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Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the greatest figures of our generation, an outstanding statesman whose service to the cause of human freedom is unforgettable. Nehru can rightly be called the architect of modern India. He is of the firm opinion that without economic and social freedom, political freedom has little or no meaning. Constitution is relevant to him only as an instrument of social change. Nehru is very clear in his vision that modern India shall radiate scientific temper, which includes freedom from every form of fundamentalism and respect for universal values of human dignity. He carefully handles India's domestic situation in the years immediately after the independence. One of the major contributions of Nehru towards modern India is the making of Indian foreign policy. In fact, Nehru determines India's international profile to a great degree in the post-independence years. Nehru is regarded as the architect of modern India for shaping the nation-building process in India.

Let us now discuss some of the ideas put forwarded by Nehru which made him the architect of modern India.

#### ***Nehru and the Non-Aligned Movement***

Nehru's concept of non-aligned movement has earned him the reputation of the architect of modern India. Along with Tito, Nasser and Sukarno he has founded the non-aligned movement. During his time, the world is divided into two power blocs. The newly independent and non-colonized nations are pressurized from both the blocs to join them. But Nehru along with Tito, Nasser and Sukarno stay out of the power bloc politics. Nehru is in favour of an issue-based alliance. He does not favour alliances based on political and

economic dogmas. The main principle of non-aligned movement is the preservation of India's freedom of action internationally through refusal to align India with any bloc or alliance particularly those led by the United States or the Soviet Union. Nehru believes that the newly independent states in Asia and Africa have the rights not to join either the Soviet or the capitalist power blocs. Nehru does not consider the nonaligned policy to be neutral but he believes that it allows the nations to accept aid and maintain good relations with nations from both power blocs.

**SAQ**

Do you think the non – aligned movement has contributed to the world peace? Explain.

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***Panchasheel:***

Nehru's concept of panchasheel is a contribution towards building modern India. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence or Panchsheel are a series of agreements between the People's Republic of China and India. It is first put forth by India at the start of negotiations that takes place in Delhi from December 1953 to April 1954 between the Delegation of the PRC Government and the Delegation of the Indian Government on the relations between the two countries with respect to disputed territory. Later, the Five Principles are formally written into the preface to the "Agreement Between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India on Trade and Co-Operation" concluded between the two sides. Since June 1954, the Five Principles have been adopted in many other international

documents. As norms of relations between nations, they have become widely recognized and accepted throughout the region. The main objective of panchasheel is to ensure that newly independent nations will not have the same aggressive relationship they once share with the colonizers. The five principles or the panchasheel are

- Mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty
- Mutual non-aggression against anyone
- Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs
- Equality and mutual benefit
- Peaceful co-existence

You should learn here that Nehru had chosen this policy to reduce the world tension. This policy has its relevance amidst the nuclear weapon and military approach. Through panchasheel Nehru wanted to offer a solution to all the problems facing by the nations. He believed that as a member of the human fraternity, it is our duty to provide for a course of action which might lessen the troubles of the states by eliminating the sources of conflicts. It is worth mentioning here that Panchasheela is neither a mental approach nor a military approach. It is a peaceful approach and this approach is followed by political and economic policies. Nehru opines that it is not possible to establish democracy or socialism without advocating this policy of panchasheel or peaceful co- existence. In short, he constantly wanted to seek peaceful solutions for all the international problems.

### ***Mixed Economy***

Another notable contribution of Nehru towards building modern India is his concept of mixed economy. Though Nehru is a socialist he favours a type of socialism different from most of the socialist thinkers. Nehru reconciles his socialism with the concept of mixed economy. This implies combination of state or public enterprise in certain fields with private enterprise in other fields. In his socialism



Nehru rejects the state owned concept of mixed economy. Nehru argues that India with her limited resources and underdeveloped economy cannot adopt the system of complete state controlled economy and also free enterprise method. Therefore, he favours the idea of mixed economy as the best method because this will lead to equitable distribution of wealth in the country and proper utilization of the wealth. Nehru favours state control of industries, which are concerned with defense production as well as the basic heavy industries. He is conscious of the fact that India, a state with a shattered economy and limited technical and financial resources is not in a position to take over the existing industrial concerns. He feels it desirable to permit the private enterprise to continue in the fields where it is operative and to utilize the resources of the state for the development of the state. However, Nehru is in favour of limiting the scope of private sector, though he fully realizes the important role the private sector can play in the development of the country's economy. He favours its continuance with governmental control and to work in co- operation with the public sector. The private sector must be guided by a social purpose and must subordinate its self- interest to common welfare. Thus the mixed economy gives the consideration in extension of public sector on social ends. The idea of mixed economy emphasized by Nehru is of a flexible nature and can adapt itself according to the changing conditions. Thus Nehru has to reconcile himself with the concept of mixed economy because of the economic conditions of the country, particularly India's underdeveloped economy. His main concern is the concept for India's economic development. Though various thinkers criticize the concept, Nehru has to compromise with the concept of mixed economy in the socialist pattern of society as it is not applicable in the Indian situation.

**SAQ**

Describe the role of government in a mixed economy.

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***Nationalization of Industries:***

You have already learnt that Nehru advocated the system of mixed economy. In a mixed economy there is collaboration between capitalist and socialist vision. To ensure state control over key industries, Nehru advocates nationalization of industries. This concept also helps him in building modern India. To him, the most important objective is to increase production and nationalization is only a means to achieve that end. You must remember here that he does not wish to go for nationalization without considering its consequences. He does not regard socialism as synonymous with nationalism. He does not accept the idea that a general scheme of nationalization will bring greater equalization. He is in favour of the rapid industrialization of India so that she can be relieved of pressure on land, combat poverty and raise her standards of living, her defence and variety of other purposes. Nehru advocated a socialist model for the economy of India i.e. no taxation for Indian farmers, minimum wage and benefits for blue-collar workers, and the nationalization of heavy industries such as steel, aviation, shipping, electricity and mining. An extensive network of public work and industrialization campaign result in the construction of major dams, irrigation canals, roads, and thermal and hydroelectric power stations. Nehru was an ardent believer in the process of industrialization. He opined that without the growth in industries, it is almost impossible to keep the pace of development. He also believed that economic development implies industrial development and not agricultural development. Nehru considered agriculture as a primitive and culturally inferior activity.

### ***Nehru on Nationalism:***

Nehru is a great nationalist though he does not provide any theory of nationalism. He believes in fundamental unity of India despite numerous diversities. He treats nationalism as a positive as well as negative force. The radical arrogant behaviour of the British ruler towards the Indians shapes his ideas on nationalism. He blames the British government for poverty and exploitation in India. Again, nationalism is a living force in the history of modern India. As the British keeps in their hands all the initiatives and controls the mechanism and they take all the decisions, he thinks that nationalism in India is very important for the people of India. Nehru opines that the feeling of nationalism will make the people realize that they belong to a nation called India and it will help in bringing national unity among the people of India. It is worth mentioning here that Nehru is cautious against any narrow mindedness in the name of nationalism. By now we have learnt that Nehru is not a narrow nationalist. Nehru is convinced that differences in language cannot stop the growth of nationalism in India. He does not believe in things like Hindu nationalism or Muslim nationalism. According to him, there is only Indian nationalism.

He cited the example of soviet union, where there were 182 nationalities. All the nationalities are allowed to maintain their cultural autonomy. Moreover, they were also allowed to impart education on their vernacular language. He believed that without a strong nationalism there cannot be any internationalism. The nationalism of Nehru was a composite living force. Hence it can make the strongest appeal to the spirit of man. The nationalism of Nehru denotes patriotism and independence of country.

**Stop To Consider :**

**Major Works of Nehru:**

**The Discovery of India:** This book is written by Jawaharlal Nehru during his imprisonment in 1942-1946 at Ahmednagar in the Ahmednagar Fort. He is imprisoned for taking part in the Quit India Movement along with other Indian leaders. He uses the time of his imprisonment to write down his thoughts on Indian history, philosophy and culture from the viewpoint of a liberal Indian fighting for the independence of his country. In this book Nehru argues that India is a historic nation with a right to sovereignty. He also examines the impact of various people starting from the arrival of the Aryans to the British government on Indian culture. In this book he also analyses the incorporation of various people and culture into Indian society. This book also analyses the philosophy of Indian life.

**Glimpses of World History:** Jawaharlal Nehru has written this book in the year 1934. It is the collection of 196 letters on world history written from various prisons in British India from 1930 to 1933. He has written these letters to his young daughter Indira to introduce her to world history. The first letter is the birthday gift to Indira from him. It is the only gift he can afford in jail. This book contains the history of humankind from 6000 BC to the time of writing of the book. It covers the rise and fall of great empires and civilizations from Greece and Rome to China and West Asia; great figures such as Ashoka and Genghis Khan, Gandhi and Lenin; topics like wars and revolutions, democracies and dictatorships. He does not like the way history is taught in school as it is confined to the history of a single country. He wants his young daughter to know what people do and why they do. He is well aware that it is possible only through knowing the history of the whole world. The New York Times describes it as one of the most remarkable books ever written.

**An Autobiography or Towards Freedom (1936):** This book is an autobiographical book. He has written this book while staying in prison. He begins the book describing how his ancestors have to flee Kashmir and goes on to tell about his own life. His entire life history, from the time before his father is born seems to have led him naturally

to where he is. As a child he seems quiet, observing, and thoughtful. As a grownup, he is still thoughtful. One sees his admiration for humble people and his aversion to any form of violence early in the book.

This section is designed to help you comprehend Nehru's works as well as aims to provide an insight into his socio-economic and political ideas.

### ***Nehru on Internationalism:***

Nehru is also an internationalist. Though he is a great nationalist, he does not advocate an aggressive attitude towards internationalism. He is of the view that true nationalism does not conflict with internationalism. His nationalism is mixed with a strong internationalist outlook. He believes that the different nations of the world shall maintain a relation of peaceful co existence and co-operation. But most importantly, Nehru does not want internationalism at the cost of nationalism.

He was in favour of world peace. While supporting internationalism, though he felt the presence of hostile and powerful forces, groups, nations with different vested interests still he wanted to focus on cooperation and peace. Nehru did not accept the contemporary theories of internationalism and propounded his own theory of internationalism. The main idea of nehruvian internationalism is the fusion of nationalism and internationalism. He supported the concept of one world. Another feature of nehruvian internationalism is the cooperation among the nations. Nehru purely believed that disturbances in one nation surely affect the other nations. Therefore, for the peaceful survival of the nations, the cooperation among the nations is important. At the same time he also emphasized that co-operation should be held on equality and mutual welfare only. His internationalism denounced the use of war as an instrument of foreign

policy. Nehru opined that the very spirit of internationalism gets destructed by the negative and destructive elements contained in war.

### Check Your Progress 1

1. Who were the founders of non- aligned movement?
2. Mention the five principles or panchasheel.
3. Nehru believed that general scheme of nationalization will bring greater equalization. (Write true or false).
4. Nehru opined that economic development implies industrial development and not agricultural development. (Write true or false).
5. Glimpses of World History was written in the year \_\_\_\_\_. ( fill in the blank).
6. What was the main idea of the book The Discovery of India written by Jawaharlal Nehru?
7. Write a note on Nehru's idea on internationalism.

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### 3.4. Nehru's Ideas on Socialism

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Nehru is born in an aristocratic family and possesses purely bourgeoisie outlook till 1920. Only in the summer of 1920, he is involved in a peasant movement in Oudh which provides a new turn to his thinking. During this peasant movement in Oudh Nehru stays with the peasants for three days. This period brings him in close contact with the peasants and provides him an opportunity to look at their miserable plight from close quarters. The impacts of this change in Nehru's ideologies greatly contributes to the development of his faith in socialism in the later stages. It ultimately leads Nehru to become a socialist. In 1929, after a visit to Russia, Nehru is greatly influenced by the socialist thought of Russia. He is firmly convinced that without

social freedom and socialist pattern of society neither the state nor the country or the individual can develop much. Nehru is opposed to capitalism as it leads to exploitation of one man by another, one group by another, and one country by another. According to Nehru the only alternative is socialism. Socialism appeals to him as a philosophy of life. It is the only key to the solution of the world's problems in India. According to him, establishment of a classless society shall be our main aim. The development in USSR had promoted the socialist thinking in India. This thought has attracted specially the workers and youths of India. Nehru was converted to socialism by 1936. In 1951, though he did not clearly said that he would establish a socialist state, yet he showed his preference for one. In the year 1954, Nehru declared that India shall be a socialist pattern of society. Nehru's socialism mainly emphasized on removing inequality among the people. There are three main objectives of socialist pattern of society. These are as follows :- social ownership or control of the principal means of production, progressive speeding up of production and equal distribution of national wealth. To achieve these objectives of socialism Nehru proposed mixed economy. Ideologically, Nehru's socialism is given concrete form at the Avadi session of the congress in January 1955. The state will have to initiate large scale power and transport projects, it will have overall control of resources, maintain strategic controls, prevent the development of cartels and the like. Nehru is deeply moved by what he has seen in China. He is impressed by the energy and discipline of Chinese workers under the direction of an efficient centralized government, which gives China terrifying strength. He admires the effective use of China's huge labour force in large scale construction projects such as dams and hopes to emulate this in India. Nehru feels that the socialism is the only solution to India's problems as well as world problems. For him, socialism is more important than economic doctrine. He considers socialism necessary not only for India but for the entire world.

Nehru tries to evolve a socialist philosophy. In order to achieve a classless society, he emphasizes the need for total transformation of social life through democratic methods. He wants to bring socialism through gradual and non-violent methods. He also gives importance to economic planning but rejects the concept of state owned economy. You have already learnt that he advocates the concept of mixed economy in his socialism. He assures a place for the private sector in his socialism. His socialist society is not totalitarian in nature. He does not subordinate the individual to the state. He also gives place to rival industries and Khadi Udyog in his scheme of economic reconstruction. The socialism of Nehru is particularized by three distinguishing characteristics. He is a democratic socialist and his socialism is based on respect for individual worth and dignity. He also provides freedom of enterprise, conscience and mind and the possession of private property on a restricted scale. Nehru does not find any inherent contradictions between socialism and individualism. He gives more importance on production than on distribution. The removal of poverty and the establishment of equal opportunities are the main essence of socialism. Nehru wants to organise socialism in a way that it suits the condition of each country. He continuously tries to bring changes keeping in view the fabric of Indian society.

Nehru opines that socialist society and cooperative society are similar in kind. All of us know that in a cooperative society each individual gives his best as well as find full scope for his own development. Nehru said that we are accustomed to an acquisitive society. But the profit motive of this society should be ended as soon as possible. But this is not a very easy task. The vested interest in the acquisitive society will always act as a barrier. These interests are active during the freedom struggle also. This gives a false impression of democracy without active participation by the masses. But the changing model envisaged by Nehru will definitely benefit the masses. But it should be noted here that there is a large gap between his theory and practice.



Yet we must not forget that he is the one who carries the socialist vision to millions and makes socialism a part of their consciousness.

Nehru opines that in Indian condition socialist transformation is a process and not an event. Socialism in India, according to him, is not a clearly predefined, pre-laid-out scheme. Socialism is a process which is expected to go on being defined, stage by stage, as the process advanced. Socialist transformation is viewed in terms of a series of reforms. Nehru describes these reforms as 'surgical operations'. Therefore, socialist transformation, according to him, consists of a series of 'surgical operations' performed through the due process of law by a democratic legislature. Moreover, one aspect of Nehru's approach to socialism deserves to be stressed. As an impact of Gandhi's influence, he emphasises the importance of means with that of ends in building a socialist India. He believes that wrong means will not lead to right results. He condemns violence as a mean and emphasises using non-violent means. He is of the view that existing class struggle can be resolved through non-violent means and rule of law.

### **Stop To Consider**

#### **Nehru on Caste**

Jawaharlal Nehru is a highly educated man. His western education acts as a catalyst to make him oppose the evils of all pervasive caste system. He undertakes corrective measures by changing existing Indian legal laws. He enacts legal procedures to make caste discrimination illegible and punishable by law. He also aspires for the equality of the Indian populace. He actively promotes and brings the system of reservation in the Indian job sector. A certain percentage of government jobs are reserved for persons born into Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This is done to ensure the participation of the less privileged Indian population to the mainstream.

Nehru is keen on retaining the Indian character of socialism. His approach to socialism is pragmatic and he opposes to define socialism in precise and rigid terms. The socialism of Nehru is not only based on his social ideal of human relations based on individual liberty but also on his concept of social justice. He believes that the problems of India's mass poverty and economic stagnation can be solved only through the adoption of economic planning on socialist basis. He puts emphasis on planning, economic growth and socialist pattern. He is in favour of equality of opportunity for all individuals, minimization of inequalities of income and wealth and prevention of the concentration of economic power.

**SAQ**

Discuss the impact of socialism in India.

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### **3.5 Nehru on Secularism**

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Secularism is a distinct contribution of Nehru to Indian political thought. He is the chief architect of Indian secularism. Nehru defines secularism in dual sense. Firstly, by secularism he means keeping the state, politics and education separate from religion. He has no attraction for religion as the basis of social and political state. Religion, according to him is a private matter for the individual. India is a country of many religions. He feels that it must not be controlled by any particular religion. Secondly, he defines secularism in terms of showing equal respect for all faiths and providing equal opportunities

for their followers. According to him, secularism means grant of equal status to all religion. He feels that through secularism all religion will be equal in order. He opposes the grant of any special privileges to any religion. He regards secularism as an essential condition for democracy. He lays his foundation of strong secular state. The secularism of Nehru implies the neutrality of the state in religious matters. According to him, secularism is a mental attitude on the part of various committees which can bring harmony and fraternity towards one another. His concept of secularism also implies the existence of a uniform civil code for the people of India. His commitment to secularism is unsurpassed and all-pervasive. He helps secularism acquire deep roots among the Indian people. He is of the view that secularism means giving full protection to the minorities and removing their fears. But at the same time he is opposed to minority communalism. He also argues most convincingly that secularism has to be the sole basis for national unity in a multi-religious society.

You should remember here that secularism is a reaction against the conflict between religion and politics in the medieval west. The secularism of Nehru was liberal. Again, nehru's secularism is not absolute in character. Nehru's secularism is dynamic and enlightened in character. In nehru's secularism, religion plays an important part in social welfare. In a secular state, all the religions are protected by the state, and it does not favour any religion. In a secular state, there is no state religion. Nehru treated religion as purely a personal matter. Religion was dissociated from the state. He also was in favour of giving full freedom to all the religions. He also opined that there should not be any discrimination on the ground of religion. The states are to follow a neutral policy regarding the matters of socialism.

**SAQ**

Discuss the threats to Indian secularism.

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**Check Your Progress 2**

1. Nehru is opposed to capitalism as it leads to exploitation of one man by another, one group by another and one country by another. ( write true or false)
2. Nehru was converted to socialism by the year \_\_\_\_\_. ( fill in the blank)
3. In which year Nehru declared that India shall be a socialist pattern of society?
4. Nehru wanted to bring socialism through rapid and violent methods. ( write true or false)
5. Mention the main features of Nehru’s socialism.
6. Write a note on Nehru’s views on caste.
7. Nehru opined that the problems of India’s mass poverty and economic stagnation can be solved only through the adoption of economic planning on socialist basis. (write true or false).
8. Discuss Nehru’s idea of secularism.

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### 3.6 Summing up

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After analyzing the unit, you have learnt that Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the greatest political leaders of India as well as the socio economic reformer. He is rightly said to be the architect of modern India. He has proposed some ideas which earn him the reputation as the architect of modern India. These ideas include his views on non-alignment, panchasheel, nationalism, internationalism etc. He is said to be the

founder of non-aligned movement. He opines that this non-align policy helps India in getting aids from the power blocs. He also put forward his ideas on mixed economy. He suggests the nationalization of big industries. We have also learnt that though he is born into an aristocratic family, he puts forward some socialist ideas. He wants to retain the Indian character of socialism. Nehru's socialism is marked by two essences i.e. the removal of poverty and establishment of equal opportunity. He believes in democratic means to bring about socialism in the country. He also adopts a secular outlook. He does not support religion as the basis of state. In the next unit we shall discuss the ideas of Jawaharlal Nehru on democracy.

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## **Unit 4: Nehru: Parliamentary Democracy**

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4.1 Introduction

4.2 Objectives

4.3 Nehru's view on Democracy

4.4 Nehru's Ideas on State

4.5 Summing up

4.6 References and Suggested Readings

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### **4.1 Introduction:**

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Nehru is considered as one of the modern thinkers and his thinking combines the ideas of East and West. His ideas were also influenced by Mahatma Gandhi. He was a statesman who seek welfare of the mankind. He was a strong believer of democracy.

Nehru has made a constant effort, since he had come to power, to seek peaceful solutions for international disputes. He was predisposed by nature, training and reflections to these courses, but regarded them also as being imposed upon him by the legacy of Gandhi. Nehru's idea of democracy was liberal but classical. In the previous unit we have already discussed some of the important ideas of Nehru. In this unit we shall discuss at length Nehru's idea on Democracy.

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### **4.2 Objectives:**

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Nehru was a dynamic leader. He wanted India to keep her doors open to new ideas and new knowledge. Nehru's outlook was broad and he did not hold the idea that the end justifies the means. He believed in inclusiveness and therefore advocated democratic principles and ideas in a highly diverse country like India. After reading this unit you will be able to :

- Understand Nehru's views on democracy

- Examine Nehru's idea of state

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### **4.3: Nehru's view on Democracy:**

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In the previous unit we have learnt about Nehru's idea of socialism. Here we must mention that his idea of democracy has a close connection with his idea of socialism. For him, political democracy has to be fused with economic democracy. In his words, "political democracy by itself is not enough except that it may be used to obtain a gradually increasing measure of economic democracy, equality and the spread of good things of life to others and removal of gross inequalities." He opposes the idea of the elite democratic school thinkers including Giovanni Sartori, Joseph Schumpeter who propose that in a democratic system the leaders have the singular aim to obtain the authority by securing votes by competitive means. According to Nehru, the aim of achieving power is to provide service for the people. Thus, he supports Gandhian views of ethical use of power.

Nehru is a democrat in the true sense of the term. As we all know democracy believes in the right of all and it counts the voice of all. Nehru was a firm believer of equality of all in all spheres of life and therefore to him, democracy is the best form of government. Many thinkers believe that Nehru is the main person behind India's adoption of Constitutional democracy. He believed in Mill's idea that democracy in practice does not mean the suppressing of the voice of the minority by a majority by its voice strength. Nehru believed that democracy would succeed in India and he was ready to resist the imposition of any other concept or practice here.

He considered democracy to be the best form of government as it required participation of all. Indian society which is diverse and heterogeneous only democracy can address to its problems. Moreover, it would reduce discrimination on the basis of race, caste, religion, gender, etc. Nehru advocated these ideas since the time of freedom movement. In the Objective Resolution of the Constituent Assembly,

Nehru presented many ideas which were later incorporated in the Preamble as well as in different parts of the Indian Constitution. Some of those ideas expressed by Nehru were, the ideals of justice, social, economic and political, equality of status, of opportunity and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association etc. which provided the ground for the democratic practice in India.

**Nehru as An Individualist :**

Like a modern thinker the whole philosophy of Jawaharlal Nehru revolves around the individual. He attaches great importance to the all round development of the individuals in the society. Nehru argues that without the satisfaction of essential economic needs individual development is not possible. He believes that the welfare of the individual can be properly realised only in a democracy. Democracy is a means to an end, the end being the good life of the individual. He considers the individual more important than the society. He insists that individual shall try to promote the larger interest of the community as a whole while developing himself. But he never believes in the sacrifice of the spirit of individual freedom at the altar of the state. He believes in various freedoms of man inside the state. His faith in individual freedom and civil liberty is fundamental.

He is ready to accept political democracy in the hope that it will lead to social democracy. He is clear in his mind that political democracy is only the way to the goal and not the final objective. We have already learnt that Nehru is a great individualist. He has great faith in individual and this has naturally led to his faith in democracy. He criticizes the authoritarian system as it hampers individual liberty and does not provide adequate opportunity to the individual for his development. He shows preference for the democracy which promotes human dignity. Nehru's concept of democracy is different from the



western concept of democracy. His democracy does not imply a system in which certain freedoms are made available to the people.

To him, democracy is a way of life and a basis for social structure. According to Nehru, democracy is a mental approach applied to our political and economic problems. Nehru offers different interpretations of democracy at different times. Firstly, he defines democracy in terms of freedom. According to him, freedom is vital to the realization of human values. Nehru is of the view that if an individual is denied freedom it will automatically go against democracy. Therefore, he favours grant of freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship, vocation, association and action to all. He also argues that individual freedom shall be balanced with social freedom. Again Nehru defines democracy in terms of certain governmental institutions and procedures. He lays emphasis on the principle of popular sovereignty, elections, adult franchise etc.

He realizes the importance of political parties and considers majority rule as an integral part of democracy. He also wants a constitutional guarantee for the protection of cultural and religious rights of the minorities. He feels that the government must use its power for the betterment of the people. Leadership constitutes a very important role in democracy. Nehru is of the view that without civil liberties there cannot be social progress. Nehru's democracy implies the existence of social and economic equality amongst the members of the society. He is of the opinion that true democracy can flourish only in an equal society. He argues that a system where the social and economic equalities are absent cannot be regarded as democracy. According to him, political democracy is the only means to attain the goal of an economic and social structure which can ensure freedom, equality and social justice to all.

Again Nehru visualizes democracy as a way of self-discipline and a scheme of values and moral standards. He defines democracy in terms of social self-discipline and tolerance. According to Nehru, democracy means a dynamic society giving full opportunities to the individuals for their development. Above all, to Nehru, democracy implies

solution of all problems through peaceful methods like discussions, negotiations, conciliations and persuasion. Thus we can say that Nehru's democracy aims at the multifarious development of the individuals. However, he is well aware of the fact that democracy cannot work successfully and achieve its aims and ideals without the goodwill and the cooperation of the people. He accepts the truth that democracy cannot go against people.

According to him, democracy is the best form of government because it preserves the highest human values. To him, democracy in practice does not mean the stifling of the voice of minority by a majority through its sheer voting strength. According to him, democracy means tolerance not merely of those who agree with us, but of those who do not agree with us. He believes that the method of democracy is discussion, argument, persuasion and ultimate decision and acceptance of that decision may go against our grain. He does not object to demonstrations, but he has no liking for violence, resulting from them. In fact, parliamentary democracy demands many virtues. It demands, of course, ability and devotion to work. But it also demands co-operation, of self discipline, of restraint.

Nehru argues that in a democracy the party should be a mass party. It shall be constantly in touch with the people. Moreover, it shall reflect the aspirations of the masses and also struggle to end social and economic justice. Though there are some changes in the party system in India, but still it has not come up to the expectation of Nehru. But we can hope that the mass consciousness that is developing in India will help in achieving this goal. Nehru has fought three general elections on the basis of universal adult franchise and secret ballot and made elections the norm, not an exception. Nehru uses his popularity and personal power to reinforce the democratic process. He has promoted internal democracy and open debate within the Congress Party. He also helps to create an institutional structure which is democratic and in which power is diffused. He regular tour sharing his ideas with the people, trying to educate them in the ways of rational and democratic thinking. When he was asked what his legacy to India

will be, he replies, “hopefully it is four hundred million people capable of governing themselves.” (Jawaharlal Nehru- A Biography by S Gopal, volume 3, London, 1984, p. 170).

Nehru is of the view that democracy will enable the people to mobilise themselves and to exert pressure from below to achieve social justice and equality. It will also help in reducing economic inequality. If the political party does not implement the popular mandate it will get swept away. He has placed emphasis on elections, besides community development projects, Panchayati raj, cooperatives and decentralisation of all kinds of power. Nehru feels that to ensure the unity of a diverse society like India’s, democracy is essential. He opines that no amount of force or coercion can hold India together. In ‘India today’ he opines in 1960, ‘any reversal of democratic methods might lead to disruption and violence.’

Nehru’s idea of democracy and humanism were shaped by both Indian and Western thinking. In his words, “For I do believe that ultimately it is the individual that counts. ....but the idea appeals to me without belief, the old Hindu idea that if there is any divine essence in the world every individual possessed a bit of it and he can develop it. Therefore, no individual is trivial. Every individual has an importance and he should be given full opportunities to develop material opportunities naturally, food, clothing, education, housing, health etc.” at the same time, he was very much influenced by western liberalism which expressed itself in his firm devotion to political democracy and individual freedom.

Nehru, as a staunch supporter of democracy, favoured parliamentary system, free elections, a free press, freedom of speech, of religion and assembly, political parties and constitutional safeguards for individual rights. For Nehru true essence of democracy is participation of all and decentralisation of power. He believes that democracy is very much rooted in Indian society as it practiced Panchayat system where in political matters everyone has a vote and in economic matters everyone has equal opportunities. Moreover, there was no distinction between man and woman. As the nation builder he advocated

democracy to be practised in real sense in India , where the diversities and hierarchies can be minimised and equality could be established.

**SAQ**

Do you think decentralization of power is the true essence of democracy? Explain. (100 words)

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**Check Your Progress**

1. Nehru believed that individual development is possible only when economic needs are satisfied. (Write true or false)
2. Nehru was in favour of authoritarian system. (Write true or false)
3. According to Nehru, democracy is a \_\_\_\_ approach applied to our political and economic problems.
  - a. Mental
  - b. Physical
  - c. Moral
  - d. None of the above
4. Which among the following is a correct interpretation of democracy according to Nehru?
  - a. Freedom
  - b. Governmental institutions
  - c. Leadership
  - d. All of the above
5. Nehru was influenced by western liberalism. ( Write true or false)
6. Which among the following is a method of democracy according to Nehru?
  - a. Discussion
  - b. Argument

- c. Persuasion
  - d. All of the above
7. Who opined that any reversal of democratic methods might lead to disruption and violence?
  8. Nehru was a supporter of Gandhian views of ethical use of power. (Write true or false)
  9. Which among the following statement is not correct?
    - a. Nehru considered democracy as the best form of government.
    - b. Nehru believes in the sacrifice of the spirit of individual freedom at the alter of the state.
    - c. Nehru accepted political democracy in the hope that it will lead to social democracy.
    - d. Nehru opined that democracy is a way of life and a basis for social structure.
  10. Nehru's democracy aimed at the multifarious development of the individuals. (Write true or false)

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#### **4.4 Nehru's Ideas on State:**

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According to Nehru, the state is not an end in itself but only a means to an end, and that end is to serve man. Political liberty is intended to give economic and social freedom to individuals. Nehru condemns the Machiavellian concept of state governing the people and keeping them down. According to him, the duty of the state is to protect the individual from foreign attack and internal disorder. It is to provide the citizens with opportunity of progress, education, health for the development of man. Consequently, for Nehru some kind of coercion is inevitable. It is not possible to reject violence altogether. However, violence must be used with reason. Nehru has faith in good government and preferred local self-government. He believes in welfare state and self-government at village level.

**SAQ**

Do you think coercion is an inevitable part of a democracy? Illustrate.

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Nehru imagined a welfare state with the consent and confidence of the people in a democratic socialist political economy of planning and decentralization. He wanted his states to deliver both productive and protective functions. And to achieve this he tried building a strong centralized bureaucracy with the Weberian unity of command. Nehru was in favour of a set of fixed and firm principles for smooth running of the state. He wanted his state to be a classless society. He also was in favour of equal economic justice and opportunity for all. He also believed that for a higher material and cultural level of mankind the state should be organized on planned basis.

**Stop To Consider:**

Nehru on Education:

Jawaharlal Nehru is well aware of the need of proper intellectual development of the Indian populace. He understands the importance of proper and healthy intellectual development to run the Indian states. He tries to imply the winning combination of western scientific prowess and Indian civilization wisdom. Nehru is well aware that Indian republic can re-establish its existence in the world scenario only through the intellectual power of its citizens. He emphasises on the teaching of science and its application in practical field. The teaching of vocational science attracts him. The Indian Institute of Technology or IITS are established during his Prime Ministership. The Indian Institutes of Technology are now regarded as the premier scientific institutes of higher technological learning throughout the world. All India Institute of Medical Sciences and the Indian Institutes of Management are also established during his time. Nehru also initiates the construction and functioning of a number of schools to educate the

rural populace. Primary education is provided free of cost. The trump card of Nehru is the scheme of providing free meals to the students of government schools. He understands the importance of food to attract students. Majority of rural population survives on one meal a day. The food acts as a magnet for the impoverished hungry child. The family of the prospective student is also happy with the subsequent tangible cost savings. Jawaharlal Nehru also establishes vocational schools for adults. Adult education centers are created both in rural and urban areas. Higher technical schools are also established.

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#### **4.5 Summing Up:**

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Nehru conceptualized democracy in the Western liberal framework where the elections were to be held after a regular interval. This unit has discussed Nehru's view of democracy at length. After reading this unit you have learnt that Nehru is a democrat in the true sense of the term. He offers different interpretations of democracy at different times. He defines democracy in terms of freedom, leadership and also in terms of certain governmental institutions and procedures. You have also learnt that he emphasises the need of co-operation of people for the successful working of democracy. Thus, we see Nehru put utmost emphasis on the opinion of every individual constitution the society. Again, Nehru had special likings for the children and he considered them the future of the society. As they grow up they would be the citizens of the country whose opinion and participation in the political process can change the course of a nation. For establishing a healthy democracy also, the children of today might have a strong role to play in the future. From this point of view, one can come to the conclusion that Nehru was in favour of a participatory form of democracy.

**Stop To Consider:****Nehru on Women:**

Jawaharlal Nehru is said to be one of the greatest advocates of the rights of women in India. He plays a significant role in improving the socio- economic condition of the women. He makes every effort to raise their status socially, economically, politically and educationally to make them at par with men. He believes that a country is judged by the condition of women. Nehru forces the women of India to come out of their seclusion. He turns the 'dolls' into valiant soldiers to fight the battle for freedom. In the Karachi Congress, Nehru introduces the concept of 'equal obligations' along with 'equal rights'. He tries to remove the 'sex disabilities'. He introduces the local programmes of self-defence and self- sufficiency to help the women to take part in the national movement. With the dawn of independence, the upliftment of women becomes the special responsibility of the government. Jawaharlal Nehru enacts laws to guarantee practical universal suffrage to the women population of the country. These laws aim to secure the social freedoms of Indian women. Under the Prime- Ministership of Nehru, female legal rights are increased. The greatest achievements of Nehru are the female education and passing of Hindu Code Bill.

**Check your progress**

1. Which among the following is wrongly stated?
  - a. According to Nehru, state is an end in itself.
  - b. Nehru condemns the Machiavellian concept of state governing the people and keeping them down.
  - c. Nehru opined that the duty of the state is to protect the individual from foreign attack and internal disorder.
  - d. None of the above
2. Nehru believed in welfare state and self government at village level. ( Write true or false)
3. Which among the following is wrongly stated?
  - a. Nehru wanted his states to deliever both productive



- and protective functions.
- b. Nehru was in favour of a strong centralized beuaracracy.
  - c. Nehru wanted class division in his society.
  - d. Nehru opined that for a higher material and cultural level of mankind the state should be organized on planned basis.
4. Write a note on Nehru's views on education.
  5. The teaching of vocational science attracts Nehru. ( Write true or false)
  6. In the Karachi Congress, Nehru introduced the concept of equal obligations along with equal \_\_\_\_\_. ( Fill in the blanks)
  7. What is Hindu Code Bill?

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## **Unit 5: B.R. Ambedkar: Caste and Untouchability, Constitutional Democracy, Social Justice**

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5.1 Introduction

5.2 Objectives

5.3 Ambedkar as a Critic of Hindu Society

5.4 Ambedkar's Views on Caste System

5.5 Ambedkar's Views on Untouchability

5.6 Ambedkar's Movement against Caste System and Untouchability (Hindu Social Order)

5.7 Comparison between Gandhi and Ambedkar

5.8 Ambedkar's Views on Education

5.9 Ambedkar's View on Language Policy

5.10 Ambedkar's View on Democracy

5.11 Summing up

5.12 References and Suggested Readings

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### **5.1 Introduction:**

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Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar also known as Babasaheb held a prominent position among the twentieth century leaders of India. Ambedkar took upon himself the task of fighting for religious, social and economic equality in the Indian society. He was widely read in history, culture and religion. He realized that distortion of religion and misinterpretation of history and culture does more harm to Indian social life than foreign invasions and dominations. In this unit we shall discuss Ambedkar as a critic of the Hindu society. We shall also deal with his criticism of the Varna system, Caste system, and Untouchability. Our attempt here is to offer you a comparative study of the views of Gandhi and Ambedkar. Our discussion shall also include Ambedkar's efforts for removal of Untouchability and the restrictions of caste system. Moreover, this unit also attempts to deal with Ambedkar's views on education, language policy and democracy.

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## 5.2 Objectives:

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Ambedkar is known as a jurist, a political leader, philosopher, anthropologist, historian, Buddhist activist and a revolutionary thinker. As a reformer and critic of Indian Hindu society, Ambedkar has made efforts to establish social justice and worked for the liberation of the untouchables. After reading this unit you will be able to

- analyse Ambedkar as a critic of the Hindu society and the Caste system
- discuss Ambedkar's criticism of Untouchability
- explain Ambedkar's views on Education and Language policy
- attempt a comparative study of Gandhi and Ambedkar
- analyse Ambedkar's efforts for removal of Untouchability and restrictions of caste system
- elaborate Ambedkar's views on Democracy and Parliamentary Democracy

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## 5.3 Ambedkar as a Critic of Hindu Society:

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In this section we shall discuss Ambedkar as a critic of the Hindu society which suffers from number of inherent contradictions and is stepped in various social evils during the time of Ambedkar. It is known to us that the Hindu culture is based on the high ideals of non-violence, tolerance, love and humanitarian services but there are several problems within the Hindu society. B.R. Ambedkar studies the Hindu social system objectively and dispassionately. The ideals of freedom, equality and justice cannot be realized in practical social life. According to Ambedkar, the gap between theoretical ideals and practical life existing in Hindu society is the main cause of its weakness and consequent subjugation for centuries. The Hindus never resemble a society which is an organized system of individuals with a purpose. Ambedkar criticizes the Hindu society on the following grounds:

- Caste system: A society is composed of social, economic and intellectual classes. An individual in a society is always a member of a class. The most unfortunate characteristic of the Hindu society is that classes develop into a caste. Ambedkar has realized that social stratification of occupations by caste system is basically a pernicious development. In Hindu society, social rules subordinate natural powers and inclinations of individuals.

- Denial of equality: Ambedkar is of firm belief that the Hindu social order does not recognize the principle of equality. It is given to believe that men differ from birth. Thus, Hindu social order is based on graded inequality and the principle of fixity of occupation, regardless of a person's ability and quality. Hindu social order denies individual freedom. By denying the right of education, resentment and use of arms, the social and economic status of lower castes is fixed. He further states that class consciousness and class conflict has been the basis in Hindu society. Rigid rules of marriage, eating and social customs prohibit Hindus to grow as a harmonious community. The religion of Hindus prohibits them to lead a free social life based on social interchange. The Hindu social life is based on Varna (class) system that recognizes four varnas and later the class of untouchables is added to them. Though Hinduism is a liberal religion, yet it gives sanction to complete segregation of a class known as untouchables. Therefore, Ambedkar is of the view that it amounts to the fact that untouchables are not human beings and not fit for social association.

- Against Chaturvarnas: According to Ambedkar, with the growth of caste system, Hinduism ceases to be a missionary religion. The varna system becomes more and more rigid and hierarchical. Ambedkar opines, "there cannot be more degrading system of social organisation than chaturvarna. It is a system which deadens, paralyses and cripples people from helpful activity". Thus, Ambedkar opines that Hinduism is based on the principle of graded inequality.

- Atrocities against untouchables: Ambedkar has said, "Hindu law declared that the untouchable was not a person, Hinduism refused to regard him as a human being fit for comradeship". The people belonging to untouchable category cannot be touched by touchables, an untouchable patient cannot be treated by the doctors of higher caste. There are various other restrictions on untouchables. To elaborate, they are not allowed to enter into temples and fetch water from common well. The society imposes various restrictions even on their eating and wearing of clean clothes. To summarize Ambedkar's views on Hindu society, we can say that the Hindu society is based on inequality which has denied social justice to a large section of population. Consequently, such principles deprive a large number of population belonging to the untouchable category and lower caste from the measure of equal privileges.

**Stop To Consider:**

**Life Sketch of Ambedkar:**

B.R Ambedkar also known as Babasaheb was born on 14th April, 1891 in a Mahar community, an untouchable caste of Maharashtra. He

was the last child of his parents Ramji and Bhimabai. His father and grandfather served in the army. But the stigma attached to the members of Mahar community continued to influence their position in the caste-ridden society of Maharashtra. The Mahars were treated as untouchables by the Hindus. Being a member of the Mahar community, B.R Ambedkar had a bitter taste of discriminatory treatment early in life. During his early school career he got to know that being born in a particular community could make all the difference in one's status in society. He and his brother had to carry bags from their home to sit in the class. They were denied facilities of drinking water, games and mixing up with other children. Even teachers would not check their notebooks for fear of pollution. Thus, the seeds of discontentment about Hindu social system were sowed in the life of Ambedkar. Ambedkar started his education first at Satara. He passed his B.A from the prestigious Elphinstone College, Bombay with distinction. The assistance and encouragement from the Maharaja of Baroda in the form of scholarship played a great role in Ambedkar's life. Again with the scholarship of Maharaja of Baroda he passed M.A and finished his PhD from Columbia University, U.S.A. In 1917, Ambedkar joined the Baroda State Service but did not get respectable treatment because he belonged to the untouchable community. He left Baroda for Bombay where he first started business and then joined as a professor of Political Economy in Sydenham College, Bombay. He earned good reputation as a teacher, however very often he felt insulted as he was ill treated by his colleagues from high caste in the college. Thus he resigned from his job and resumed his studies in Law and Economics in London. He died on 6 December 1956. The Major works of Ambedkar are as follows: Problem of Rupees Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India, Castes in India ,Small Holdings and their Remedies.

**SAQ**

Elaborate Ambedkar's views on Chaturvarnas and Untouchability. (80 words)

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**5.4 Ambedkar's Views on Caste System :**

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As a member of a lower caste or untouchable family, Ambedkar has personally experienced discriminatory treatment from upper caste. Thus, the seeds of discontentment about the Hindu social order and the

caste system are sown very early in the life of Ambedkar. He observes that the caste system stands as a major obstacle against an egalitarian society. Ambedkar studies the Hindu Social System objectively and opines that Hindus never appear as a society; they are always a system of castes. He states that “Hindu society as such does not exist. It is a collection of castes, each caste is conscious of its existence. It is not even a federation.” Thus, according to him, the Hindu social system suffers from inherent contradictions due to the caste system. Caste system provides for social stratification. We all know that the division of people into classes is very common in all societies of the world. Ambedkar also believes that society is always composed of classes. An individual in a society is always a member of a class. This is a universal fact and early Hindu Society is no exception to this rule. In the Hindu society, the chaturvana (four caste system) system becomes the base of caste system. According to Ambedkar, this system has ruined the Hindus in general and the Untouchables in particular. The origin of this system is traced back to the Purusha Sukta of the Rigveda, the arch text of Hindus. Ambedkar treats the chaturvarna system as a social idea that is invested by Manu with a degree of divinity and in fallibility. The caste system as depicted in the Hindu religious texts, does not only divide the social order into four unequal, hierarchically organized and ritually graded occupational groups, but also makes these divisions permanent and immutable. Ambedkar also believes that in the beginning there is only one caste but later on classes become caste through initiation and excommunication. Ambedkar realizes that social stratification of occupations brought by caste system is a pernicious development of Hindu society. Ambedkar has bitterly criticized the caste system of the Hindus. Let us now discuss the grounds on which the caste system is criticized by Ambedkar:

- The caste system is based on four *varnas* that have resulted in inequality and disunity among the Hindus.
- Caste system has given rise to Untouchability and the untouchables have to face various humiliations and oppressions from the high caste Hindus.
- Caste system has made the Hindu society weak compared to other religions or societies.
- Caste system, rigid rules of marriage, eating and social customs have prohibited the Hindus to develop into a homogeneous community.
- As a result of Caste system, Hindu religion has ceased to be a missionary religion.
- Caste system is used as a weapon by the orthodox Hindus to persecute the reformers of the society.

- Caste system paralyses and cripples the people from cooperative and helpful activities.
- Caste system has created divisions among the Hindu society as it is based on the principle of graded inequality.
- Due to the caste system, it is impossible to establish a just social order in the Hindu community.
- The caste system is the main cause of the weakness and subjugation of the Hindu society for centuries. Hence, it is evident from the above discussion that Ambedkar believes that Hindu social society is not based on the principle of equality and fraternity. It is based on graded inequality as it is based on the principle of fixity of occupation regardless of a person's ability to perform other occupation. Ambedkar suggests that the internal contradictions within the Hindu society can be solved only by annihilating the caste system of the Hindus. Throughout his life Ambedkar wages a relentless struggle against the caste system and untouchability of the Hindu society to build a new social order based on freedom, equality and justice in social, religious and political life of the people.

**SAQ**

Do you think Ambedkar's criticism of caste system can be justified? Give reasons in support of your argument (20+80 words)

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**Check Your Progress**

1. Fill in the blanks

- a) According to Ambedkar caste is.....
- b) Chaturvarna system divides the Hindu social order into..... unequal, hierarchically organized groups.

2. State the reasons behind Ambedkar's view of Hindu society as based on graded inequality. 3. Why is it impossible to establish a just social order among the Hindu community?

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## 5.5 Ambedkar's Views on Untouchability:

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The above section has made us familiar with Ambedkar's criticism on the caste system. The caste system of Hindu social order is closely linked with the system of untouchability which is regarded as one of the worst social evils of the Hindu society. In this section we shall discuss Ambedkar's view on Untouchability. It is already clear to us that the Hindu social order is based on fourvarnas or classes – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. In the Hindu society, each class develops into a caste and every individual is entitled to the rights and privileges attached to the class he belongs. Ambedkar analyzes that after sometime, a fourth class develops in Hinduism i.e., the Untouchables. Hinduism sanctions the complete segregation of the Untouchable class. They are shunned by Hindus as they are considered to be impure and polluted. The Untouchables are not treated as human beings and are not regarded fit for social association. A permanent division is created between the so-called Touchables and Untouchables. The higher castes in Hindu society enjoy all the rights and privileges and in the name of code of conduct they have the freedom to ill-treat a section of the society i.e. Untouchables. The untouchables are given a condition of life in which their thinking habits and general conduct cannot be improved. The upper castes forfeit their civic life and the untouchables are forced to live a suppressed life. They are declared unfit for social association and denied all social rights. The society imposes restrictions on the eating and wearing of clean clothes on the untouchables. They are not allowed to use the village wells, go to the schools and enter the temples. Outcaste patients are not treated by the doctors from the higher caste. Religious segregation of a particular class has forced millions of untouchables to convert to Islam and Christianity to free themselves from the shackles of humiliation and oppression.

### **Stop To Consider:**

Ambedkar and The Partition of India :Between 1941 and 1945, Ambedkar published a number of books and pamphlets, including Thoughts on Pakistan, in which he criticizes the Muslim League's demand for a separate Muslim state of Pakistan but considered its concession if Muslims demanded so as expedient. In the book entitled Thoughts on Pakistan, Ambedkar writes a sub-chapter titled 'If Muslims truly and deeply desire Pakistan, their choice ought to be accepted'. He writes that if the Muslims are bent on Pakistan, then it must be conceded to them. He asks whether Muslims in the army can be trusted to defend India. To answer the question-In the event of



Muslims invasion of India or in the case of a Muslim rebellion, with whom will the Indian Muslims in the army side? he concludes that, in the interests of the safety of India, Pakistan should be acceded to in keeping with the demand of the Muslims. According to Ambedkar, the Hindu assumption that though Hindus and Muslims are two nations, they can live together under one state, is nothing but an empty sermon, a mad project, to which no sane man will ever agree.

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## **5.6 Ambedkar's Movement against Casteism and Untouchability (Hindu Social Order) :**

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After discussing Ambedkar's criticism of the Hindu society, the caste system and Untouchability, now we will discuss Ambedkar's efforts for removal of casteism and Untouchability in this section. He is of the view that there is Untouchability because there is caste system. Thus he launches a powerful movement for the restoration of civic rights to the untouchables and giving them equal rights at par with other castes. The movement for the rights of the untouchables and for the eradication of caste system is started in two phases----

- Firstly- In the form of petition and protest.
- Secondly- In the form of direct action to use wells, schools, buses and railways etc. Ambedkar's movement against Casteism and Untouchability can be described as humanitarian struggle. Ambedkar believes that caste system and untouchability are parts of social system based on some principles. Without destroying the caste system, untouchability cannot be reviewed. Thus Ambedkar stresses the necessity of eradicating the ideas of highness and lowness on the basis of caste. He asks his followers to fight against the isolation of civil life without fear. The leaders of Satyasodhak movement of Maharashtra have given Ambedkar full support in his struggle for the rights of the depressed classes. Through Satyagraha, he has led his followers to assert their rights over common drinking water and right to worship in temples. The demands for safeguarding the interest of the untouchables inform Ambedkar's career. In 1919, when Montague Reforms are being formulated, Ambedkar demands separate electorates and reservation of seats for depressed classes in proportion to their population. In the first conference of Untouchables, in March 1927, at Bombay, Ambedkar has called upon the Untouchables to fight for their rights, give up dirty habits and rise to manhood. During that time, the Satyashodhak Movement is taking place in Maharashtra and the leaders offers full support to Ambedkar in his struggle for the rights of the depressed class.

Ambedkar becomes the first President of The All India Depressed Classes Association on August 1930, where he demands the safeguard of depressed and downtrodden untouchables in the constitution and pleads for their representation in official committees. As a member of the State Committee appointed by the Bombay Government in 1930 to find out educational, social and economic condition of the depressed classes, Ambedkar recommends scholarship for students of depressed classes, their recruitment in police and army as well as their greater involvement in social and cultural activities. Political activities are prominent part of Ambedkar's movement against Casteism and Untouchability. He is not impressed by Gandhiji's word Harijan as a replacement for untouchables. His views with suspicion the formation of the Harijan Sevak Sangha by Gandhiji for removal of untouchability as it is entirely managed by caste Hindus and the Sangha works as an organ of the Congress party. Ambedkar maintains that its aim is to secure support of the depressed classes. Thus Ambedkar forms the Samata Sainik Dal for the upliftment of the Untouchables and asked the Untouchables to adopt Buddhism to free themselves from the shackles of discrimination followed in Hinduism. Ambedkar feels that concerted action to secure political and economic rights for people ignored for centuries is necessary to give them a better future. He attacks the British Government for not initiating constitutional measures to improve the lot of Untouchables.

In political front Ambedkar demands a separate electorate and reservation of seats for the depressed classes in proportion to their population. He has succeeded in securing separate electorate for the depressed classes through the Communal Award in 1932. However, Gandhiji's protest and fast unto death made Ambedkar sign the Poona Pact in 1932 on behalf of the depressed classes and accept a joint electorate with the Hindus ensuring seats for the depressedes classes. The pact is later embodied in the Government of India Act 1935. In 1942, Dr Ambedkar was included in the Executive Council of the Viceroy and as a labour member he works hard to give workers their due rights and to provide social security to the labour class. In securing reservation of seats for members of the depressed classes, Ambedkar makes use of his position in raising the standard of life of the labourers. He worked hard for establishing better relations between labour and management and thus ensuring industrial peace through suitable law. He asserts that the problems of the Untouchables cannot be solved unless radical changes are introduced in the social system and unless the caste system is annihilated. Ambedkar pleads for making the public services more responsive to the needs of the Untouchables and insists on recruitment of more members of the Untouchable community in the higher posts. Through his writings and

speeches, he makes the people conscious of the political, economic and social problems of the Untouchables and focuses the need of paying special attention to the amelioration of the condition of the Untouchables. Influenced by the ideas of Ambedkar, the new constitution of independent India, not only assures equality, reservation of seats and special privileges for the depressed classes but also takes definite steps to abolish untouchability and make its practice in any form an offence punishable under law.

**SAQ**

Elaborate the humanitarian struggle and political activities of Ambedkar aimed to safeguard the depressed classes. (80 words)

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**5.7 Comparison between Gandhi and Ambedkar:**

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After discussing Ambedkar’s ideas, we can easily make out that Ambedkar differs from Gandhi in various matters. Gandhi and Ambedkar are the two prominent personalities of India who devote their life for the upliftment of the depressed classes and eradication of Untouchability. They are the symbol of revolt against caste-conscious oppression within the Hindu society. Gandhi and Ambedkar live for service and not for glory and in this section we will attempt a comparative study of Gandhi and Ambedkar. Both Gandhi and Ambedkar share the similar interest of uplifting the untouchables from the shackles of oppression and domination. Gandhi and Ambedkar want to eradicate untouchability and thereby uniting all castes into one oceanic unity. Both the personalities are able to command respectful obedience from millions of people. They are able to reach tremendous height in Indian politics and Indian society. They want to remove the economic disparity that exists in the society as both firmly believe that unless the economic disparity is removed, there can be neither social justice nor the downtrodden will rise in life.

After the Poona Pact, Gandhi and Ambedkar have intensified their efforts to eradicate untouchability. Gandhi has softened people’s heart and Ambedkar awakened self-respect and interest in politics among the untouchables. Gandhiji’s work, in fact complements Ambedkar’s work and vice-versa. Thus both Gandhi and Ambedkar can be rightly regarded as saviours for untouchables as they share similar interests. Though we have found that both Gandhi and Ambedkar share similar interests in terms of improving the fate of the untouchables, their

approaches for the removal of untouchability are dramatically different. They have chosen different paths, strategies and ideologies.

Now let us discuss the grounds of their difference-----

- A. **Views on Untouchability:** Gandhi feels that he is the natural guardian of untouchables while Ambedkar opines that he is the natural leader of the untouchables. Gandhi firmly believes that Untouchability can be removed by change of hearts in the Hindus initiated by moral pressure but Ambedkar believes that Untouchability can be removed by giving them safeguards and political and legal rights.
- B. **Views On Caste System:** Mahatma Gandhi's views on caste system are quite different from those of Ambedkar. Interpreting Hinduism Gandhiji said that, "Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin we do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know that it is harmful to both spiritual and national growth.....". Ambedkar totally disagrees with Gandhiji's view. According to Ambedkar in Hindu society, class (varnas) develops into castes and the caste system develops various sub-castes. But according to Gandhi, caste system has nothing to do with religious and Varna system. It is harmful for both spiritual & national growths. But according to Ambedkar caste system has completely ruined the Hindu society. Gandhi represents the masses of India, Ambedkar represents the depressed classes of India. Gandhi wants to reform, end injustice without abolishing caste system. But, Ambedkar demands rebellion for the annihilation of the caste system itself. Gandhi wants to eradicate shudrahood & untouchability and not the caste system as a whole. Efforts of Gandhi and Ambedkar for upliftment of Untouchables. In 1932, under the patronage of Gandhi, The All India Anti-Untouchability League was formed, which is later named as "Harijan Sevak Sangha". But Ambedkar is not impressed by this movement as it excluded the leaders of the depressed classes as the members of the governing body and did not concentrate on the economic, social and educational development of the depressed classes. Ambedkar thus forms Samata Sainik Dal (Social Equality Army) for the upliftment of the depressed classes. Samata Sainik Dal emphasizes the development of the depressed classes by granting scholarship for the students of depressed classes and reservation system for their upliftment in every stage of their life.
- C. **Views on Separate Electorate:** Ambedkar also differs from Gandhi on the question of separate electorate and reservation of seats for the depressed classes. He opines that there is no

link between the Hindus and the depressed classes. Each has distinct and separate identity. He thus achieves separate electorate for the untouchables through the Communal Award in 1932. But Gandhi believes that untouchability is a stigma of the Hindu society as whole and it must be eradicated. Separate Electorate will make it a permanent feature giving rise to serious problem of human relationship. His decision to fast till death leads to the signing of Poona Pact between Gandhi and Ambedkar. But Ambedkar feels that Poona Pact is against the interest of the depressed classes.

D. **Views on Varna System:** Ambedkar is full of criticism for the Hindu society as a whole and wants to eradicate the varna system and he does not favour Gandhi calling the untouchables as Harijans. But Gandhiji is not against the varna system. He opines that varna system has nothing to do with caste. In fact he wants to revert the original varna system. He said that the law of varna teaches us that each one of us can earn our bread by following our ancestral calling. He only wants to abolish untouchability but not at the cost of offending the castes Hindus.

On the otherhand Ambedkar believes that varna system has given rise to caste system and the reorganization of Hindus on the basis of varna system can prove harmful as it will have degrading effect on the mass by denying them opportunity to acquire knowledge. Religious sanction behind the caste and the varna system must be destroyed. Thus we have seen that both Ambedkar and Gandhi criticize each other but at the same time each is conscious of others necessary place in any final solution of the problems of the untouchables. Though their paths are different their ultimate aim is quite similar. Because of the efforts of Ambedkar and Gandhi, the constitution of independent India not only abolishes Untouchability but also makes its practice in form punishable by law.

**SAQ**

Analyse how Ambedkar differs from Gandhi. (80 words)

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**Check Your Progress:**

1. Fill in the Blanks:

a)The fourth class that develops in the Hindu society is .....

b) The first president of All India Depressed Classes Association is.....

c) The Poona Pact was signed in.....between.....

2. Write a brief note on Ambedkar's movement against Untouchability.

3. What is Ambedkar's view on separate electorate?

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## **5.8 Ambedkar on Education:**

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Like any social reformer Dr. Ambedkar believes that for the reconstruction of society on the principles of equality and justice education is the necessary precondition. Now Let us study Ambedkar's ideas on Education. He studies the development of education in Indian society and finds that right to education is restricted to higher castes during the rule of Peshwas in Maharashtra and even during the earlier period of British Raj. Ambedkar takes upon himself to fight for the education of masses without discrimination of caste and sex. Ambedkar's attempt for spreading education can be highlighted as follows

- As a nominative member of Bombay Legislative Council in February, 1927 Ambedkar takes active part and pleads for greater attention toward education.
- Ambedkar has founded the people's Education Society, and starts colleges at Bombay and Aurangabad.
- He pleads with the government that providing equal education opportunities to all without discrimination is the responsibility of the government.
- He pleads that boys and girls should get different education suited to their temperament.
- Taking active part in the discussion on Bombay University Act and Primary Education Amendment bill, he contributes his views in the reform of education.
- Ambedkar stresses on the need to cut the cost of education in all possible ways and greater possible extent so that it can reach everyone. Therefore, Ambedkar is of the view that education is something to be brought within the reach of everyone and should be made cheap in all possible ways.

**Stop To Consider:**

Ambedkar as an Architect of India's Constitution With India's independence on August 15, 1947, the new Congress-led government invited Ambedkar to serve as the nation's first law minister. On August 29 of 1947, Ambedkar was appointed Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, charged by the Assembly to write free India's new Constitution. Ambedkar won great praise from his colleagues and contemporary observers for his drafting work. In this task Ambedkar's study of sangha practice among early Buddhists and his extensive reading in Buddhist scriptures were to come to his aid. Sangha practice incorporated voting by ballot, rules of debate and precedence and the use of agendas, committees and proposals to conduct business. Sangha practice itself was modelled on the oligarchic system of governance followed by tribal republics of ancient India such as the Shakyas and the Lichchavis. Thus, although Ambedkar used Western models to give his Constitution shape, its spirit was Indian and, indeed, tribal. The draft prepared by Ambedkar provided constitutional guarantees and protections for a wide range of civil liberties for individual citizens, including freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination. Ambedkar argued for extensive economic and social rights for women, and also won the Assembly's support for introducing a system of reservations of jobs in the civil services, schools and colleges for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, a system akin to affirmative action. India's lawmakers hoped to eradicate the socio-economic inequalities and lack of opportunities for India's depressed classes through this measure, which had been originally envisioned as temporary on a need basis. The Constitution was adopted on November 26, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly.

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**5.9 Ambedkar on Language Policy:**

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We all know that India is a multilingual country. Ambedkar clearly understands that India being a multilingual country has the possibility of problem for the unity of the country on account of regional pressures and pulls. When the idea of linguistic states is taken he favours it for two reasons. Firstly, he thinks that it will facilitate functioning of democracy in the country. Secondly, linguistic states will help in the removal of racial and cultural tension. Ambedkar said, "In seeking to create linguistic states, India is treading the right road. It is the road which all states have followed. In case of other linguistic states they have been so from the very beginning. In India, she has to put herself in the reverse gear to reach the goal. But the road she proposes to travel is a well tried road." According to Ambedkar, in the

enthusiasm to accept the idea of linguistic states, India commit the grave blunder of giving official status to regional language. For this reason, he warned that with regional languages the states could aspire for independent nationality and thus pose a threat to the national unity. To avoid this possibility in future Ambedkar suggested that it should be laid down in the constitution that regional languages shall never be accepted as official languages of the states. Hindi must be declared as the official language of the nation. So long as Hindi does not become fit for this status English should continue as the only official language.

Again, Ambedkar believed that those who lived in India should be Indians first and Indians last. This is the only way to keep India a united country. The idea of linguistic states with regional languages as their official language was contrary to this basic principle. He is of the view that one language can unite while two languages can divide the people of India. He emphatically said that any Indian who refused to accept this idea has no right to call himself an Indian. He might be hundred percent Tamil or Gujarati but could not be an Indian in real sense. Ambedkar said that Indian politics, already under the great influence of castes, is suffering from lack of unity of interest. The evil consequences of this are sure to be sharpened with linguistic states which we have created. The country is bound to move to disintegration if suitable amendment in our Constitution is not made and a national consensus on one official language is not accepted and enforced.

**SAQ**

Discuss Ambedkar’s ideas on Education and Language policy. (80 words)

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**5.10 Ambedkar on Democracy:**

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Ambedkar, on the basis of his extensive study and knowledge of the evolution of human society and social institutions, is convinced that democracy is the only form of government which ensures liberty and equality in the society and he has discussed elaborately on democracy. Democracy is the form of government in which people rule themselves through their elected representatives. It ensures equality, liberty, fraternity and justice to all section of the people without discrimination and give due importance to public opinion. Democracy is universally accepted as the best form of government and it not just a form of Government but has become a way of life. Hence, according to



Ambedkar we should have a government where the men in power, not be afraid to amend the social and economic code of life will give their undivided allegiance to the best interest of the country. Notion of Democratic Society Ambedkar said, "Democracy is more than a government. It is a form of the organization of society. There are two essential conditions which characterize a democratically constituted society:

- Absence of stratification of society into classes
- A social habit on the part of individuals and groups which are ready for continuous readjustment or recognition of reciprocity of interests."

He opines that a real democratic government is not possible without form and structure of democratic society. If the social milieu is undemocratic, the government is bound to be undemocratic. According to Ambedkar even a democratic government will not be able to do anything if Indian society remain divided into classes and sub classes as each individual in such society will place class interest above everything and there will be no justice and fair play in the functioning of the government. Apart from being a government of the people and by the people, democracy must also be a government for the people. It requires a democratic attitude of mind and proper socialization. Thus, Ambedkar is of the view that democracy is more than a social system. It is an attitude of mind, a philosophy of life. Need of Fraternity Impressed by French Revolution, Ambedkar opines that in democracy equality and liberty ensured by the constitution cannot be considered sufficient. Without fraternity equality destroys liberty and liberty destroys equality. Fraternity implies true religious spirit which is the basic of any democratic system.

**Conditions for a Democratic System:** Ambedkar clearly outlines the conditions for a democratic system. These conditions are as follows----

- In a democracy, those who are in place of authority must seek mandate to rule after every five years.
- In a democracy, there is a necessity of a strong opposition.
- In a democracy, there should be equality for all in the eyes of law.
- In a democracy, there should be observance of constitutional morality. In the larger interest of the country, the party in power must resist temptation.
- In the name of democracy, there should be no tyranny of the majority over the minority. Parliamentary form of Democracy There are different forms of democracy prevalent in different countries of all these Ambedkar feels that parliamentary democracy of the British type will be the best for India. Ambedkar says that parliamentary democracy has three traits
  - a. Negation of hereditary rule.
  - b. Laws applicable to public life have public approval.

c. Rulers cannot stay in power without the confidence of the people.

Ambedkar says that, “In Parliamentary democracy, there is the legislature to express the voice of the people; there is the executive who is subordinate to the legislature and bound to obey the legislature. Over and above the legislature there is the judiciary to control both and keep them both in prescribed bounds. Parliamentary democracy has all the marks of a popular Government.”

**Conditions for Parliamentary Democracy:** Ambedkar knows that parliamentary democracy can fail as there can be discontent and dissatisfaction in such a system. In spite of constitutional assurance of equality and liberty, the parliamentary system cannot succeed without social and economic democracy. According to Ambedkar, “Democracy is another name of equality. Parliamentary democracy developed passion for liberty.”

**SAQ**

Elaborate Ambedkar’s notion and conditions for a democratic society.  
(80 words)

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**5.11 Summing up:**

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After reading this unit, we come to the conclusion that B.R Ambedkar has made valuable contribution to the social and political thinking. He strongly denounces the outrageous attitude of the Brahmanical Hinduism towards the Untouchables and works for the liberation of the untouchables from the oppressions of the High caste Hindus. Ambedkar is successful in focusing the attention of the Hindus on the tension generating social problems and the need for resolving the same in the interest of the Hindu society as well as the political system. Because of the efforts of Ambedkar Indian Constitution makes special provisions for the upliftment of the backward classes. Reading of this unit will help you to make a comparison between Gandhi and Ambedkar. This unit will also enrich your knowledge on education, language policy and democracy. Through his writings and speeches he makes the people conscious of the political, economic and social problems of the untouchables and impressed the need of paying special attention to the amelioration of the condition of the untouchables. As the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution for free India, he made provisions for the members of the Schedule caste

community to develop itself with constitutional guarantee of equality of opportunities. The influence of his idea is evident from the fact that the new constitution not only assured equality to all citizens but took definite steps to abolish untouchability and made its practice in any form an offence punishable under law. Dr D.R Jataw has rightly described Ambedkar as a social humanist. Ambedkar was a great optimist . He had faith in man's capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, true and false.

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## **5.12 References and Suggested Readings**

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**BLOCK III :**  
**CONTENDING PERSPECTIVES ON**  
**NATIONALISM**

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## **Unit 1: Aurobindo Ghose: Philosophical and Spiritual Foundations**

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- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Aurobindo's Philosophical and Spiritual Foundations
- 1.4 Summing up
- 1.5 References and Suggested Readings

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### **1.1 Introduction:**

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Sri Aurobindo was one of the leading figures in the history of the Indian renaissance movement and Indian nationalism. A man gifted with the power of intellect and mysticism, Sri Aurobindo's moral, spiritual, and intellectual accomplishments on human progress and spiritual evolution have a deep influence over the mind of the Indian intelligentsia. Sri Aurobindo was a multifaceted genius, a philosopher, yogi, maharishi, poet, journalist and Indian nationalist. His magnum opus, 'The Life Divine' had gathered attention of some of the leading intellectuals of the world and his epic poem 'Savitri' is considered as dawn of new era in the realm of spiritual poetry. Rabindranath Tagore hailed him as the most pronounced exponent of the spiritual message of India to the world. Romain Rolland regarded him as the highest synthesis of the genius of Asia and the genius of Europe.

Sri Aurobindo was born in Calcutta, Bengal Presidency, on 15 August 1872 to a well to do Bengali Kayastha family. His father was a distinguished surgeon who studied medicine in Britain and wanted his children to be educated there, free from any kind of Indian influence. Although his family were Bengali, young Aurobindo was brought up

speaking English as his father believed that British culture to be superior. After few years of schooling in Loreto Convent in Darjeeling, young Aurobindo and his two elder brothers were sent to Manchester, England. From the young age of seven until he was twenty one- for fourteen years Aurobindo stayed in England for study. During his stay in England, Aurobindo showed signs of genius and penetrated deeply into the Greek and Latin classics. He studied some of the great works of great European masters from Homer to Goethe. When he returned back to India, Aurobindo worked as a professor of English at Baroda (Central India) where he studied the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. The vedantic synthetic philosophy of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda deeply influenced him. From 1905 to 1910, Aurobindo pursued a political career as a leader in the nationalist movement in Bengal. He was one of the acknowledged leaders of the new extremist party of nationalists. Aurobindo along with Lokmanya Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal were the champions of an assertive nationalism. He advocated the sanctification of patriotism as the dedicated worship of India. He was a prophet of pure religion of nationalism. He was the one who showed the courage to champion the faith of absolute swaraj for India as early as 1907. As a political leader and writer, he wanted to construct a synthesis of the ancient Vedantic and modern European political philosophy. His 'Political Vedantism' was not merely a restatement of the world affirming tendencies of the Upanishads but also a concrete political philosophy for reconstruction of the social and political life of a dependent nation. During his lifetime, Aurobindo wrote some of the acclaimed books: The Life Divine, Essays on the Gita, The Synthesis of Yoga, Savatri and others. His books reveal a synthesis of eastern sacred literature and western metaphysics.

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## 1.2 Objectives:

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This unit is an attempt to study the political and spiritual foundation of Sri Aurobindo with special reference to his idea on Nationalism. After reading this unit you will be able to

- Explain his philosophy on history and culture
- Discuss his spiritual foundation on politics

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## 1.3 Aurobindo's Philosophical and Spiritual Foundations

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As a political philosopher, Sri Aurobindo is a believer of spiritual determinism of History. He saw a spirit behind the external historical currents and forces. History is the manifestation and progressive self-revelation of Brahman, the Absolute. Aurobindo accepted the reality of a universal Omnipresent being or existence “which fulfils itself in the world and the individual and the group with an impartial regard for all as equal powers of its self- manifestation”. History is the fulfilment of the divine spirit. Politics can be conceived as a fulfilment of the spirit on the historical plane. Hence, the movement of swaraj can be regarded as the fulfilment of God by the fulfilment of people through their independent mode and patterns of individual, social, communal and national life. As a mystic, he declared that God was behind Indian Nationalism and God was the real leader of the movement. The repression, humiliation, coercion used by the British was also in plan of the divine dialectic, which was using these methods to train the Indian people in the art of self discipline. Aurobindo illustrated his theory of the dynamic activity of Kali, the directing force of the spirit, with special reference to two historical movements- the French Revolution and Indian Nationalist Movement. According to Aurobindo, the French revolution occurred due to the will of the God. As long as the leaders of the revolutions like Mirabeau, Danton, Robespierre, and Napoleon- manifested in their action the will of ‘Kali’(or Zeit- Geist), she allowed them to work. Aurobindo applied

his theory of divine determinism in history to the Indian Nationalist Movement. The partition of Bengal provided an opportunity for the development of an exalted nationalism in India. “Nationalism is immortal; nationalism cannot die, because it is no human thing: it is God who is working in Bengal. God cannot be killed, God cannot be sent to jail.” Aurobindo believed that God or Atmam was the leader of the movement, and hence in his speeches, he advocated a return to the spirit and the realization of its plans and dictates. Being a mystic who believe in the will of God in history, Aurobindo interpreted that all events in the course of Bengal nationalist movement and the Indian Nationalist Movement as designed and willed by God. This type of theodicy in Aurobindo, or what Hegel would call the justification and rationalisation of the history in divine terms, represents a fusion of the ideas of the Bhagavad gita and German idealism. According to Gita, the hero or the great man is only an instrument of God. Aurobindo believed that the real leader of the Indian nationalist movement was not Tilak or Ashwini Kumar Dutta, but God himself. It is important to note that this theory of divine determinism of history and the notion of God’s leadership in political movement is a fundamental belief of the Hindu philosophical mind. In Indian mythology like Mahabharata and Puranas there are stories illustrating god’s intervention in the course of history. In Gita, it is stated that wherever there is anything great and colossal in human and cosmic history that is due to the will of Divine spirit. The Vedas also contains stories where God King Indra is solicited to kill demon Vritra.

**SAQ:**

Do you think Aurobindo’s philosophy on History and Culture can be related to the modern world? Give reasons in support of your answer.

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Aurobindo's being a metaphysician and a mystic believes that philosophy of history has a note of chiasm and futurism. The futuristic chiasm makes Aurobindo a teleologist in history. Aurobindo believes that history is not aimless, purposeless random conglomeration of mechanical forces; there is an inward spiritual purpose running throughout the historical structure. Aspiration of mankind for freedom, light, peace and immortality are going to be realized through the supernatural progression of history and evolutionary nature.

Aurobindo's philosophy of the cyclical evolution of human cultures and civilization was influenced by Karl Lamprecht's typology, although the concept of the cycle can be traced back to the ancient Vedanta and Puranas. Lamprecht analysed five stages in the course of German political evolution: The symbolic ages of primitive Germany, the early middle stage, the conventional later middle age, the individualistic age from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, and the subjective age starting with Romanticism. Aurobindo was influenced by this typology and applied Lamprecht's typology to India. Aurobindo in this book 'The Human Cycle' mentioned the Vedic age as the symbolic era of Indian history. He interprets varna (social Order) as a social institution and the caste system as a conventional social form. Aurobindo believes that despite of increasing impact of western civilization, age of individualism in the Eastern world that rational age would not last long in the eastern world because the traditional subjectivism of the Orient would assert itself. Aurobindo thought that the subjective age would be replaced by the spiritual age when the full power of the human spirit, which is an eternal portion of divine, would guide the evolution of man. Thus Aurobindo's philosophy of culture was both psychological and spiritual. :

**Check Your Progress:**

1. Mention the name of a Book written by Aurobindo.

2. Discuss briefly Philosophical and Spiritual Foundations of Aurobindo.

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### **1.4 Summing up:**

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Sri Aurobindo was one of the great nationalist India had produced. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan called him as “the most accomplished of modern Indian thinkers”. He was a Yogi, a sage, philosopher and one of the makers of Indian nation. Reading of this unit has helped you in learning that he was a humanitarian who preached human unity and taught that without the divine remaking of human nature, our civilization is doomed. Moreover, from this unit you have also learnt that Aurobindo gave a new spiritual dimension to nationalist movement which is above the economic and political context. He always believed that Indian nation was the manifestation of the divine being and refused to acknowledge the superiority of the west. In the next unit we shall discuss his ideas of nationalism and swaraj.

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### **1.5 References and suggested readings:**

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Varma, V.P. Modern Indian Political Thought. Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publisher, 2008

Gupta, R.C. Great Political Thinkers: East and West. Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publisher, 2008

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## **Unit 2: Aurobindo Ghose: Nationalism**

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2.1 Introduction

2.2 Objectives

2.3 Aurobindo's view on Nationalism

2.4 Aurobindo's view on Swaraj

2.5 Summing up

2.6 References and Suggested Readings

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### **2.1 Introduction**

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In the previous unit of this block we have discussed at length about the historical and spiritual foundations of Sri Aurobindo's thought. From this unit we have learnt that Sri Aurobindo was one of the leading figures in the history of the Indian renaissance movement and Indian nationalism. . Sri Aurobindo was a multifaceted genius, a philosopher, yogi, maharishi, poet, journalist and Indian nationalist. He was a poet too. He developed a spiritual practice called internal yoga. His spiritual thinking has led to the formations of his new ideas on Nationalism as well as swaraj. In this unit w shall try to discuss Aurobindos's ideas of nationalism and swaraj.

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### **2.2 Objectives**

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Reading of this unit will help you to

- Discuss Aurbindo's views on Nationalism
- Explain his views on swaraj

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### **2.3 Aurobindo's view on Nationalism:**

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The fundamental philosophy of Sri Aurobindo was his concept of spiritual nationalism and the divinity of the motherland. His concept of nation was deeply influenced by Bankimchandra- a great Bengali novelist. According to Aurobindo the nation is not just a piece of land nor a mass of human beings. It is neither a figure of speech nor the creation of mind. Nation is something more than a geographical unit or a figment of people's imagination. His view on nation is much more profound than a patriotic notion about the nation.

Similarly, he has given a very thoughtful notion of nationalism. Nationalism in his opinion is not merely a political movement or political programme. According to Aurobindo, nationalism is akin to religion. Nationalism is a faith and a creed which one has to live. Nationalism is immortal because it is not a creation of human beings, but a creation of god. Nationalism is like a religion which has come from god. Aurobindo believes that nationalism is a deep and fervent "religious sadhana". For him "nationalism is a religion by which people try to realise God in their nation, and their fellow country men". While discussing Nationalism, he has also talked about political freedom. In his words, "Political freedom is the life-breath of a nation; to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom, is the very height of ignorance and futility."

Aurobindo viewed his beloved country India as his mother and he was highly devoted to her. He glorified India as a mother Goddess and advised the young patriots to work for their nation which is their mother. According to Aurobindo's understanding, the 'nation' is a mighty 'shakti' composed of all the shaktis of all the million of units that make up the nation. It is thus a living entity.

Aurobindo's view on nationalism was cosmopolitan in nature. He believed that nationalism is a necessary stage in the social and political evolution of man towards human unity. In an article in the *Bande Mataram* he wrote:

“Nationalism is simply the passionate aspiration for the realisation of the Divine Unity in the nation, a unity in which all the component individuals, however various and apparently unequal their functions as political, social or economic factors, are yet really and fundamentally one and equal. In the ideal of Nationalism which India will set before the world, there will be an essential equality between man and man, between caste and caste, between class and class, all beings as Mr. Tilak has pointed out different but equal and united parts of the Virat Purush as realised in the nation...We are intolerant of autocracy because it is the denial in politics of this essential equality, we object to the modern distortion of the caste system because it is the denial in society of the same essential equality. While we insist on reorganizing the nation into a democratic unity, politically we recognize that the same principle of reorganization ought to and inevitably will assert itself socially; even if, as our opponents choose to imagine, we are desirous of confining its working to politics, our attempts will be fruitless, for the principle once realized in politics, must inevitably assert itself in a society”.

As a nationalist, the reconciliation of the eastern and western ideas could be seen in the writings of Aurobindo. When he refers to passive resistance, to arbitration in place of the British judicial courts, and to boycott, he is referring to familiar techniques in European political history. Aurobindo also referred several times to Mazzini, the spearhead of the Italian revolutionary movement. Aurobindo also spoke of the Bengalis or the Indians as the ‘chosen people’ for the divine work of winning the political salvation of India. In fact, the ideal of complete freedom is another contribution of Aurobindo.

Aurobindo strongly believed that without political freedom real development of India is not possible. Since nationalism was regarded as spiritual in character, Aurobindo believed that there is a need of moral training both for the leaders and for the followers. He stated:

“Our leaders and our followers both require a deeper sadhana, a more direct communion with the divine Guru and Captain of our movement, an inward uplifting, a grander and more impetuous force behind thought and deed. It has been driven home to us by experience after experience, that not in the strength of a raw unmoralized European enthusiasm shall we conquer. Indians, it is the spirituality of India, the sadhana of India, tapasya, jnanam, sakti that must make us free and great...”

Aurobindo wanted a spiritual reorientation of political life. He believed in the great scriptures of ancient Hindus- the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Gita that contained the secrets of spiritual wisdom, which was necessary for the liberation of Mankind. Thus for him nationalism is a religion by which people try to realise God in their nation, and their fellow countrymen.

**SAQ:**

Do you Consider Aurobindo a true Nationalist?

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**2.5 Aurobindo’s view on Swaraj:**

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Aurobindo was one of the early Indian political leader to call for complete freedom. India’s liberation from foreign domination was the

final goal for Aurobindo. Swaraj i.e. self-rule by Indians was not merely of economic and political nature. It was necessary for India to perform its spiritual mission dedicated to the upliftment of humanity. Writing about swaraj in 'Bande Mataram' Sri Aurobindo wrote "we of the new school would not pitch our ideal one inch lower than absolute swaraj, self- government as it exists in the United Kingdom". To strive for anything less than Swaraj, he argued, "would be to insult the greatness of our past and the magnificent possibilities of our future". According to Aurobindo, Swaraj was something worth fighting for. That is why he challenged people to be aggressive in their resistance to British authority. He believed that Indians should not live as slaves but as free people to work spiritual and intellectual benefit of the human race. To achieve his goal of swaraj he explained the positive methods of political action. One is through secret revolutionary propaganda by setting up revolutionary organization. Secondly, through continuous propaganda against foreign rule through writings, speeches, public contacts etc., thirdly, by mobilising the masses through various organizations to carry open and total opposition to foreign rule through methods of non-cooperation and passive resistance. He also advocated methods of economic boycott so that the economic exploitation by the British can be stopped. It is important to note that being a radical nationalist Aurobindo did not opposed the use of force in application of these methods to attain swaraj.

**Check your progress:**

1. Comment on Aurobindo's view on Spiritual Nationalism.
2. Elucidate Aurobindo's view on Swaraj and his positive methods of political action.
3. 3. Critically analyse the role of Aurobindo as a revolutionary and advocate of spiritual conception of nationalism.

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## **2.6 Summing up**

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After reading this unit you are now in a position to discuss Aurobindo's view on nationalism. As a nationalist he gave a new understanding to nationalism by interpreting the concept in spiritual terms. As a prophet of Bengal Swadeshi movement, Aurobindo stood for an inspired and exalted patriotism. From this unit you have learnt that according to Aurobindo Swaraj was something worth fighting for. That is why he challenged people to be aggressive in their resistance to British authority. Moreover, this unit has also helped you in learning that as a nationalist, Aurobindo emphasised on the reconciliation of the eastern and western ideas. Thus, after reading this unit it is now clear to you that fundamental philosophy of Aurobindo was his concept of spiritual nationalism and the divinity of the motherland.

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## **2.7 Reference and Suggested Readings**

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1. Varma, V.P. Modern Indian Political Thought. Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publisher, 2008
2. Gupta, R.C. Great Political Thinkers: East and West. Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publisher, 2008
3. Mehta, V. R Ideology, Modernisation and Politics in India, Manohar Publications New Delhi, 1983
4. Sarma, G. N. The Vision of Sri Aurobindo, dipti Publications, Pondicherry
5. Panthan Thomas (eds) Political Thoghth in Modern India, Sage Publications, New Delhi. 1986



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## UNIT 3

### V.D. Savarkar

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- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Early Political Life
- 1.4 Savarkar's interpretation of History
- 1.5 Cultural Nationalism
- 1.6 Savarkar's view on Hindutva
- 1.7 Summing up
- 1.8 References and Suggested Readings

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#### 1.1 Introduction:

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Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, an ardent nationalist, revolutionary and a politician was born in Bhagur, near Nasik, on 28 May 1883. Widely known as 'Veer' Savarkar, he gained a great fame as an ardent Hindu nationalist who developed the political ideology of 'Hindutva'. He was a leading figure in Indian National Movement and the Hindu Mahasabha. From his childhood Savarkar was inspired by the revolutionaries Wasudeo Balwant Phadke and Chapekar brothers, who had taken revolutionary measures against the British. He was also inspired by Lokamanya Tilak's strong nationalism and political ideas. Tilak's belief in Hindu identity and Hindu Sangathan immensely influenced Savarkar political thought. V.D Savarkar represented an unconventional strand of political thought in India in contrast to political theories propounded by the leaders of mainstream nationalist movement. V.D Savarkar propounded the theory of cultural nationalism in contrast to the theory of territorial nationalism propounded by the leaders of the mainstream nationalist movement. The uniqueness of his personality and thinking can be estimated from

the fact that while one school of thought calls him an 'ardent nationalist, heroic revolutionary and terrorist', the other considers him as 'an angry, resentful, vengeful, violent and intolerant prophet'. However it must be admitted that V.D Savarkar won immortal fame by his daring and assertive nationalistic political ideas in the early decades of twentieth century. Being an ardent Hindu nationalist, Savarkar believes that the real traits of India could be restored only by reviving India's glorious past and re-establishing what he called 'Hindu Rastra'. Savarkar's political philosophy revolves round the ideological foundation of homogeneity of Hindu population living in a particular tract of land and creation of nation based on the culture of the majority. Savarkar's nationalistic ideas have deep influence of the values of Hindu religion and culture and aspiration of reviving the glorious legacies left by the great Maratha rulers like Shivaji.

### **Stop to Consider:**

#### **Life Sketch of V.D Savarkar:**

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in the Marathi Chitpavan Brahmin Hindu family of Damodar and Radhabai Savarkar. Savarkar began his political activities from a very young age. He and his brother founded a secret society called Abhinav Bharat Society. During his stay in United Kingdom he involved himself with organizations like India House and the Free India Society. His book "The Indian War of Independence" about the Indian Rebellion of 1857 was banned by the British Colonial Government. In 1910, Savarkar was arrested for his connections with the revolutionary group India House. On the voyage back to India, Savarkar staged an attempt to escape and seek asylum in France while the ship was docked in the port of Marseilles. But the French port officials handed him back to the British government. Savarkar was sentenced to two life terms of imprisonment for fifty years. He was moved to Cellular Jail in Andaman and Nicobar Island.

As a president of Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar endorsed the idea of India as a Hindu Rashtra. Savarkar was a revolutionary and he endorsed the militarization of Hindus in order to liberate the country and protect the Hindus. There were two phases in the ideological development of Savarkar. In the first phase of his life, he was influenced by the philosophy of Italian nationalist Joseph Mazzini and supported the concept of composite Indian Nationalism like that of nationalism of Aurobindo and Tilak. During this period religion played an important role in the philosophy of Savarkar but it did not exclude any religious community from it. In the second phase of his life after 1922-23, Savarkar became ardent supporter of Hindu nationalism and began to advocate Hindutva. Savarkar articulated the spirit of the popular slogan ‘Hindi Hindu Hindustan’.

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## **1.2 Objectives:**

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This unit is an attempt to study the socio- political ideas of V.D Savarkar with special reference to his view on “Hindutva”. After reading this unit you will be able to

- Explain his view on nationalism and religion
- Analyse Savarkar’s interpretation of History
- Understand his idea of cultural nationalism
- Explain his idea on Hindutva

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## **1.3 Early Political life:**

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Born in a traditional Barhmin family in Maharashtra, Savarkar had profound adoration for the cultural and philosophical achievements of Hindus. Savarkar being an ardent nationalist from his childhood, he was anguished at the brutalities of the British rule in India which not only suppressed and exploited the Indians but also devalued the pious

and glorious religious- cultural traditions of the Hindus in the country. Hence Savarkar developed deep nationalistic feeling to fight for the independence of the country and to work for the cause of the Hindus. Savarkar's nationalist activities earned him the ire of British and he was expelled from Ferguson College, Poona. With the recommendation of Lokmanya Tilak, he was offered scholarship to study in London by Shyamji Krishna Verma, the leader of Indian revolutionists in Europe. From 1906 to 1910, he studied in England and also carried on revolutionary activities. In England, Savarkar came into contact with the other revolutionists like Madame Cama, Lala Har Dayal and Madan Lal Dhingra. Savarkar's stay in England and his interactions with the revolutionists apparently helped him in deeper understanding of the history and nationalism. However Savarkar was arrested and sentenced to 50 years of imprisonment at Andamans. After spending rigorous life of more than a decade in Kala Pani, he was brought from Andamans in 1923 and interned in Ratnagiri. He was released from the internment on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1937. During the periods of his solitary confinement he carried out his intellectual explorations.

Savarkar was a rebel and radical nationalist. He did not subscribe to the Gandhian philosophy of non- violence and satyagraha. On the contrary he supported rebellious mode of struggle for India's independence. As he wrote,

“..so long as that divine age has not arrived, so long as the highly auspicious end remains only in the lines of saintly poets and in the prophecies of divinely inspired, and so long as... the human mind has to be busy eradicating sinful and aggressive tendencies, so long rebellion , bloodshed and revenge cannot be purely sinful.”

Hence, instead of joining the Congress party to fight for the independence, Savarkar joined the Tilakite Democratic Swaraj Party based on the ideology of radical swaraj as advocated by Lokmanya Tilak. However he was not contented with this party's activities and

later he joined Hindu Mahasabha. Savarkar became the president of Hindu Mahasabha and retained his position till 1945. During his presidency Hindu Mahasabha gained much popularity on the Hindu society where he extensively emphasised on his ideas on the Hindu Rastra as presented in his publication 'Hindutva'. In his book Hindutva he claims that Hindu thought "has exhausted the very possibilities of human speculation as to the nature of the unknown".

### **Stop to Consider:**

There are five philosophical dimensions of Savarkar. These are:

1. **Utilitarianism:** Savarkar's strategic agnosticism is deeply rooted in his utilitarian outlook. Savarkar was a staunch follower of the Utilitarianism school of England. Since he studied Herbert Spencer, he internalised utilitarianism as his leading ethical principle.
2. **Rationalism and Positivism:** To propagate his social and political philosophy, Savarkar used rationality as his benchmark. That is why he was sceptical of anything that is devoid of logical explanation and observable facts.
3. **Humanism and Universalism:** Savarkar's thinking was based on humanitarian values and a belief structure founded upon a faith in science, equality and liberty and not on charity of religious considerations.
4. **Pragmatism:** Savarkar was pragmatist in his approach. Savarkar identified a deep contradiction between the fatalism found in religious or philosophical doctrines and the need for action or practical advice for the progress of Indian society.
5. **Realism:** Savarkar was a realist. For him human conduct had to adapt to the need and necessity of the time and could not remain same ever. His version of realism is his firm belief in the maxim 'Might is right' as the leading principle in International Politics.

**SAQ:**

Elucidate Savarkar as a revolutionary nationalist. Give reasons in support of your answer (20+60 words)

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**1.4 Savarkar’s Interpretation of Indian History:**

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In Savarkar’s interpretation of Indian history there is an intense and passionate glorification of vedic Hinduism. Savarkar believes that India, which he preferred to call as ‘Hindustan’, belongs to Hindus and her forcible occupation by Non- Hindus was an act of aggression which must be resented and repulsed by all Hindus of the country. His glorification of Hindutva and nationalist interpretation of history could be found in his ‘Hindu Pad Padshahi’, published in 1925 where he glorified the rise of Maratha power in Maharastra. Savarkar also praised the governance of Maratha, as confirming the system of governance as envisaged in the religious scriptures of the Hindus.

There have been six glorious epochs in Indian history.

1. The Maurya Empire founded under the leadership of Chandragupta and Chanakya was the first. Chandragupta was hailed as a “super Alexander” because by his own efforts unaided by any heritage “he founded an Indian empire mightier even than that of Alexander himself”.
2. The second epoch was the one manifested in the triumphs of Pushyamitra, the destroyer of the Greek power in India.
3. Vikramaditya , the annihilator of the might of the Sakas manifested the political and cultural resplendence of the third glorious epoch.

4. Yashodharma of Malwa, defeated the Huns at Mandasore and captured the powerful and cruel Hun leader Mihiragula. His regime constitutes the fourth glorious epoch of Indian history.
5. The fifth glorious epoch was the foundation of Maratha power as a powerful counter blast to the might of Islamic forces in India. Aggression against the enemy and not merely defence was the policy of the Maratha leaders.
6. The sixth glorious epoch is the period of successful repulsion of the British power in India and liberation of the country from the shackles of an alien imperialism.

Savarkar was one of the earliest exponents of the view that the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was the first war of Indian independence. According to him the revolt of 1857 was inspired by the noble ideas of “Swadharma and Swaraj”.

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## **1.5 Cultural Nationalism:**

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Savarkar was a man of action, a nationalist who devoted all his energies to the realization of Hindu nationalism, whose fundamental dimensions were unity of the people, their modernization and their militarization. He was a supporter of cultural Nationalism who believes in identity formation as the essence of nationalism and India had received such identity from the Hindu religion. This identity was evolved over a long period of time. Savarkar was of the opinion that despite having outward differences, the Hindus were internally bound together by cultural, religious, social, linguistic and historical affinities. It shaped the Hindus into a homogenous and organic nation. According to Savarkar it was cultural, racial and religious unity that plays an important role in the formation of a nation. While defining nation, Savarkar wrote that nation meant a political community which had occupied a contiguous and adequate territory and developed independent national identity. This community was internally

organised and was bound together by cultural and racial affinities. Hindus had developed close affinities with the land bound by Himalayas to the Indian Ocean and the Indus River. Hindus considered India as their fatherland and holy land. On the basis of this definition he held that the Hindus had become a nation because they possessed all the characteristics of becoming a nation. It is to be mentioned that Savarkar excluded those people who do not consider India as their holy land because their sacred religious places were not situated in India. He excluded Muslims and Christians from the Indian nation because they did not consider India as their holy land because their sacred religious places were situated outside India. Savarkar believes that Hindu nationalism stood for the unity of the Hindus and to strengthen the nationalism the common affinities of being a Hindu should be used. Based on the common affinities of history, culture, geography, the Hindu society should be united.

Savarkar was a rebel. Apart from Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar was on the only all India leader who launched an intense propaganda for the militarization of the Hindus and for the industrialization of the country with pure patriotic and political objects during the Second World War. For Savarkar, the independence of India was ‘the independence of our people, our race, and our nation’. Thus, Indian Swarajya, as far as the Hindu nation is concerned, involves the political independence of Hindu nation.

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## **1.6 Savarkar’s view on Hindutva:**

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During his imprisonment, Savarkar extensively dedicated his intellectual exploration towards Hindu cultural and political nationalism, and the later phase of his life remained dedicated to this cause. Savarkar in his treatise “Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?” promotes a farsighted new vision of Hindu social and political consciousness. Savarkar began describing a Hindu as a patriotic inhabitant of



Bharatvarsha, venturing beyond a religious identity. He proclaimed that a Hindu could be any one who considered this land of Bharatvarsha, from Indus to the Seas, as his fatherland as well as his holy land that would be the cradle land of his religion. Further he envisaged three fundamental bonds that would conjoin the Hindus as a common entity, namely, rashtra (territory), jati (race) and samskriti (culture). The territorial bond or rastra is a primary requirement. A Hindu is one who feels attachment to the geographical region extending from the Sindhu River to the Brahmaputra and from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin. Secondly, he talks about the racial or blood bond or the Jati. A Hindu is one who inherits the blood of the race “whose first and discernible source could be traced to the Himalayan altitudes of the Vedic Saptasindhu. In his Hindutva Savarkar writes:

“No people in the world can more justly claim to get recognized as a racial unit than the Hindus and perhaps the Jews. A Hindu marrying a Moslem may lose his caste but not his Hindutva. A Hindu believing in any theoretical or philosophical or social system, orthodox or heterodox, provided it is unquestionably indigenous and founded by a Hindu, may lose his sect but not his Hindutva- his Hinduness- because the most important essential which determines it is the inheritance of the Hindu blood. Therefore, all those who love the land that stretches from Sindhu to Sindhu, from Indus to Seas, as their fatherland and consequently claim to inherit the blood of the race that has evolved, by incorporation and adaptation, from the ancient Saptasindhu, can be said to possess two of the most essential requisites of Hindutva”.

Thirdly, savarkar talked about Samskriti as criterion of being a Hindu. A Hindu is one who feels pride in the Hindu culture and civilization. The Hindu culture and civilization is represented in common historical memories of achievement and failure, in common artistic, literary and juristic creations and in common rituals or festivals or other media of collective expression. Thus, Muslims and Christians who have been

converts from Hinduism cannot claim to be Hindus because they do not subscribe to Hindu culture.

He also emphasised the need for patriotic and social unity of all Hindu communities and considered Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and Buddhism as one and the same. Savarkar favoured intermarriages between all sections of Hindus. He outlined his vision of a Hindu Rashtra as “Akhand Bharat” (United India), supposedly stretching across the entire Indian subcontinent. According to Savarkar the concept of Hindutva is much broader and more comprehensive than Hinduism. Hinduism has a theological connotation but Hindutva goes beyond religious connotation and rituals of Hindus. Hindutva covers social, moral, political and economic aspects as well. Hindutva connotes an organic socio- political body bind together by three bonds of Rastra, Jati and Samskriti with the essential elements of Nationalism.

Savarkar accepted the cultural and organic solidarity of the Hindu nation and believed in the cultural superiority of Hinduism. He said:

“Let Hinduism concern itself with the salvation of life after death, the concept of God, and the universe....But so far as the materialistic secular aspect is concerned, the Hindus are a nation bound by a common culture, a common history, a common language, a common country and a common religion.”

Savarkar also talked about Hindu Rashtra. To Savarkar, the cultural, racial and religious unity of the people is the fundamental criteria for formation of a Hindu Rashtra. As the Hindus consisted of all these characteristics, they undoubtedly constituted a nation in the nature of a Hindu Rashtra. According to Savarkar in such a Hindu Rashtra the minorities will be given some degree of freedom and right to participation in the affairs of the state provided they accept a position of non- aggression to the interests and rights of Hindus. As he stated:

“...we shall ever guarantee protection to the religion, culture and language of the minorities for themselves, but we shall no longer tolerate any aggression on their part on the equal liberty of the Hindus to guard their religion, culture and language as well. If non- Hindu minorities are to be protected, they surely the Hindu majority also must be protected against any aggressive minority in India.”

Savarkar, thus, opposed the demand of Muslims for the grant of separate electorate in India. He did not believe in the policy of appeasement. He had full confidence that Swaraj could be achieved without the collaboration of the Muslims.

**Check Your Progress:**

- 1 Discuss the main features of Hindu nationalism of V.D Savarkar.
- 2 Analyse Savarkar’s interpretation of History.
- 3 Analyse Savarkar’s view on Cultural nationalism.
- 4 Elucidate Savarkar’s view on Hindutva.

**SAQ:**

What was the concept of independence of India for Savarkar?  
Elucidate the role of Savarkar in the freedom struggle of India. (20+80 words)

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**1.7 Summing Up:**

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Savarkar was a staunch Hindu solidarist, who interpreted a broader idea of Hinduism in the form of Hindutva or Hindu solidarity. He had an open and rebellious mind who believed that Hindutva is far more

than organic socio- political unity. It is a programme of action. The distinction made by Savarkar between Hinduism and Hindutva brought a new perception in Indian political thought. Savarkar comprehends the essential elements of political, social, educational, economic and cultural connotation with the idea of Hindutva while Hinduism is by and large a theological idea. However the life of Savarkar had been controversial one and has drawn criticism also. His approach to politics- protection of Hindu interest has been criticised as one dimensional. He has been alleged of providing the intellectual input for the present day right wing extremism in the country. Despite of the controversy the fact cannot be denied that his intellectual explorations have provided a new impetus to the political thought in India. His interpretation of the revolt of 1857 as India's first war of independence shows the depth of his vision and intellectual capability. Savarkar was a great rationalist who although a staunch Hindu nationalist have the guts to openly confront the illogical and irrational practices and customs within Hinduism. For instance, Savarkar found the cast system as oppressive and inhuman and supported intermarriages between all sections of Hindus. To conclude, Savarkar's proficiency as an erudite theorist could be found from the distinction made by him between Hinduism and Hindutva which has remained a hallmark of Indian civilization.

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## **1.8 References and suggested readings:**

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## UNIT 4

### Mohammad Ali Jinnah

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- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Early Political Career of Jinnah
- 1.4 Jinnah's Fourteen Points
- 1.5 Two Nation Theory
- 1.6 Summing up
- 1.7 References and Suggested Readings

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#### 1.1 Introduction:

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Mohammad Ali Jinnah once said “I am a nationalist first, a nationalist second, a nationalist last”. As a Governor General of Pakistan Jinnah said “I still consider myself to be an Indian”. From being an Indian nationalist to the architect of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah is one of the most controversial figures in modern Indian history. During initial part of his life Jinnah was a staunch secularist, advocating Hindu-Muslim unity who vehemently opposed the oppressive and divisive policies of the British Government. But it was also Jinnah who after 1937 propounded the Two Nation Theory who held that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations and they cannot live together leading to the formation of Pakistan. Jinnah's journey from a messiah of Hindu- Muslim unity to the architect of a separate nation based on religion calls for analyses of his political ideas and his place in Indian history. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the architect of the state of Pakistan was born in Karachi on 25 December 1876 to Mithibai and Jinnabhai Poonja. He was an erudite lawyer and acquired the fame as a great statesman. Jinnah was one of the many luminaries of Indian Freedom Struggle and he was critical of Gandhi's leadership in the national freedom movement. His ideologies had an overwhelming influence on some section of his respective communities which later played a vital

role in formation of the state of Pakistan. Jinnah served as the leader of the All India Muslim League from 1913 until the inception of Pakistan on 14 August 1947, and then as the first Governor General of the Dominion of Pakistan. He is known in Pakistan as ‘Quaid-i-Azam’ (Great Leader) and ‘Baba-i-Qaum’ (Father of the Nation). This unit attempts to make the learner understand the political ideologies of Jinnah and his ‘Two Nation Theory’.

**Stop To Consider:**

**Life Sketch of Mohammad Ali Jinnah**

Mohammad Ali Jinnah was born at Wazir Mansion near Karachi to Jinnabhai Poonja and Mithibai, a wealthy merchant family. Jinnah’s family was from Gujarati Khoja Shi’a Muslim background, though Jinnah later followed the Twelver Shia’s teachings. Jinnah’s parents were native Gujarati speakers. But interestingly Jinnah was more fluent in English rather than in Gujarati and Urdu. In Karachi, Jinnah attended the Christian Missionary Society High School and the Sindh-Madrassa- Tul- Islam. He was matriculated from Bombay University. From his childhood, Jinnah was a person of etiquette and mannerism. When he was young, Jinnah used to discourage other children from playing in the dust, urging them to keep themselves clean and tidy and play cricket instead of marbles. Jinnah was impeccable when it comes to his dressing. After his higher education in England, Jinnah joined The Honourable Society of Lincoln’s Inn as an aspiring barrister. During his stay in England Jinnah was influenced by 19<sup>th</sup> Century British liberals like Bentham, Mill, Spencer and Comte. Jinnah was a proficient lawyer. He gained fame for handling the 1908 “Caucus Case” at the behest of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. Jinnah was a member in the moderate group in the Congress advocating Hindu- Muslim unity. He was inspired by the leaders like Dadabhai Naoriji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

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## 1.2 Objectives:

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This unit is an attempt to study the political ideas of Mohammad Ali Jinnah with special reference to the ‘Two-Nation Theory’. After reading this unit you will be able to

- Explain his views on nationalism and religion
- Analyse Jinnah’s transformation from a secular nationalist to architect of Pakistan
- Understand Jinnah’s 14 points
- Explain Jinnah’s ‘Two- Nation Theory’

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## 1.3 Early Political Career:

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Jinnah was a nationalist in the early days. Jinnah’s nationalism and secularism was influenced by the liberal and secular ideas of John Morley. John Stuart Mill’s greatest disciple, John Morley remained Jinnah idol. Jinnah was also influenced by western liberal thinkers like Burke and Mill. Moreover, Jinnah’s early thoughts were greatly inspired by personalities like Dadabhai Naoriji, Pherozeshah Mehta and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

In 1906, he worked as private secretary to Dadabhai Naoriji presiding over Congress session. He helped draft the presidential address that talked of ‘Swaraj’ for the first time. As a liberal nationalist Jinnah was a fierce critic of the British rule in India. He strongly defended individual rights and liberties. He advocated nation’s right to self determination. Commenting on discriminatory and racist attitude of the British, Jinnah told his sister: “If Dadabhai (Dadabhai Nauroji) was black, I was darker, and if this was the mentality of British politicians, then we would never get a fair deal from them. From that day I have been an uncompromising enemy of all forms of colour bar and racial prejudice”.

In 1904, Jinnah attended the Congress session in Bombay, where he met Gopal Krishna Gokhale for the first time. Jinnah considered Gokhale as his mentor and had the greatest respect and admiration for Gokhale. Gokhale had high hopes from Jinnah as an ambassador of



Hindu-Muslim unity. He had won great applause when he defended and saved Lokamanya Tilak in the second sedition case of 1916. He also defended Tilak in the early stage of the sedition case of 1908. Jinnah argued that it was not sedition for an Indian to demand freedom and self-government in his own country. In April, 1912, Jinnah supported the Elementary Education Bill initiated by Gokhale.

The Indian Council Act 1909 or Morley- Minto Reforms created a separate electorate for Muslims and under a system of weightage, enabled the Muslims to obtain more seats in the various councils than their population in the country. First Jinnah had been opposed to communal electorates and at the 1910 Allahabad Congress, he condemned its extension to the local bodies. But in 1917 he declared that separate electorate was a matter of interest to the Muslims who by this method alone could be roused from their mental lethargy.

In 1906, the All India Muslim League started and its first session met at Dacca in December 1906 under the presidency of Aga Khan. On March 22, 1913, at Lucknow session the All India Muslim League adopted a new constitution and invited Jinnah to join the league. In 1913, Jinnah joined the Muslim League while continuing to be in the Congress. He however made it clear that his loyalty to Muslim cause would in no way be an obstacle to the interest of the nation. Jinnah was such a figure of Hindu-Muslim unity that Sarojini Naidu wrote her book on Jinnah, 'Mohammad Ali Jinnah: An Ambassador of Unity' where she emphasised that Jinnah's ambition was to follow in the footsteps of Gokhale.

Gokhale's demise in early 1915 followed by that of Pherozeshah Mehta left Jinnah as the Spokesman for moderate camp. When the Home Rule League of Tilak and Besant was founded in April and September 1916, Jinnah did not join them. But after internment of Besant, Jinnah joined the Bombay Home Rule League. A Congress liberal, Mazhar-ul-Haq, was presiding over the Muslim League. Jinnah took the responsibility of getting all these groups together to obtain consensus on the agreements that he had drawn. The object was "national unity which has brought Hindus and Muslims together,

involving brotherly service for the common course". The Muslim League and the All India Congress Committee resolved to make a joint demand for Representative Government in India. In October 1916, Jinnah presided over the sixteenth Bombay Provincial Conference at Ahmedabad where he pleaded for firm unity between the Hindus and the Muslims. He also presided at the Lucknow session of the All India Muslim League in December 1916, and pleaded for Hindu Muslim unity. Jinnah had been the signatory to the memorandum of the nineteen and at Lucknow he supported the Congress-League scheme. Jinnah supported the necessity of communal electorates for raising the consciousness of the Muslims. In the session of the League and the Congress the Lucknow pact was agreed upon whereby separate electorates were recognised, and in Muslim minority provinces, the Muslims were guaranteed a proportion of seats in the provincial legislative council larger than what their numbers entitled them to.

However, the beginning of Non-Cooperation movement made Jinnah felt that he did not belong to Congress. Gandhi after returning to India from South Africa had become a widely respected leader and influential personality in the Congress. Gandhi's 'Satyagraha' against British gained broad support from not only Hindu community but also attracted many muslims of the Khalifat faction. Jinnah criticised Gandhi's Khalifat advocacy, which he saw as an endorsement of religious zealotry. Jinnah could not accept Gandhi's new approach and opposed the main resolution on Non-Cooperation at the Nagpur Congress in 1920. Jinnah had been a believer in constitutional methods of action and hence he could not support the radical policy of Congress which took to non-violent direct action under Gandhi's leadership. In 1920, at the special Calcutta session and then at Nagpur, Gandhi took control of the Congress Party and restructured it. Jinnah felt humiliated and left the Congress party. In a speech at Poona delivered on February 19, 1921, Jinnah said that in place of Gandhian programme of Non-Cooperation, Khadi etc., he wanted a 'political' programme.

Jinnah was opposed to the Nehru Report of 1928. In opposition to the Nehru Report, Jinnah put forward his 'Fourteen Points'. He was

alarmed by the Congress policy of Muslim mass contact formulated after 1937 election. In 1939 he put forward the claim of Muslim league for fifty-fifty share of political power between 'Muslim India' and 'Non-Muslim' India. On 22 December 1939, the All India Muslim League led by Jinnah observed the 'Day of Deliverance' as a mark of relief that the Congress regime has at last ceased to function after the Congress ministries had resigned in seven provinces. Jinnah believed that democracy would mean Hindu Raj over unwilling Muslims, Untouchables, Jews, Parsees and Christians. Hence, Jinnah raised the slogan of 'Congress tyranny' and 'Hindu domination'. He claimed the All India Muslim League to be the sole representative of the Muslims of India.

In the March 1940, at the Lahore session of the Muslim League, Jinnah formulated his doctrine of 'Two Nations'.

**SAQ:**

Elucidate Jinnah as Secular and Nationalist in the early phase of his life. Give reasons in support of your answer (20+60 words)

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**1.4 Jinnah's Fourteen Points:**

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Mohammad Ali Jinnah submitted a proposition of 14 points as a constitutional reform plan to protect the political rights of Muslims in Independent India. Jinnah's 14 points covered the interest of the Muslims and it paved the way for Jinnah parting away from the Congress. After Jinnah's return from England in 1929, the Muslim League organized a session under his presidential leadership where he addressed 14 points as a constitutional reform plan of Muslims. These points came to be known as Jinnah's 14 points. These points are:

1. The form of the past constitution should be federal with the residuary powers vested in the provinces.

2. All cabinets at central or local level should have at least 1/3 Muslim representation.
3. All legislatures in the country and other elected bodies shall be constituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority in any province to a minority or even equality.
4. In the Central Legislature, Muslim representation shall not be less than one third.
5. Representation of communal groups shall continue to be by means of separate electorate as at present, provided it shall be open to any community at any time to abandon its separate electorate in favour of a joint electorate.
6. Any territorial distribution that might at any time be necessary shall not in any way affect the Muslim majority.
7. Full religious freedom, i.e., freedom of belief, worship and observance, propaganda, association, and education shall be guaranteed to all communities.
8. No bill or resolution or any part, thereof, shall be passed in any legislature or any other elected body if three fourths of the members of any community or in the alternative, such other method is devised as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases.
9. Sindh should be separated from the Bombay Presidency.
10. Reforms should be introduced in the North West Frontier Province and Balochistan on equal footing as in the other provinces.
11. Provisions should be made in the constitution giving Muslims an adequate share along with the other Indians in all the services of the state and in local self governing bodies, having due regard to the requirement of efficiency.
12. The Constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim culture and for the protection and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion, personal laws and Muslim charitable institution and for their due share

in the grants-in-aid, given by the state and by local self-governing bodies.

13. No cabinet, either central or provincial, should be formed without there being a proportion of at least one- third Muslim ministers.

14. No change shall be made in the constitution by the Central Legislature except with the concurrence of the state's contribution of the Indian Federation.

Jinnah's fourteen points faced fierce condemnation from the Congress. Hindus unanimously disregarded Jinnah's suggestion while the Congress party straight away rejected the demands made in it. Jawaharlal Nehru referred Jinnah's points as 'Jinnah's ridiculous 14 points'. However, Jinnah's 14 points played a major role in the emergence of Pakistan.

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## **1.5 The 'Two Nation Theory':**

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Jinnah started off as a staunch secularist advocating Hindu- Muslim unity, however towards later part Jinnah turned into foe of Hindu social system and the Congress. He propounded the two-nation theory, which held that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations who could not live together. His journey from the messenger of Hindu-Muslim unity to the propounder of two- nation theory made him one of the most controversial figures in modern Indian history. However the germination of Two Nation Theory could be found much before Jinnah. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the evolution of this theory. Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan, a Muslim modernist and reformer started the movement of self- awakening and identity of the Muslims. He established the Aligarh Muslim University and the university was one of the centres where the idea of Pakistan evolved. Moreover, the poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal's presidential address to Muslim League on December 29, 1930 at Allahabad is considered as the first

articulation of Two Nation Theory. In a vague manner Muhammad Iqbal stated:

“I would like to see the Punjab, The North- West Frontier Province, Sindh and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state, self government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North- Western Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny, at least of North- West India”.

A clear shape to an idea of Pakistan was given by Rahmat Ali, who coined the word Pakistan. Jinnah translated the two- nation theory into political reality of a nation state. Jinnah believed that Muslims of the subcontinent were separate and distinct nations from Hindus and wanted a constitutional arrangement based on equal share of power between the Congress and the Muslim League, while Congress, representing the Hindus and the Muslim League representing the Muslims. The Congress insisted on the unity of the nation and refuses to share power at British India’s unitary centre. Jinnah opposed the Congress stand and paved the way for two nation theory and subsequently partition of India. At annual session of the League at Patna, Jinnah opposed the Congress intransigencies and considered it, ‘a misfortune of our country, indeed it is a tragedy, that the High Command of the Congress is determined, absolutely determined, to crush all other communities and culture in this country, and to establish Hindu Raj’. He further stated, ‘I say that Muslims and the Muslim League have only one ally, and that ally is the Muslim nation’. Jinnah believed that the democratic system based on the concept of a homogenous nation such as England is definitely not applicable to heterogeneous countries such as India. In 1944, in course of Gandhi-Jinnah talks, Jinnah vigorously stuck to the view that Muslims are a nation. Jinnah argued that the Muslims of the subcontinent were separate and a distinct nation from the Hindus. He wanted a constitutional arrangement based on equitable sharing of power between the Congress and the Muslim League, representing Hindus and Muslim respectively. While the Congress insisted on the unity of the nation and refused to share power at British India’s unitary centre.

It paved the way for articulation of two-nation theory by Jinnah. In his article in *Time and Tide* in January 1940, Jinnah argued that the Muslim League was opposed to the domination of Hindu Majority over Muslim and other minorities. He opposed any federal arrangement which may result in domination of the majority community over the minority community under the disguise of parliamentary democracy. He showed an uncompromising stand and insisted that partition was the only practical solution to the Hindu-Muslim difference.

In 1940 Jinnah presided over the second session of the Lahore Muslim League and was instrumental in passing the famous resolution which called for a separate Muslim homeland. In his address Jinnah showed disagreement with Gandhi on the question of the possibility for securing the rights of minorities in Independent India. According to Jinnah the Congress was dominated by the Hindus and was incapable of responding to Muslim concerns. Hence, the Muslim League is the sole organization to look after the Muslims in colonial India. Jinnah feared that the Constituent Assembly would be dominated by Hindus and there would be no space for Muslims to express their social, political, economic issues and grievances. Besides, Muslims would constitute a minority in India and this would lead to a situation where they will not get equal voice and their rights would be restrained. Jinnah stated that Hindus and Muslims belonged to two different religious philosophies, different customs and traditions and no inter-marriage. Hence, he considered religion as the basis of nation and he envisaged Pakistan as a secular sovereign state where all religion would be treated equally. Jinnah also believed that there are familiar principles between Islam and democracy. He argued that democracy is in consonance with Islamic principles. Although he did not advocate an orthodox Islamic state but he believed that Islam would provide an ethical value to the modern democratic structure of the state.

**Check Your Progress:**

1. Comment on Jinnah’s 14 Points as constitutional reform plan of the Muslims.
2. Why Jinnah is considered as architect of Pakistan?
3. Explain Jinnah’s view on Muslim as a Nation.
4. Critically analyse Jinnah’s Two- Nation Theory.

**SAQ:**

Why Jinnah left Congress? Elucidate role of Jinnah in partition of India. Give reasons in support of your answer. (20+80 words)

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**1.6 Summing up:**

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Jinnah’s journey and transformation from “the best ambassador of Hindu- Muslim unity” to that of an advocate for separate homeland for Muslims is the result of the contradictions and perplexity of Indian nationalism. Jinnah grew suspicious of the Hindu social system and the Congress that the majority Hindus would subdue the religious minority Muslims. Jinnah represented the aspirations and interest of the Muslim elites. His main concern was to protect the interests of the upper middle classes and capitalist classes of Muslim community. Jinnah’s conceptualization of nationalism and democracy was based on the ideology of the bourgeoisie. Moreover Jinnah’s two- nation theory also suffers from theoretical fallacy. After partition the country was torn apart triggering riots, mass casualties and displacement in the name of religion. While majority of Muslims decided to stay with India, the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 further falsified the two- nation theory.



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## **1.7 References and suggested readings:**

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## UNIT 5

### RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM

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1.1.Introduction

1.2.Objectives

1.3.Religious nationalism

1.4.Summing up

1.5.Suggested readings

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#### 1.1 Introduction

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When nationalism is related to a particular religious belief, dogma or affiliation, it is called religious nationalism. There are two aspects of this relationship. One is politicization of religion and the other is influence of religion on politics. The first aspect implies a shared religion contributing towards the sense of national unity creating a common bond among the citizens of the nation. Again, another aspect is support of a national identity similar to shared ethnicity, language or culture. There is an ideological influence of religion on politics. The political activism and actions are influenced by current interpretation of religious ideas. Religious nationalism may be articulated as binary of secular nationalism. The newly independent nations are more prone to religious nationalism and they interpret religious nationalism in terms of identity. When a state derives political legitimacy from religious doctrines, it becomes dangerous. It may lead to domination of religious elements, institutions and leaders in the state.

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#### 1.2 Objectives

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After reading this unit you will be able to

- Understand the concept of religious nationalism
- Analyse the various instances of religious nationalism

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### 1.3 Religious nationalism

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In modern times religion is nationalised. Religion is a part of national identity. The histories of religious conflict are tailored to fit the national unity. Modern period witnesses nationalised religion, secular nationalism as well as explicitly religious nationalism. In modern times there are differences between states in terms of their relative secularity in fields of law and governance. Likewise there are also differences between societies in terms of their relative secularity in fields of religious organization and religious practices. Moreover the process of globalisation is intimately connected with nationalism and religion. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the modern forms of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Taoism and their relations with national identity are all produced.

One of the salient aspect of nationalism is religious nationalism. Religious nationalism implies the fusion of religious and national identities and goals. Religious and national identities coexist and reinforce each other. Religious nationalism reinforces popular religiosity and attitudes. It also empowers religious organisations in influencing policy across a wide range of domains. In modern times, religious nationalism also shapes the patterns of inter state and intra state violence.

Religious nationalism is both neglected and powerful. The literature on nationalism neglects it by dismissing it as an exception. Despite this, religious nationalism is very powerful. it has shaped the very definition of legitimate citizenship, delineating the nation and privileging some political actors and visions in making public policy, obtaining electoral support, and building states. This analysis is mostly based on Christian nationalism.

Religious nationalism is defined as “fusion of nationalism and religion such that they are inseparable” (Rieffer, 2003, p. 225). Religious nationalism depends on religious identities and myths to define the

nation and its goals. According to Ernest Gellner, nationalism is the “principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent” (Gellner, 1983, p. 1).

Let us first discuss the role played by religion in the origin of nationalism. It has been said that the development of nationalism is the outcome of territorialisation and pluralisation of religion following the reformation. And the essence of modern national state i.e. the attribute of sovereignty has been transferred from the god to the absolute monarch. The French revolution which resulted in emergence of nationalism has transferred this attribute of sovereignty from absolute monarch to the people.

"This process of differentiation – and in particular the emergence of understandings of economy, society and polity as autonomous realms – was arguably a precondition for the emergence and widespread naturalisation of the social ontology, social imaginary and ascending understanding of political legitimacy that are characteristic of modern nationalism.

Roger Friedland, opines that all religious movements active in the public sphere, such as Evangelical Christianity or political Islam, constitute forms of religious nationalism. Brubaker on the other hand stated that religious nationalism requires a demonstration that there is a distinctively religious type of nationalist programme.

The various religious nationalism program like Hindu nationalism in India, religious Zionism in Israel, Christian nationalism in us etc. show more inclination towards military rather than secular nationalism.

The religious nationalist find secular state artificial. The important question is finding the potentiality of religious nationalism in developed countries. In the medieval period, the churches worked like religious clubs. It worked as the voluntary associations for the spiritual edification of individuals in their leisure time, rarely cognisant of the social and political world around them. The American Revolution is also religious in nature. The advocates of this revolution, were mostly influenced by eighteenth-century deism, a religion of science and natural law that was ‘devoted to exposing [Church] religion to the light

of knowledge. As in France, American nationalism developed its own religious characteristics, blending the ideals of secular nationalism and the symbols of Christianity into what has been called ‘civil religion’.

Religion like a glue holds together broad communities. The members share same interests. Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have provided religious alternatives to secular ideology as the basis of nationalism. So also has Hinduism, Sikhism, and, perhaps most surprisingly, Buddhism. In Thailand, for example, the king must be a monk before assuming political power.

In Burma as well which was renamed as Myanmar, many of the demonstrations were led by Buddhist monks. If we take example of India, India is a secular nation and after independence there generations of prime ministers tried to maintain religious neutrality in India. Still they were bound to announce privileges on the basis of religion.

Most people believe that secular is modern and religious is pre modern concept. It is also believed that religion is associated with private sphere and they should be separated from public sphere of state and government. The issue is that religion is viewed as something negative in character and hence the positive contribution religion can make to politics have been overlooked.

One clear example of religious nationalism can be cited as Islamic militant group hamas’s aim to establish an islamist Palestinian nation state. This group aimed at islamisation of Palestine state. Liberation of Palestine has been taken as a religious duty by the hamas.

in the 2018 Costa Rican presidential runoff election, voters for evangelical populist candidate Fabricio Alvarado reportedly rallied behind the mantra that “if a man of God can’t govern us, then nobody can.”

Religious nationalism differs from nation to nation. Yet they share some common attributes. These are as follows: First, most religious nationalist parties possess a puritanical line that colors their electoral platforms—and subsequent methods of governance—with a moral cadence. Secondly, in many countries, religious nationalists use moral

appeals and rhetoric to support anticorruption measures. Thirdly, religious nationalism does not accept majoritarian nationalism.

If we can Indian case, the kings ran the country but they mostly relied on the Brahmins. When India got independence, the new constitution maintained a distance between state and religion though it was not as strict as state church separation in the west.

### **Stop to consider**

#### **SECULAR NATIONALISM**

Secular nationalism is a feeling of nationalism which surpasses religious borders. In the western model, secular nationalism implies non interference by the state. In India, secular nationalism gives equal respect to all religions. In a state following secular nationalism, nationalism is promoted without interfering with religion or invoking religion. In a state adopting the ideology of secular nationalism, nation transcends parochial considerations of religion, language subculture etc. and provides space for all kinds of diversity. For example, India as a nation post its independence largely was glued by common values enshrined in its constitution based on India's struggle for independence. But in the global scenario, there have been various threats to secular nationalism. These can be listed as follows :

- a. Various NGO s promoting well being of special class
- b. There are various organisations which are depicting history in a distorted manner to promote the interest of particular religious group
- c. Extremism which has led to mutual untrust among various religious and ethnic groups.
- d. Desperation to establish the past glory has also threatened the notion of secular nationalism.

There are various different religious nationalism in the world. These are

- Buddhist nationalism

Buddhist nationalism can be found in srilanka, myaanmaar, Cambodia and Thailand. In srilanka, the political ideology is a intermixing of Sinhalese culture and ethnicity and Theravada Buddhism. In Myanmar also, the patriotic assoxciation of Myanmar, organised and protected burman people and their Buddhist religion.

- Christian nationalism

The Christian nationalist focuses mostly on internal politics. They pass laws that reflect their views of Christianity. Christian nationalism is conservative in united states. The Christian nationalists promote religious discourses various fields of social life, from politics and history, to culture and science; with respect to legislation. We can cite the example of Sunday blue laws. In the middle ages, the countries within christiendom were united to establish a pan Christian state. During this era, Christian nationalism played a strong role and wanted to recover the lands where Christianity flourished. Certain parts of north Africa, east Asia, southern Europe, central Asia and middle east lost Christian control after the rise of islam. In Poland, nationalism is often identical with loyalty to roman catholic church. In Poland, groups like national revival of Poland use slogans like WielkaPolskaKatolicka (Great Catholic Poland).

- Hindu nationalism

India is country with linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity. Indians identify themselves with civic, cultural or third world nationalism. In the modern period, the bhartiya Janata party and rashtriyaswayamsevaksangh are endorsing a contemporary form of hindu nationalism or Hindutva. Vinayakdamodarsavarkar, a hindu nationalist popularised the term Hindutva in the year 1923. This term is championed by rashtriyaswayamsevamsangh, bharatiyajanta party, vishvahinduparishad etc. Hindu nationalism is based on native spiritual and cultural tradition of Indian subcontinent.

- Islamic nationalism

Being Islamic nationalism, Pakistani nationalism is religious in nature. Pakistani nationalist narrative is based on religion. The national consciousness is moulded by the religious and ethnic influences. . Pakistan has been called a "global center for political Islam"

- Jewish nationalism

Zionism and orthodox Judaism is together called religious Zionism. Initially they wanted to rebuild a Jewish state in the land of Israel. But the religious Zionist movement integrated with Israeli nationalism and it got evolved into neo Zionism. The ideology of neo Zionism revolves around three pillars :Land of Israel, the People of Israel, and the Torah of Israel.

- Shinto

The state Shinto was used to abolish imperial Japanese practices. This practice relied on Shinto to support nationalistic ideology. The post war constitution of Japan refused to ban Shinto. The constitution was able to preserve full freedom of religion.

- Sikh

The Sikh separatist movement which is also known as Khalistan movement wanted to create a homeland for Sikhs by establishing a sovereign state in Punjab. The state Khalistan would consist of lands from both parts of India and Pakistan.

- Other religious movements and nationalism

In the Korean peninsula the Donghak movement and its leader, Choe Je-u, were inspired by Korean Catholic missionaries. However, they condemned the 'Western learning' preached by missionaries and contrasted it with the indigenous 'Eastern learning'. They started a rebellion in 1894 in Jeolla province in southwestern Korea. The rebellion was eventually crushed by Chinese and Japanese troops, resulting in 300,000 fatalities. It is comparable to the millenarian Taiping revolution led by Hong Xiuquan, who was also inspired by Catholic missionaries. The Donghak movement served as a template for the later Daejonggyo and Jeungsan-gyo movements, as well as for other religious nationalist movements. The Buddhist-influenced



Daejonggyomovement financed guerillas in Manchuria during Japanese colonial rule of both Korea and Manchuria. The North Korean state ideology, Juche, is sometimes classified as a religion in the United States Department of State's human rights reports.

**SAQ**

Explain secular nationalism in the context of Indian nation.

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**Check your progress**

1. “Nationalism is the principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent.” who said this?
2. Discuss the role played by religion in the origin of nationalism.
3. Religious nationalism implies the fusion of religious and \_\_\_\_\_ identities and goals. (fill in the blank)
4. Roger Friedland opines that all religious movements active in the public sphere like Evangelical Christianity or Political Islam, constitute forms of religious nationalism.
5. What are the common attributes of religious nationalism?
6. Write a note on Christian nationalism.
7. Explain hindu nationalism.
8. What is Islamic nationalism?

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**1.4 Conclusion**

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After reading this unit now you have understood the concept of religious nationalism. You have learnt that when a nationalism is related to a particular religious belief, dogma or affiliation, it is called

religious nationalism. In the contemporary scenario, political actions are influenced by current interpretation of religious ideas. Again, you must remember here that newly independent nations are more prone to religious nationalism. You have also learnt about various religious nationalisms like hindu nationalism, islamic nationalism, Buddhist nationalism etc.

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## 1.5 Suggested readings

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<https://www.insightsonindia.com/2018/01/15/1-secular-nationalism-threat-lately-threat-secular-nationalism-global-phenomenon-unique-india-examine/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious\\_nationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_nationalism)

<https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-813>

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/3911/blog/vistas/7354352/nationalism-and-religion>

**BLOCK IV:**  
**MARXIST AND SOCIALIST DISCOURSE**

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## UNIT 1

### Marxist and Socialist Tradition in india:

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- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Background of Marxist and Socialist Tradition
- 1.4 Marxist thought in India
- 1.5 Features of Marxist Thought in India
- 1.6 Summing Up
- 1.7 Reference and Suggested Readings

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### 1.1 Introduction

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Marxism is one of the important ideologies of the world in the political and economic areas. In paper I, we have already studied Marxist Ideas and its importance. Marxian philosophy and political theory has influenced the entire world. Lenin adapted Marxist ideas to the conditions of Russia and established a socialist State in Russia. Maoze Dong following the ideas of Marxism and Leninism established Communist state in China. In India too, there were a number of thinkers who believed in Marxian philosophy. During the freedom movement of India, a section of leaders were deeply influenced by Marxian and Socialistic principles. In this unit we shall try to deal with the emergence of Marxist and socialist thought in India.

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### 1.2 Objectives:

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Marxism and Socialistic philosophy has influenced Indian intellectuals in the British period and also acted as a guiding principle in the freedom movement of India. Reading of this unit will help you to

- Discuss the background of Marxist and socialist tradition
- Analyse Marxist thought in India
- List the features of Marxist thought in India

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### 1.3 Background of Marxist and Socialist Tradition

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Lenin stated in 1908 that the Indian proletariat has already matured to wage a class conscious political mass struggle. Moreover, there was an increase in the number of factories in India. While there were 815 factories in India in 1894, in the time of independence its number went up to 14071. According to R. Palme Dutt, the steady increase in the number of factories as well as the wage labourers provided the base for socialism in India.

Hence we can say that Indian Marxism grew with Indian Nationalism. Some journals advocating Marxian philosophy were published in the year 1921-23. They were----

- Vanguard, edited by M. N. Roy
- The Masses of India and the Socialist edited by S.A. Dange
- Janavani edited by Muzaffur Ahmed.

While analyzing the growth of Marxian thought in India we must remember that it did not develop only because of external factors. It is true that Russian Revolution or Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had been influential in the development of Marxian philosophy in India. But it was not the sole factor. The First World War already damaged the internal economic situation of India which affected the socio-political scenario. It thus, created the ground for the growth of communism in India.

Before the First World War, the industrial sector was dominated by the cotton and Jute industries. During the war period, because of several reasons there was growth of these industries. Indian manufacturers also started taking interest in different industries and they entered in the fields of engineering, iron and steel, paper, cement etc. thus number of registered companies increased from 356 in 1914 to 1039 in 1920-21. As a result, in the post First World War period new industrial groups begun to emerge. Again in the period of 1929-1930, because of great depression, the imperialist economy got a severe blow. It also boosted the capitalist class of India.

With the increase in the number of capitalists as well as the working class, there were greater political mobilizations among them too. To agitate against post war inflation and price rise the working class started strikes in India. Such agitations and strikes were slowed down because of decrease of employment in the mid of 1920s. However, class-consciousness among the working class continued to increase. In such a scenario, All India Trade Union Congress was formed in 1920. Through this organization, workers started to fight economic battles. Besides, the economic struggles, the working class also took part in Political struggles like non-co-operation movement as well as Simon Commission.

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## 1.4 Marxist Political Thought of India:

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The most of the modern thinkers of India were influenced by Liberal political philosophy. During the British period, India had witnessed the rise of intellectual because of their exposure to Western Liberal thinkers like Locke, Mill, Bentham and Spencer. While on the one hand, they developed a rational and secular political outlook based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, on the other hand, they sincerely believed in slow and orderly progress through peaceful constitutional methods. However, at the same time some thinkers developed following Marxist and socialist principles. They emphasized more on actions and political activity than on intellectual activity. Among the Indian Marxist and socialist thinkers we must mention the names of M. N. Roy, Ram Manohar Lohia and Joy Prakash Narayan. In the following units of these Block we shall discuss the ideas of all these thinkers in detail. Now Let us have a look at Marxist Thinkers in India.

**Manavendra Nath Roy (1886-1954):** M. N Roy is a scholarly thinker of modern India. His concept of Radical Humanism or New Humanism which is a great contribution to modern Indian political thought. He was one of the extremists in the freedom struggle of India for quite some time under the influence of communism, but later on he changed his ideology and fought for India's independence even from the platform of Indian National Congress. His notion towards India's problem was quite different and unique from others.

**Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (1910-1967):** Dr. Lohia is a well known political thinker of Modern India and the founder of the Socialist Party of India. He was one of the founders of Congress Socialist Party. In 1936, he was given the responsibility as the secretary of the foreign department of the Congress on the recommendation of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was also the editor of the periodical 'Congress Socialist'. In 1938, he was included in the executive committee of the Congress Socialist Party and he began to develop his own political ideas.

**Jaya Prakash Narayan (1902-1979):** J. P. Narayan was a leading socialist of modern India. He played an important role in the formation of Congress Socialist Party, a left wing group within the Congress party, in 1934. He founded Bihar Congress Socialist Party. Jaya Prakash Narayan was a great socialist as well as a true nationalist. He started his political journey as a Gandhian Non-cooperator and a disciple of Bhagavad Gita. Jaya Prakash wanted to establish both political and economic democracy. In the later period of his life, Jaya Prakash Narayan suggested the idea of Total Revolution, specially during Bihar Movement. He called for mass upsurge against the widespread corruption and centralisation prevailing in Indian democracy

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## 1.5 Features of Marxist Thought in India

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The Marxist and Socialist thinkers of India had given a new dimension to Politico-economic thinking in India. As already mentioned, though influenced by external factors, Indian Marxism grew out internal conditions. Following are the main features of Marxist Socialist tradition of India:

i). Efforts were made to reconcile nationalism with internationalism. The communism urges all workers to unite and thereby talks about proletarian internationalism. Indian Marxism as a product of imperialist or colonial rule however was guided by Nationalistic principles. Therefore, they believed in reconciling nationalism with internationalism.

ii). The Indian Marxist thinkers were conscious about the stages of social development in India. According to them, the Indian capitalist class has also taken the colour of imperialist rulers and therefore they were not in a position to fight against the colonial rule.

iii). After analyzing Indian society, The Indian Marxists have emphasized the need to have an alliance between the working class and peasantry, mainly the landless peasants. It would help in establishing true democracy in India.

iv) The Indian Marxists also believed that as in the West, the Marxian theories of Historical Materialism and Class Struggle could also be applicable to Indian scenario.

v). Equality, Democracy, social Justice, anti-communalism etc are the guiding force for which Indian Marxists carried out their policies and programmes.

vi), In the post –independent period, the Communists regard India as a National Bourgeoisie Class.

Vii). They refused to accept India as an independent country as according to them , it continued to be semi feudal and semi-colonial in its nature. Therefore the major goal of Communist Party of India (ML) is complete eradication of Feudalism and distribution of land among landless labourers

### Check Your Progress:

1. Discuss Briefly the Economic and Political background of Marxist Thought in India.
2. Write a note on Marxist Political Thought in India.

3. Analyse the Features of Marxist and Socialistic tradition of India.

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## 1.6 Summing Up:

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After going through this unit you are now in a position to discuss the emergence Marxist and socialist tradition in India. You have understood that Marxism grew during the colonial rule in India. The increases in the number of factories as well as workers in the factories have significantly contributed towards the growth of Marxist and socialistic thinking in India. Moreover, the external influences like literature, the economic consequences of First World War and revolution like Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 etc can also be cited as reasons for the emergence of Marxist thinking in India. From this unit you have also learnt the basic features of Marxist and Socialist tradition in India. In the following Units of this Block we shall discuss at length the Marxist and Socialist thinkers of India like M. N. Roy., Ram Manohar Lohiya and J.P. Narayan. The reading of the whole block will give you a holistic idea of Marxist and Socialistic thinking in India.

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## 1.7: Reference and Suggested Readings:

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Bipan Chandra: Nationalism and Colonialism In India , Orient Longman, 1981, New Delhi

Bipan Chandra (ed): Indian Left  
: Critical Appraisal, Vikas Publications, 1983, New Delhi.

K. N. Panikkar (ed): National And Left Movements in India, Vikas Publications, 1980, New Delhi.

Dale Riepe Marxism in India in Social Theory and Practice, Spring 1970, Vol 1, No 1

URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23556686>



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## Unit 2

### Manavendra Nath Roy

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#### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.2 Objectives

#### 2.3 From Revolutionary to Radical Humanism

#### 2.4 M. N. Roy's Radical Humanism

##### 2.4.1 Ideas about Nature of Man

##### 2.4.2 Views on Individual Freedom

##### 2.4.3 Ideas about Materialism

##### 2.4.4 Views about History

##### 2.4.5 Views on Democracy

##### 2.4.6 Criticism of M. N. Roy's Radical Humanism

#### 2.5 Critique of Marxism

##### 2.5.1 Impact of Marxism on Roy's Philosophy

##### 2.5.2 M. N. Roy's Criticism on Marxism

#### 2.6 Summing Up

#### 2.7 References and Suggested Readings

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## 2.1 Introduction

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The origin of the communist movement in India basically took place after Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917. Among those prominent leaders who got inspiration from Russia and took initiative in the growth of communism in India, Manavendra Nath Roy was the most successful. He is known as the "Father of Indian Communism".

Manavendra Nath Roy (1886-1954), who is a scholarly thinker of modern India is most popularly known for his concept of Radical Humanism or New Humanism which is a great contribution to modern Indian political thought. He was one of the extremists in the freedom struggle of India for quite some time under the influence of communism, but later on he changed his ideology and fought for India's independence even from the platform of Indian National Congress. His notion towards India's problem was quite different and unique from others. In this unit, you will come to know how Roy had

changed his ideology from revolutionary to radical humanism as well as the basic principles of his radical philosophy. This unit will also help you to understand M. N. Roy's critical analysis of Marxism.

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## 2.2 Objectives

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M. N. Roy is mostly known for his revolutionary role in Indian national movement and his great contribution towards the development of the concept of Radical Humanism or New Humanism. After going through this unit, you will be able to

- know M. N. Roy's revolutionary role in Indian freedom struggle
- analyze Roy's contribution towards the growth of communism in India
- examine Roy's transition from Marxism to Radicalism and from Radicalism to Radical Humanism
- analyze critically Roy's idea of Radical Humanism and the basic principles of it
- examine the impact of Marxism on Roy's philosophy
- describe Roy's criticism of Marxism

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## 2.3 From Revolutionary to Radical Humanism

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M. N. Roy started his political journey as a revolutionary nationalist from his school days. When Bengal had been undergoing the tremendous agitation of Swadeshi period, Roy received his political illumination and began his revolutionary activities. He was inspired by the political ideas of Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghose and Surendranath Banerjee as well as got motivation from the life of sacrifice and sufferings of V. D. Savarkar.

### Stop to Consider

#### Life Sketch of M. N. Roy

M. N. Roy was born on February 6, 1886 in a village in 24 – Paraganas district in Bengal into a family of priests. His early name was Narendra Nath Bhattacharya. Roy was greatly influenced by the ideas and personality of Swami Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra, Swami Ramtirtha and Swami Dayananda Saraswati. It was after the partition of Bengal, Roy started his revolutionary journey and took

active part in the Swadeshi Movement. He also worked with *Yugantar* and *Anusilan Samiti* – two revolutionary organisations operating in colonial Bengal. He was imprisoned several times by British government for his involvement in militant activities against British rule in India. He changed his name from Narendra Nath Bhattacharya to Manavendra Nath Roy in 1916 when he was in San Francisco, California.

Creativity was the biggest weapon of Roy. He wrote many important books, edited and contributed articles in various journals. Some of his important books are: *Scientific Politics* (1942), *New Orientation* (1946), *Beyond Communism* (1947), *India in Transition* (1922), *India's Problem and Its Solution* (1922), *One Year of Non-cooperation* (1923), *The Future of Indian Politics* (1926), *Historical Role of Islam* (1939), *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in China* (1946), *New Humanism: A Manifesto* (1947), *Beyond Communism* (1947), *Materialism: An Outline of the History of Scientific Thought* (1951), *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (1952) etc. Roy died in Dehradun on January 25, 1954.

In 1910, Roy was sentenced to imprisonment in connection with the Howrah Conspiracy Case During. First World War, the German revolutionaries along with the Indian revolutionaries in Berlin came to the conclusion that one of the effective means of checking British resistance was to create internal troubles in British India. They therefore decided to smuggle arms and ammunitions to India to help the Indian revolutionaries. M. N. Roy went to Java in search of arms but got disappointed because the ship carrying arms did not reach Java. In 1915 he again went to Java to receive arms for Indian revolutionaries but again failed in his mission. Roy was again arrested in 1915 because of his connection with a political dacoity in Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> In the same year he visited Dutch Indies and later went to Japan, China, U.S.A., Mexico, Germany and Russia. In late 1915, he met Indian revolutionaries and Indian students in San Francisco who were working there for Indian freedom struggle. There, he also came in contact and worked in collaboration with Lala Lajpat Rai. Roy changed his name from Narendra Nath Bhattacharya to Manavendra Nath Roy during that period. He already had started to study Marxist literature when he was in New York.

In Mexico, he founded the first Communist Party outside Russia and became its Secretary General. It was at this stage Roy came in contact with Borodin, a Russian favourite of Lenin, who introduced Roy to

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<sup>1</sup> Varma, V. P. *Modern Indian Political Thought*. P. 482

Hegelian Dialectical Ontology. After Bolshevik revolution he was invited to Russia by V. I. Lenin. Roy reached at Russia in the beginning of 1920 and became the advisor of Bolshevik Party on colonial problems. There, he attended the Second Congress of the Communist International and had a difference of opinion with Lenin. Roy prepared a different thesis from that of Lenin and revealed the drawbacks of resolutions sponsored by Lenin. Roy's views were more realistic and even Lenin was highly impressed by his analysis.

In 1922, Roy made a sociological study of contemporary India and stated his views in his book *India in Transition*. He predicted that the future Indian nation was going to be shaped by the 'inexorable evolution' of the progressive forces latent in Indian society. The Indian transition was a consequence of the movement of social forces which were struggling for the replacement of the old bankrupt decadent socio-economic structure.<sup>1</sup> In 1922 Roy went to Berlin to organise Indian revolutionaries there. There he started his journal the *Vanguard of Indian Independence*. For the spread of communism in India, Roy believed that, there should be a separate Communist Party of India which would have an independent role. He also pleaded to form People's Party with a revolutionary character, though he was not successful in his mission. In 1922 his book *India's Problem and Its Solution* was published where Roy criticised the medievalism and conservatism of Gandhian social ideology. He suggested that revolutionary people's party would stimulate dissatisfaction against the existing political and economic system of the country. It would also intensify discontent in those places where it did exist. In 1923, Roy published another book *One Year of Non-cooperation from Ahmedabad to Gaya* where he praised the saintly personality of Mahatma Gandhi. He acknowledged the sacrifice and efforts of Gandhi to mobilise common people from 1919 to 1922. At the same time Roy also mentioned a number of shortcomings of Gandhism i.e. lack of economic programme in Gandhism, inclusion of all sections of Indians-exploiters and exploited, vacillation of Gandhism etc.

**SAQ**

Discuss M. N. Roy's contribution towards the expansion of communism around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> M. N. Roy, *India in Transition*, pp. 84-85

Gradually M. N. Roy got dissatisfied with communist organisation and in 1928, he even did not attend the Sixth Congress of the Communist International. In 1930, Roy came back to India and attended the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress. In July 1931, he was arrested in connection with the Kanpur Conspiracy Case and imprisoned for 6 years. After his release in 1936 he became a member of the Indian National Congress. He wished to form Indian National Congress on revolutionary basis. Differences arose between Roy and officially dominant groups of Congress during the period of World War II. Indian National Congress wanted to boycott war efforts by Indians for British government; but Roy was of the view that England was fighting war against Nazism and Fascism and hence every Indian should help British government by contributing money and material to stop the spread of Nazism in the world. He also condemned Gandhism. Roy left Indian National Congress in 1940 and then founded a separate party known as Radical Democratic Party. In 1944, he formed Indian Federation of Labour. In 1948, Roy dissolved his Radical Democratic Party and in its place founded Indian Renaissance Movement. He was elected as the vice president of “International Humanist and Ethical Association” in Amsterdam. Thus Roy transformed himself from Marxism to Radicalism and from Radicalism to new scientific humanism. Roy’s political journey—from revolutionary to Radical Humanism—allowed him to conceptualise radicalism in different perspectives.

He believed that political independence is not the ultimate solution to solve the problem of poverty and to attain development. Rather he had deep faith on individual’s freedom. He was very critical of all those theories and perspectives which did not take individual as the focal point of analysis. According to him, state and society should come later and individual first in all social, political and economic arrangements. Hence, individual freedom should not in any way be hampered either by religious dogmas or like concepts such as dialectical materialism. M. N. Roy was a great rationalist and judged everything by the yardstick of reason and rationality.

**Check your Progress:**

1. Fill in the blanks:
  - a) In 1916, Roy changed his name from \_\_\_\_\_ to Manavendra Nath Roy.
  - b) M. N. Roy founded Radical Democratic Party in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In which country Roy founded the first Communist Party outside Russia?

3. Write a short note on Indian Communism.

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## 2.4 M. N. Roy's Radical Humanism

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Although M. N. Roy was under the great influence of Marxism in the first half of his life, but later on he realised that communism provided no solution to individual liberty. His faith on individual freedom started to increase and in the last years of his life (1947-1954) Roy developed his own philosophy what he called as 'Radical Humanism' or 'New Humanism'. He claimed that his notion of radical humanism is distinct from the humanist versions of other thinkers. Prior to M. N. Roy, there were also humanist trends in the writings of Protagoras, Erasmus, More, Buchanan and Herder.<sup>1</sup> According to Roy, though the humanists of 19<sup>th</sup> century emphasised on man and individual liberty, but they could not get away from the erroneous belief of subordinating man to some super-natural forces and super-natural powers. For Roy, the advancement of science is a factor for the liberation of creative energies of individuals, because science has emancipated man from the dominance of superstitions and trans-terrestrial fears. Roy explained 'New Humanism' as a 'philosophy of freedom based on modern scientific knowledge'. Regarding the basic principles of new humanism of M. N. Roy, we can summarise his philosophy like follows:

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### 2.4.1 Ideas about Nature of Man

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M. N. Roy believes the notion of evolution of man. Man is the product of physical universe as well as an integral part of it. Because of his emergence from this physical harmonious universe, man is rational by nature. Everything in man that deals with biological evolution is thus distinguishable and noticeable. As soul or atman cannot be noticed and traced, there is no such thing like soul or atman, to radical humanists. In the philosophy of radical humanism, there is no place for supernatural things or factors like soul and God whose existence cannot be scientifically proved. Any person, who thinks that God has created the world and everything is determined by fate or God's will,

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<sup>1</sup>Varma, V. P. *Modern Indian Political Thought*. P. 498

can never become a radical humanist. The religious ideas, supernatural and superhuman powers are worthless to a radical humanist.

M. N. Roy believed that man is rational by instinct and above all other living beings. Rationalism is the most essential and basic standard of human being. Each individual has the thinking capacity. Roy believed that the advancement of science has enhanced the creative energies of man and liberated him from the dominance of superstitions and trans-terrestrial fears. According to him, humanist ethics is built on the foundations of this natural rationality of man and conscience is the spontaneous effect of rationality. Thus, reason is not an innate metaphysical entity but is an emergent in the process of biological evolution.<sup>1</sup>Man is an ensemble of social relations and hence morality springs as an answer to man's search for social harmony and beneficent social accommodation. Man is governed by laws inherent in the physical universe. It is the rationality of man which discovers these natural laws by making themselves familiar with the law governed character of this universe.

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#### **2.4.2 Views on Individual Freedom**

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M. N. Roy was a great lover of individual freedom. For him, individual is an end in itself and every other organisation in the society was simply means to an end. He kept individual freedom above everything else. Roy subordinated everything, even religion, morality or other supernatural powers, to individual freedom. Society is the creation of man. Roy argues that human beings derive all their virtues and abilities from their creative achievements in unscrambling the mysteries and partial conquest of nature. If man can move out of the circumference of nature, then how can he be subordinated to something supernatural and man-made creation which itself is very enough to be undone time and again. He believed that individual had always been struggling for protection and preservation of their freedom. He was categorical in propounding that 'Radicalism thinks in terms neither of nation nor class; its concern is man; it conceives freedom as freedom of the individual'. Individual will not attain full freedom unless the society is organised on rational basis. The more rationality ensures greater freedom for individual.

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<sup>1</sup>Varma, V. P. *Modern Indian Political Thought*. P. 499

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### 2.4.3 Ideas about Materialism

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M. N. Roy essentially believed in the basic doctrine of historical materialism as propounded by Karl Marx but he differed from Marx in details. Roy considered that Marxian doctrine of materialism was dogmatic and unscientific and neglected the creative role of human subject. He took the idea of scientific method of Marx in his philosophy of radical humanism, but explained it in a different way. 'Matter' was real and independent to him and he revised the whole concept of matter with the latest scientific knowledge. Roy believed that 'matter' is not made up of hard and massy stone like atoms as in traditional 'mechanical materialism'. He said that there was no difference between organic and inorganic matter. All living bodies were created out of certain chemical matters and their combination resulted in the creation of other matters. Mind was the product of matter at high stage of development. Hence, there is a close relationship between mind and matter. Our bodies, our sense organs, the brain, the nerve system, the cognitive apparatus; all have grown out of the background of inanimate matter.

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### 2.4.4 Views about History

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According to M. N. Roy, human history is nothing else but a record of struggle for freedom. History is the witness that people had always been struggling either for their political, social or economic freedom. Hence they created society to attain freedom as well as state for peace and security. Roy also criticised Karl Marx's notion of history as a dialectical process governed by the economic forces only. Apart from economic there were many more other factors and forces of individual's life which also determined the course of history. Social, political, cultural as well as ideological factors also played important role in the process of history. He believed that history was not only study of an economic aspect of life but something broader and wider.

#### SAQ

How M. N. Roy's materialist philosophy was different from Karl Marx?

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## 2.4.5 Views on Democracy

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M. N. Roy was not satisfied with the present form of democracy. According to him, the current democracy fails to protect individual freedom and sacrifices individual freedom for the interest of collective freedom. Roy desired that the individual in society should be able to enjoy economic adequacy and security as well as live in a social psychological atmosphere that would be free from any kind of cultural regimentation. It will help in the development of individual's rationality and potentialities. Roy pleaded for an organised democracy based on decentralisation. Individual liberty is possible only in a proper democratic set up.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **M. N. Roy's concept of Organised Democracy**

M. N. Roy was opposed to parliamentary democracy based on party system. In this regard, he was very similar to Jaya Prakash Narayan. According to Roy, parliamentary democracy could not ensure individual freedom and brought regimentation in political life. In its place, he proposed the concept of organised democracy based on decentralisation and partyless system. Ultimate sovereignty was to be vested in the hands of people. The whole structure of the system will be based on local democracies. But for success of organised democracy, Roy felt that certain pre-requisites were essential. He said that first and foremost, the people should be made educated to realise their responsibilities. Also, people should have high moral character and high standard of intelligence. Until and unless people attain high moral and intellectual standards, there should be elective as well as selective democracy in the initial stages. Roy also prepared a draft constitution which was to be a model of his organised democracy.

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## 2.4.6 Criticism of M. N. Roy's Radical Humanism

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A critical evaluation of M.N. Roy's philosophy of Radical Humanism reveals certain drawbacks of his ideas relating to humanism.

Although Roy condemned Marxism on several grounds and identified himself as a radical humanist yet he could not totally get rid of

Marxism. He denounced Marx's notion of dialectical materialism without giving any satisfactory alternative to it. Because he failed to give any logical reason as to how the matter was capable of producing living bodies.

It is said that M. N. Roy's philosophy of radical humanism is entirely based on the concept of rationalism. According to him, man is rational by nature and everything should be decided by reason. But unfortunately he has failed to clearly and precisely define the term 'reason'.

Critics claim that M. N. Roy's radical humanism was not something new. Prior to Roy, many political thinkers in both East and West had talked about the cause of individual freedom. Roy only tried to give a new outlook by freeing human beings from all other social compulsions. But in reality, no one can deny the role of marriage and society in individual's life.

Likewise, M. N. Roy also condemned religion as a hindrance towards individual's freedom and development. But critics are of the view that religion is a part of human life and it plays a very crucial role in our cultural and intellectual development.

Roy also failed to narrate precisely how human urge for freedom will not result in clashes. Because while struggling for individual freedom there is bound to have its impact on collective freedom resulting clashes among individuals.

### **Check your Progress**

1. Write 'True' or 'False'.
  - a) A true radical humanist believes that the world is created by God.
  - b) M. N. Roy was in favour of partyless democracy.
  - c) M. N. Roy subordinated individual freedom to society.
2. 'Radicalism thinks in terms neither of nation nor class; its concern is man; it conceives freedom as freedom of the individual' – Discuss.
3. Critically analyse M. N. Roy's notion of Radical Humanism.

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## **2.5 Critique of Marxism**

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M. N. Roy was a born revolutionary. When he was in USA he came under the influence of Marxism and became a known person in the Marxist world. Like other revolutionaries, Roy was also highly impressed by the doctrines of Karl Marx. He even began to think that the only solution to existing Indian problems lay in Marxism. Roy was the first Indian who founded communist party outside Russia for the first time. In Mexico, the Mexican Communist Party was founded by M. N. Roy in 1917. First it was named as Socialist Workers' Party and in 1919 the party was renamed as the Mexican Communist Party. It was because of Roy's interest in Marxism, he became very close to Lenin and other eminent communist leaders of the world. But slowly Roy got frustrated with the subtle characteristics of the Marxian philosophy.

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### **2.5.1 Impact of Marxism on Roy's Philosophy**

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No doubt Roy accepted and applied some principles of Marxism in his new humanism. Like Marx, Roy was also a thorough going materialist. Regarding materialism, Roy stated that "it represents the knowledge of nature as it really exists, knowledge acquired through the contemplation, observation and investigation of the phenomenon of nature itself.. It simply maintain that the origin of everything that really exists is matter, that there does not exist anything, but matter, all other appearances being transformations of matter, and these transformations are governed necessarily by laws inherent in nature." According to Roy, matter is real and independent. All living bodies were created out of chemical matters and mind was the product of matter at a high stage of development. He applied scientific method of Marx in his radical humanism. Similarly, M. N. Roy also believed that all knowledge had its roots in the physical universe. According to him, sensations and perceptions are the sources of knowledge. Like Marx, Roy also criticised the capitalist system of economy and he was of the view that industry should be controlled by people themselves.

Even though Roy was highly impressed by Karl Marx's ideas, differences arose between Roy and Stalin and Roy lost his faith in Marxism. He realised that communism cannot provide any solution to worldly problems. The genesis of the concept of New Humanism lies in the frustration of Roy with the subtle characteristics of the Marxian philosophy.

**SAQ**

“Like Marx, M. N. Roy was a staunch materialist” – do you believe it? Give arguments in favour of your answer.

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**Stop to Consider**

“Marx’s proposition that consciousness is determined by materialist metaphysics being placed on a sound scientific foundation. His subsequent thought, particularly sociological, however, did not move in the direction indicated by the significant point of departure. Marxism, on the whole, is not true to its philosophical tradition. In sociology, it vulgarizes materialism to the extent of denying that basic moral values transcend space and time. With the impersonal concept of the forces of production, it introduces teleology in history, crassly contradicting its own belief that man is the maker of his destiny. The economic determinism of its historiology blasts the foundation of human freedom, because it precludes the possibility of man ever becoming free as an individual. Yet, contemporary sociological thinking has been considerably influenced by the fallacious and erroneous doctrines of Marxism which do not logically follow from his philosophy.”

----- M. N. Roy (*Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. II, pp. 216-217)

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**2.5.2 M. N. Roy’s Criticism on Marxism**

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M. N. Roy provided a thorough criticism on Marxism.

**First**, Roy condemned Marx for his denial of individual liberty. According to him, there was no place for individual liberty in Marxism. Marx did not pay adequate attention to the worth and significance of the empirical individual. As Roy had noticed that there was complete regimentation in communism where party bosses expected the masses to act according to their instructions. Hence, he demanded for revolt against fatalism implicit in the prophetic

sociology of Marx. Under the influence of Hegel's theory of moral positivism, Marx had rejected the liberal concept of individualism and marginalised the role of individual as well as the concept of freedom.

**Secondly**, Roy was of the view that Marxian notion of materialism was dogmatic and unscientific. Roy said that the movement through thesis and antithesis is a characteristic of logical argumentation. But it is not acceptable that matter and forces of production move dialectically. To quote Roy, "The dialectical materialism of Marx, therefore, is materialist only in name; dialectics being its corner-stone, it is essentially an idealistic system. No wonder that it disowned the heritage of the eighteenth century scientific naturalism and fought against the humanist materialism of Feuerbach and his followers."

**Thirdly**, M. N. Roy criticised Marxism for its overemphasis on the economic interpretation of the history to the substantive. History cannot be interpreted only with reference to materialistic objectivism. Marx had neglected the intelligence of human beings and their cumulative actions while interpreting history. It means that in the Marxist philosophy of history the role of ideas was minimized. Roy stated that in the history of mankind we find that there were several activities apart from economic, wherein people found satisfaction. Roy said, "History does not follow the Marxian pattern of dialectics, but is a movement from homogeneous masses to the evolution of distinct individualistic experimenting in various forms of harmonisation between themselves."

**Fourthly**, Roy criticised Karl Marx for his prophecy about disappearance of middle class. According to Roy, if we study history we find that the middle classes emerged as a powerful factor that had been influencing in moulding national policies and programmes. Even, the number of middle class increases with the expansion of the economic process.

**Fifthly**, M. N. Roy criticised Marxism for its weak ethical foundation because of its dogmatic and relativistic nature. Marx believed that in the process of struggle man changes his own nature. In other words, Marx was of the opinion that there is nothing stable in human nature. But according to Roy, Marx never acknowledged the eighteenth century materialism which opined that human nature is constant. In opposition to Marxism, Roy believed that there is something stable and permanent in human nature which is the basis of duties and rights. Moral consciousness or morality is not the product of economic forces. If a man is subordinated to the overwhelming dominance of the forces of production it will neutralize his autonomy and creativity. Roy emphasised on humanist ethics that gives importance to sovereignty of individual and beliefs in freedom and justice. Thus, Roy believed that

there is something stable in ethical values which were neglected by Marxism.

**Sixthly**, Roy was also critical about the notion of class struggle. Of course, there had been different social classes in history. But along with social struggle and conflict between them, there had certainly been operative a social cohesive bond.

**Lastly**, Roy believed that there is an element of voluntaristic romanticism in revolutions. As revolutions are collective representations of emotions heightened to a pitch, the idea of revolution exalts human efforts to remake the world. Revolutionary romanticism is contradictory to the concept of dialectical materialism of Marx.

Thus, M. N. Roy criticised several notions of Marxism, though he did not enter into the technicalities of Marxian economics. After he got dissatisfied with Marxism as well as the activities of the leaders of Communist Party, Roy made the final move of propounding a theory rooted in integral scientific humanism which he called as the ‘New Humanism’ or ‘Radical Humanism’.

### **Check your Progress**

1. Write ‘True’ or ‘False’.
  - a) M. N. Roy developed his idea of Radical Humanism because of his frustration with Marxism.
  - b) M. N. Roy was in favour of capitalist system of economy.
  - c) M. N. Roy supported Karl Marx’s theory of class struggle.
2. Write two similarities between Marxism and M. N. Roy’s Radical Humanism.
3. How did Roy attack Marxism? And why? Discuss in details.

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## **2.6 Summing Up**

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After going through this unit, now you have come to know that there are two distinctive phases of M. N. Roy’s life and his philosophy. First was the revolutionary period and the second one was the period of radical humanism. As a militant activist from his school days Roy played a very active role in the freedom struggle of India. His love for Marxism was so deep rooted that he was the first Indian who founded communist party outside Russia. He was the torch bearer of Indian communism and was a renowned personality in the Marxist world. If he wished he could have take the chance to secure a high position in the Marxist world. You are now in a position to analyse why Roy

changed his ideology in the later period of his life and became a pronounced critic of Marxism as well as communist theory and practice.

This unit is also helpful for you to know about the most important contribution of Roy i.e. Radical Humanism. His political views are founded on reason and morality, not on any dogmas. He emphasised on the primacy of freedom, knowledge and truth. So he wanted the state to be free from religion and other supernatural ideas. Roy believed that matter was real and independent he reanalysed the whole concept of matter with the latest scientific knowledge. After reading this unit, you can now have an idea about Roy's idea of organised democracy. He believed in partyless system and made a draft constitution as a model of his organised democracy.

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## 2.7 References and Suggested Readings

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## Unit 3

### Ram Manohar Lohia : Caste, Class and Democracy

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- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Objectives
- 3.3 Political Journey of Ram Manohar Lohia
- 3.4 Ram Manohar Lohia's views on Caste and Class
  - 3.4.1 Lohia's Cyclical Theory of History
  - 3.4.2 Oscillation between class and caste
  - 3.4.3 Criticism
- 3.5 Ram Manohar Lohia's views on Democracy
  - 3.5.1 Four Pillar State
- 3.6 Summing up
- 3.7 References and Suggested Readings

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### 3.1 Introduction

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Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (1910-1967) was a well known political thinker of Modern India and the founder of the Socialist Party of India. He played an important role in the independence movement of India and had to go to jail several times. He was a prominent leader and is regarded as the most original thinker of the socialist movement in India. Ram Manohar Lohia fought against inequalities and injustices throughout his life. He raised his voice for common people and strived for liberation from oppression and exploitation. He was an advocate of internationalism and pleaded for true international unity. In this unit, we will discuss about Ram Manohar Lohia's political journey as a socialist leader, the cyclical theory of history as well as Lohia's ideas on caste and class, Lohia's views on democracy and economic decentralisation etc.

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### 3.2 Objectives

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This unit is an attempt to make you familiarise with political, social and economic thought of Ram Manohar Lohia. After going through this unit you will be able to



- define Lohia’s contribution to the socialist movement in India
- examine the cyclical theory of history put forwarded by Lohia
- know his ideas on caste and class
- examine Lohia’s views on democracy
- describe how Lohia fought to bring about political and social change in India.

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### **3.3 Political Journey of Ram Manohar Lohia**

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Lohia was one of the founders of Congress Socialist Party. In 1936, he was given the responsibility as the secretary of the foreign department of the Congress on the recommendation of Jawaharlal Nehru. He was also the editor of the periodical ‘Congress Socialist’. In 1938, he was included in the executive committee of the Congress Socialist Party and he began to develop his own political ideas. He criticised the Gandhian leadership of the Congress as well as the communists who were in CSP. During the period from 1938 to 1946, Lohia was actively involved in the freedom struggle of India and he was imprisoned several times. Lohia, along with other leaders of Congress Socialist Party was not happy with the way in which the Congress leaders dealt with communal situation in India after independence. The Congress Socialist Party removed the prefix ‘Congress’ from its name and became independent Socialist Party. In 1952, when Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party merged with Socialist Party, the party emerged as Praja Socialist Party. Unhappy with the new party Ram Manohar Lohia split from it and formed Socialist Party in 1955. He was elected to Lok Sabha in the by election in 1963. Here ported to parliament about the widespread problem of starvation among agricultural labourers and raised his voice for the improvement of the condition of poor people of India.

#### **Stop to Consider**

##### **Life Sketch of Ram Manohar Lohia**

Ram Manohar Lohia was born on March 23, 1910 in a middle class Marwari family at Akbarpur in Uttar Pradesh. Lohia’s father, Heera Lal, was a teacher as well as businessman by profession and was a nationalist by spirit. Lohia came into contact with the freedom struggle of India early in his life through the influence of his father. As his father was very much impressed by Mahatma Gandhi’s thought, Lohia also got attracted to Gandhi’s ideas from his early age. Though he did

not accept blindly every notion of Gandhi, but Gandhian thought had a great impact on his social, economic and political ideas. Ram Manohar Lohia even left the school to join non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. Lohia got his education in Bombay and Calcutta. He went to Germany after his graduation and attended Frederick William University (today's Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany) and got his Ph.D. When he was in Germany, he witnessed the rise of Hitler and Nazi chauvinistic racism. The climate of Germany on the one hand and political ideas of social democracy on the other shaped him as a thorough democrat and a believer of civil liberties. After coming back from Germany, Lohia associated himself with the nationalist politics of India and basically with the activities of the newly formed Congress Socialist Party.

Lohia believed that neither communism nor European tradition of socialism is relevant in the existing socio-economic realities in the third world countries. Because Marx did not sufficiently take into account the peculiar and specific conditions of the third world. Lohia was of the view that in order to succeed Indian socialism must develop on its own lines. He was a great advocate of freedom and individual liberty. Lohia was deeply influenced by different ideas of Karl Marx though he was not a blind follower of Marx. Lohia's ideas and thinking on socialist thought and movement came to be influenced by Gandhian teachings and techniques. Gandhi's concept of 'Satyagraha' had a strong impact on Lohia's thought. He advocated for the attainment of socialist ideals through Satyagraha. Lohia was very inspired by Gandhi's ideas of small machine technology as well as decentralisation of power.

Lohia was known as the champion of social justice. He vigorously worked for the emancipation of the suppressed sections of Indian society. He was also a great internationalist. He criticised Nehru's Non-alignment policy. Ram Manohar Lohia believed that India should have solid friends abroad. He also emphasised on formation of world parliament.

Some of the significant works of Ram Manohar Lohia are "Aspects of Socialist Party" (1952), "Fragments of a World Mind" (1953), "Wheel of History" (1955), "Will to Power" (1956), "Towards the Destruction of Castes and Classes" (1958), "Guilty Men of India's Partition" (1960), "Marx, Gandhi and Socialism" (1963), "India, China and Northern Frontiers" (1963), "The Caste System" (1964) etc.

**SAQ:**

Why did Ram Manohar Lohia oppose to communism and European tradition of socialism? Give two arguments.

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### **3.4 Ram Manohar Lohia’s views on Caste and Class**

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Ram Manohar Lohia wanted to free individual from all kinds of ignorance, backwardness, superstitions and unfairness. He constantly opposed to any kind of despotism and coercion in society. Lohia rejected Marx’s theory of class struggle, because it projects European history as the history of mankind. He stated that Indian Marxists were always inclined to view Indian society in terms of class structure. But the true fact was that Indian society is basically a caste-ridden society. Here, the Marxian notion of class structure cannot be established, as said by Lohia.

According to Lohia, the problems of Asian nations must be analysed from different perspective. In this region, civilisation had emerged after centuries of old despotism and feudalism. He said that the combination of rigid dogmas and political conventions results in narrow-mindedness as well as communalism. Very often terror becomes the part of politics in this region because of absence of any stable democratic system. In such a situation, the development of bureaucracy and technocracy gives rise to a new class of leadership which start to play with the sentiments of common people. So, Lohia suggested that socialists in Asia need to develop an original social philosophy that could deal with all these distinctive problems of Asian nations. He opined that caste structure in Indian society was a legacy of feudalism; so, in order to pave the way for the emergence of class structure it is necessary to smash caste structure at first.

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#### **3.4.1 Lohia’s Cyclical Theory of History**

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Ram Manohar Lohia made a distinction between class and caste in his famous book “**Wheel of History**”. According to Lohia, history moves

like a cycle. The entire human history is nothing but an internal oscillation between class and caste and an external shift of power and prosperity from one region to another. This internal oscillation and external shift are inter-related to each other. Lohia stated that the ingredients of a total historical situation at any time were class and caste on the inside and a rise or decline in power on outside. A society went up to power and prosperity only as long as it kept improving its technical and organisational ability in one critical dimension. After a point, the society hit the limits of one dimensional growth, became stagnant and fell into the trap of rigidity of caste system. Then the global centre of power and prosperity shifted to another society. In this context, Lohia mentioned about a third aspect of life i.e. physical and cultural approximation, in order to put an end to the external struggle among nations and the internal struggle among classes. He was of the view that higher physical and cultural intermingling of races, civilization and societies as well as reduction of social inequality could lead us towards unity of mankind through conscious and intelligent designing. The new civilization would attempt to overcome class, caste and regional shift.

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### **3.4.2 Oscillation between Class and Caste**

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According to Ram Manohar Lohia, class is mobile caste and caste is immobile class. While the idea of caste represents the evil forces of conservatism, ancient affinities; the idea of class is the beholder of the virtues of dynamism and social mobilisation in society. However, the true fact is that these two forces keep on changing sides resulting in caste fragmenting into classes and classes occasionally metamorphosing into castes. Caste is a rigid system. He argued that caste restricts opportunity and restricted opportunity constricts ability. This constricted ability again restricts opportunity. Thus, there is slow swing between caste and class. Lohia said that there had always been a tussle between caste and class. Lohia observed that since class is a dynamic force, a society which is at the centre of the world is characterised by class division. On the other hand, a society which has lagged behind in its struggle for supremacy in the external world develops caste system.

Lohia considered the rise of Buddhism as a movement opposed to the caste system and a shift from caste to class. Under the impact of it, there was some loosening in castes which was accompanied by political strength, economic prosperity, improvement in agriculture,

upward mobility in the case of artisans and traders and growth in national income. Lohia pleaded for internal approximation between different groups, classes and castes in society.

Ram Manohar Lohia was against caste hierarchy. He believed that the empowerment of all deprived and underprivileged sections of the society including Shudras as well as Dalits is necessary in order to attain progress. Lohia observed that caste system has stratified Indian society. In order to remove it the backward castes and groups should be given preferential opportunities for two or three or four decades, if necessary. He also pleaded that preference should be given to backward casts and classes in matters of land distribution, employment and educational sector. Lohia believed in social revolution for uplifting the conditions of the backward castes and classes and thus to abolish it. He argued that without destroying the caste system, Indian society cannot be reconstructed. For abolishing caste system on both social and political aspect, he emphasised on to create awareness and to change the mental attitude of the people. So, he pleaded for free and compulsory education specially for scheduled castes, tribes and other poorer sections of the society. Lohia put forward the idea of “roti and beti” which means that people would have to eat together and allow marriage of their daughters with other castes in order to break the caste barriers.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **Sapta Kranti or Seven Revolutions**

Ram Manohar Lohia came with the idea of *Sapta Kranti* or Seven Revolutions to introduce a new sense of dynamism in Indian social system. According to him, these seven revolutions require independent revolution. The attainment of one does not necessarily lead to the attainment of others. These seven revolutions are for:

- Equality between man and woman
- Abolition of inequalities based on skin/colour
- Abolition of inequality based on caste system
- National freedom or against foreign enslavement
- Economic equality and planned production
- Protecting the privacy of individual life from all unjust encroachments
- Satyagraha and against weapons

Lohia was an advocate of equality, social justice and individual freedom. He wanted to have an egalitarian society where all individuals would get equal opportunities to develop their capabilities and potentialities. Individual liberty could not be achieved in the absence of equality. By equality, he not only meant economic equality but also spiritual equality coming from innate feeling of the individuals that they all are equal in the society. Lohia also demanded for immediate replacement of English language by Hindi and other regional languages in public institutions. He felt that in the garb of English language a tiny minority section of the society had been imposing their domination over more than 95 percent population of India.

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### 3.4.3 Criticism

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Lohia was against the caste system and he advocated for empowerment of lower caste in the national mainstream and emphasised on reservation for lower castes in various sector in order to bring them up. Critics point out that his style of working led to the strengthening of caste structure itself. Lohia's notion about caste is also criticised on the ground that it promoted an attitude of caste-based pride, contrary to its original goal. Again, Lohia's efforts to mobilize backward castes and classes to uproot the Congress rule, led to the coalition between socialists of various shades with certain communal elements which caused communal tension in India.

#### Check Your Progress

1. Write a short note on the role of Ram Manohar Lohia on the formation of Socialist Party.
2. How did Ram Manohar Lohia differentiate between caste and class?
3. Do you think that the socialist ideas of Ram Manohar Lohia would be able to establish social equity in Indian society? Give arguments in favour of your answer?
4. Write 'True' or 'False'.
  - a) Ram Manohar Lohia was not satisfied with the formation of Praja Socialist Party in 1952.
  - b) According to Ram Manohar Lohia, caste is a dynamic force.

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### **3.5 Ram Manohar Lohia's views on Democracy**

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Ram Manohar Lohia was opposed to both capitalism and communism. According to him, none of these were suitable for India. Since capitalism is based on the idea of profit, it leads unemployment, selfishness and war which are opposed to social equity and prosperity. Likewise, communism depends upon social ownership of the means of production and alerts only the capitalist relations of production. Lohia stated that “Capitalism cannot even fulfil its primary function of providing capital to mankind...Communism inherits from capitalism its technique of production; it only seeks to smash the capitalist relations of production. Communism claims to be the continuator and developer of capitalist technology, when capitalism is no longer able to do so.” He said that the contemporary world was in the grip of capitalism as well as communism that resulted in poverty, war and fear. He also said that the European socialism were irrelevant in the existing socio-economic realities of India. During that period, he observed that, European socialism was mainly bound by ethnocentric considerations that took into account the interest of the European countries only. Hence, he put forwarded his idea of new socialism. He sought to establish a socialist society in India after independence. Lohia said that the pace of socialism will have to be changed according to changing circumstances. Regarding socialism, Lohia said that it was the best way to achieve equality and prosperity. In this regard he praised Gandhiji's some ideas and actions that may act as a filter through which socialist ideas would flow. He emphasised on greater incorporation of Gandhian ideology to socialist thought though he was not a blind follower of Gandhi. Lohia wanted to combine socialist principles with Gandhian ideas like satyagraha, end and means principle, small machine technology and political decentralisation. The core of socialism envisioned by Lohia drew its spirit and substance from the Gandhian principles of socioeconomic and political reconstruction of the Indian society.

#### **Stop to Consider**

##### **Lohia's New Socialism**

Ram Manohar Lohia pleaded for a just social order based on equality, decentralisation and individual dignity where individual will be free from ignorance, injustice, backwardness as well as all kinds of prejudices. In respect of the creation of a new human civilization, he rejected both capitalism and communism. Lohia also criticised

European socialism for its dogmatic and doctrinaire nature. He firmly believed that if socialism were to lead Indian people to development and prosperity, it must be framed in Indian context. He imagined socialism as 'New Civilisation' that we can also term as new socialism. Lohia emphasised on to give socialism a global outlook. In association with Acharya Narendra Dev, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Ashok Mehta and other contemporary socialist leaders, Lohia developed his own socialistic ideology. His idea of socialism mainly aimed at establishing a free and decentralized society by eliminating centralised power. Lohia cited his original thesis of socialism in the Pachmarhi Conference of socialists in May, 1952. He put forward a six point plan for his New Socialism. These are:

- Maximum attainable equality, towards which nationalization of economy may be one essential step;
- A decent standard of living throughout the world, and not increasing standard of living within national frontiers;
- A world parliament and government elected on adult franchise with beginning, towards a world government and world army;
- Collective and individual practice of civil disobedience so that the unarmed and helpless little man may acquire the habit to resist tyranny and exploitation civilly;
- Four-pillar state – the village, the district, the province and the centre;
- Evolution of technology, which would be consistent with these aims and processes.

Lohia had faith in democracy as government of people, but he opposed the tendency of democracy to lead on elitism. In India, there is so much of poverty and caste distinction. Therefore, Lohia stated that, if such type of democracy based on elitism prevails in India, it would increase the power of the upper class and it would have no meaning for common people. He was in favour of guaranteeing basic fundamental freedoms of the people so that the basic needs of each and every citizen would be fulfilled. Democracy must be constructed in such a way that nobody remains without securing the basic minimum needs of life. Like Laski, Lohia also believed that political democracy has no meaning without economic democracy. Increased production and effective distribution are very important for the success of democracy. According to Lohia, within the framework of social democracy, it is possible to achieve both India's freedom as well as the need to provide bread for all.



Rammanohar Lohia said that the form of democracy prevailing in west was not suitable for solving problems in India. People's participation in the political process and widespread decentralisation are important requisites in a true democratic system. Only creation of a parliament in a country does not mean that it is a democratic country. Democratic values must be adopted as a way life. So, Lohia stated that every Indian citizen must play active role in public life so that they can raise their voice against any kind of injustice that they face. He realised that we must ensure maximum participation of citizens in governance through the mechanism of decentralisation. It thus stakes democracy from the elite to the masses.

According to Lohia, as far as possible, the total affairs of a country have to be cut up in small and yet smaller quantities in order to ensure common people's participation in the economic, political and administrative process of a country. Sovereign power must not reside alone in centre and federating units. His notion of decentralised socialism emphasised on things like small machine, cooperative labour, village government and decentralised planning.

**SAQ:**

How was the idea of New Socialism of Ram Manohar Lohia different from European Socialism?

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### **3.5.1 Four Pillar State**

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Ram Manohar Lohia proposed to replace parliamentary democracy by a decentralised democratic system. He named his proposed state as **“Four Pillar State”** also called the **“Chaukhamba Model”** where he made an attempt to synthesize two opposite concepts i.e. centralisation and decentralisation. In his four pillar state, functional federalism will be at four levels, namely - the village, the mandal (the district), the province and the central government. According to Lohia, district magistracy will be abolished in this system, because it represents

centralisation of power. All these four autonomous organs will be equipped with equal authority in the process of legislation and execution of policies and will be linked to each other. Lohia's four pillar state is the manifestation of decentralisation of political and administrative power and based on immediacy in democracy. It is only through decentralization, a truly non-violent society can be achieved. Lohia said that socialism in Asia must increasingly become the doctrine of maximum attainable equality through redivision of land and social ownership over industry. Its political structure must arise out of the decentralised state and it must seek its technological framework in the small machine.<sup>1</sup> Lohia also emphasised on operationalisation of the concept of "permanent civil disobedience" in his model state which would act as a perpetual remedy against any kind of unfairness. The core of his Chaukhamba model was his views on socialism and emphasis on economic, political and legislative decentralisation. As a true internationalist, he modified his idea of four pillar state to include world government in it as fifth pillar. He even established World Development Council and made an effort to create world government to maintain peace throughout the world.

#### **Stop to Consider**

"Democracy can bring warmth to the blood of the common man only when constitutional theory starts practising the state of four limbs, the village, the district, the province and the centre. Organically covered by the flesh and blood of equalities; this constitutional selection of the four-pillar state can infuse democracy with joy..... The central limb of the state must have power enough to maintain the integrity and unity of the state and the rest of it must be fragmented."

– Ram Manohar Lohia, ("Fragments of a World Mind" 1953)

In his four pillar democratic system, Lohia provided a structure and a way in which sovereign power is to be diffused and each little community is to be so organised that they could live the way of life that they choose. Lohia was of the view that economic planning must be done at the grassroots upwards. Collective control over the means of production is necessary. Because while there will be check on increase in private property, the collective property on the whole will

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<sup>1</sup> M. Arumngam: *Socialist Thought in India – The contribution of Rammanohar Lohia*. Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1978, p-113

also increased. Therefore, according to Lohia, a decentralised economy would be more efficient as it would be based on willing participation of the workers. In the words of K. G. Pillai, “Lohia hoped that only through such a decentralisation in planning, decision-making, giving freedom to small communities the country can rise above the issues of regionalism and fractionalism.”

Lohia said that no precise list of federal or state or district or village or concurrent subjects could be drawn up. He argued that experience and time and perhaps the next Constituent Assembly of India could make precise allocations. But he was of the view that one fourth of all governmental and plan expenditure should be through village, district and city panchayats. In his four pillar state the armed forces might be under the control of centre, the armed police under province, but all other police might be controlled by district and village. Industries like railway or iron and steel might be controlled by the centre, but the small and cottage industry of the future might be under district and village. As far as possible, the nationalised sector like agriculture, industry and other property will be possessed and administered by village, district and city panchayats. The post of collector must be abolished and in its place various bodies in district will work on matters like revenue. Lohia was very sympathetic towards the poor Indian farmers. He felt that the conditions of poor farmers can be uplifted only with the abolition of land revenue on unprofitable holdings. Price fixing might be a central subject, but the structure of agriculture and the ratio of capital and labour in it might be left to the choice of the district and the village. The district, village and city panchayats will work on policies and welfare functions.

Rammanohar Lohia believed that his four pillar state would meet the requirements of socialism as well as of democracy. He was in favour of cottage industries and was against European model of development based on large scale industries. He wanted to develop technology which would be amiable and beneficial to Indian economy and environment. That is why he emphasised on to develop small unit machine that would suite Indian needs and environment. In this regard, Lohia was very much inspired by Gandhi’s condemnation against heavy industrialisation. From Asian perspective, Lohia put forwarded the concept of ‘small unit machine’ as an alternative to capitalist and communist mode of rationalisation. According to him, requirement of less capital and maximum utilisation of labour power is possible through incorporation of small machines. Moreover, when small machinery will be available, people at grassroots level will have the

opportunity to involve themselves with the processing and manufacture of raw materials available in their locality. According to him, the principle of small unit machine will lead India towards economic development as well as modernisation and prosperity. He was of the view that economic decentralization along with political and administrative decentralisation, may be brought about through maximum utilization of small machines. Lohia did not refuse the importance of heavy industry. He said, "This is not to deny altogether the heavier machine in steel works or in river-training projects, but emphasis must heavily rest on the small unit machine."

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **Thirteen Point Plan**

In a paper entitled *The Farmer in India* Ram Manohar Lohia formulated a Thirteen Point Plan to end the rampant poverty in India. These are:

1. Lowering of prices on the basis of parity between agricultural and industrial prices.
2. Austerity and sacrifice to be shared by all so that no income or salary exceeds Rs. 1000 a month.
3. Industrialisation with the help of small-unit machines, the invention and manufacture of which to be promoted by the state.
4. Any factory running below capacity to be taken over by the state, and immediate nationalisation of basic industries.
5. Anti-corruption commissioners in every state and at the centre with departments independent of the government.
6. Land to the tiller and redivision of lands –  $12\frac{1}{2}$  acres minimum and 30 acres maximum. Correction of wrong entries in Patwaris' registers.
7. Cultivation of 1 crore acres of new land by a state-recruited food army.
8. Decentralisation of administration and of economy so as to achieve the four-pillar state. Repeal of discriminatory laws including the criminal tribes Act.
9. Housing programmes and other economic activity to provide full employment.
10. Establishment of polytechnic schools and people's high schools and centres for youth and women for cultural activities.
11. Immediate adult franchise elections in unrepresented areas, that is, merged states and unions.
12. Pursuit of a positive policy of world peace through promoting full freedom and right for all nations; social and economic

equality among people and between nations, and a peace bloc which can dictate truce to warring power blocs.

13. Volunteer bands for agriculture, irrigation, road making and the like.

(*Fragments of a World Mind*, pp. 79-80).

Source: Varma. V. P. *Modern Indian Political Thought*. Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Educational Publishers, Agra, 1961, pp. 539-540

Lohia wanted reformation in the judicial system so that common man can have justice at minimum cost. He also suggested constituting a committee to reconsider the existing laws and to provide remedial measures to remove the undemocratic elements from those laws. He wanted single High Court and single Public Service Commission for two or three states so that the number of courts and public service commissions could be reduced and their jurisdiction could be expanded for more efficiency.

### Check Your Progress

1. How did Ram Manohar Lohia apply the concept of decentralisation in his Four Pillar State? Discuss.
2. Do you think that Gandhi's ideas had a great reflection on Ram Manohar Lohia's notion of democracy? Give arguments in favour of your answer.
3. Ram Manohar Lohia's concept of democracy has still its relevance in contemporary India. Justify it.
4. Write 'True' or 'False'.
  - a) Ram Manoha was a supporter of western democracy.
  - b) Lohia's Four Pillar State was an attempt to synthesize the opposed concepts of centralisation and decentralisation.

After going through this unit, now you have come to know that Ram Manohar Lohia was more original in his ideas as compared to other socialist thinkers of his time. You can realise how Lohia had challenged capitalism as well as Eurocentric socialist assumptions and tried to find out an alternative to solve socio-economic problems of south Asian nations. While dealing with any problems, he emphasised on the need of original thinking and initiative on the part of Asian

socialists. You have also learnt from this unit that Lohia was a true Marxist as well as a great socialist. Gandhian thought had a great impact on him from early age and on his ideas. So he always gave emphasis to Gandhi's ideas and advocated that Gandhism alone could provide the suitable base for socialism in India.

After reading this unit, you have also come to know how Lohia had made distinction between caste and class and analysed history through his cyclical theory. Lohia opposed the caste system and was in favour of giving preferential treatment to the people belonging to lower or scheduled caste. He was against all kinds of inequality and discrimination based on gender, colour, birth etc. So, he put forward the idea of *Sapta Kranti* to fight against inequality and injustice. Now, you are familiar with all these ideas.

This unit is helpful for you to understand that Lohia was essentially a man of action and of vision. He always kept himself aware about the latest developments in the world of ideas and thoughts. Lohia championed the idea of "Democratic Socialism" and was a social democrat in true sense. In order to achieve true socialism, he put forward his concept of Four Pillar State. you have also come to know how Lohia made his four pillar state a structure as well as a way so that each little community living in it can choose the life that they want. Lohia also emphasised on to reform Indian economy in order to remove poverty and to uplift the socio-economic conditions of poorer and farmers of India.

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## **Unit 4**

### **Jaya Prakash Narayan (Critique of Parliamentary Democracy)**

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4.1 Introduction

4.2 Objectives

4.3 Political Journey of Jaya Prakash Narayan

4.4 Jaya Prakash Narayan as a True Democrat

4.5 Critique of Parliamentary Democracy

4.5.1 Jaya Prakash Narayan's Concept of Participating Democracy

4.5.2 Critical Analysis

4.6 Summing Up

4.7 References and Suggested Readings

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### **4.1 Introduction**

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Jaya Prakash Narayan (1902-1979) was a leading socialist of modern India. He played an important role in the formation of Congress Socialist Party, a left wing group within the Congress party, in 1934. Before that, he founded Bihar Congress Socialist Party. Though J. P. Narayan began his political life as a Gandhian disciple, but later he came in contact with left wing intellectuals in U.S.A. and went under the influence of Marxism. He played an active role in the Quit India Movement in 1942 and was imprisoned several times for his involvement in India's struggle for independence. He Slowly J. P. Narayan started to lose his faith in Marxism because of its denial of individual liberty. He also became a great critic of communism. He tried to bring reform in Indian society through non-violent and peaceful methods. He realised that unless socialism was transferred into Sarvodaya, people could not enjoy freedom, equality and



brotherhood. He also wanted to have more co-operations between the congress and the socialists. After his failure to bring reform in Socialist party, he completely broke away from communism. J. P. Narayan became a follower of Gandhism and worked in close association with Vinoba Bhave. As a passionate lover of individual freedom throughout his life, he wanted to build India on the basis of Sarvodaya thoughts. He was a great critic of the parliamentary democratic set up. Instead of it, he wanted to have a partyless democracy in India. In this unit, you will come to know about J. P. Narayan's political journey as well as his critique of parliamentary democracy.

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## 4.2 Objectives

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J. P. Narayan is mostly known for his immense effort to bring reform in Indian political system. After going through this unit, you will be able to

- know J. P. Narayan's role in Indian freedom struggle
- examine his contribution towards the growth of socialist movement in India
- analyse J. P. Narayan's political journey from Marxism to a true follower of Gandhism
- evaluate J. P. Narayan's criticism against parliamentary democracy
- explore his suggestions to bring reform in the present day democratic set up.

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## 4.3 Political Journey of Jaya Prakash Narayan

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Jaya Prakash Narayan was a great socialist as well as a true nationalist. He started his political journey as a Gandhian Non-cooperator and a disciple of Bhagavad Gita. When he went to the U.S.A. in 1922, he came under the influence of Marxism and some socialists intellectuals of East Europe. He was also impressed by the writings of M. N. Roy basically his book *India in Transition*. After he came back from the U. S. A., Jaya Prakash Narayan discovered that truth is a relative concept and no single theory could hold true to all times and circumstances. He started to re-examine his faith in Marxism in the context of then India. He began to lose his faith in Marxism because of its denial of individual freedom and party regimentation. J. P. Narayan founded

Congress Socialist Party in 1934 and involved the communists too. When he found that the communists were not very sincere to the socialist dogmas, he turned them out. In 1940, at Ramgarh, J. P. Narayan openly denounced the Popular Front of Communists and became a great critic of the authoritarian regimentation of Russian Communism. He was actively involved in Quit India Movement and imprisoned for 4 years. Jaya Prakash managed to escape from Hazari Bagh Central Jail and organised underground struggle against British rule, but he got arrested again. He was opposed to Cabinet Mission Plan. After released from jail, Jaya Prakash along with other socialist leaders planned for mass revolt. He also tried to convince the national leaders that the social base of the independence movement needed to be broadened so that more workers and peasants could actively participate in it. He dreamt of a Socialist India where political and economic democracy would be established in true sense of the term; where people would be free to express their opinion; where all sections of the society would get opportunities to develop themselves to their full moral stature. In 1946, he formulated Thirteen Point Scheme of constructive work for Gramraj where Jaya Prakash emphasised on making each and every village of India self governing and self sufficient unit.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **Life Sketch of J. P. Narayan**

J. P. Narayan was born on October 11, 1902 in a progressive middle class family in Sitabdiara village in Bihar. After attending primary school in his village, he went to Patna for further education. During that period, political questions concerning India's struggle for independence stuck his mind and became a spirited nationalist. His growing interest in Bhagavad Gita as well as the influence of Mahatma Gandhi had made him a swadeshi in his thought and action. He was highly impressed by Gandhian non-violent weapons like Satyagraha. He even left his studies at Patna College just before examination being influenced by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's speech to give up English education. Then he joined the Bihar Vidyapeeth, a college run by the Congress. In 1922, J. P. went to the U.S.A. for higher education. There he did different kind of work like mechanic at garage and at slaughterhouse, washed dishes, worked at factory to his education fee. He got Master Degree in Sociology. In the U.S.A., J. P. came in contact with many socialists and was influenced by Marxist philosophy. But later he lost his faith in Marxian ideology. He played a very important role in the growth of socialist movement in India. He was an active leader in Quit India Movement. There has been major

transition in the political and philosophical notion of J.P. in different stages of his life. His life and philosophy can be analysed from different perspective i.e. as a great nationalist, democratic socialist, lover of individual freedom, phase of Sarvodaya and reconstruction of Indian polity, phase of total revolution etc.

Some of the major works of J. P. Narayan are 'Why Socialism' (1936), 'Towards Struggle' (1946), 'In the Lahore Fort' (1970), 'A Plea for the Reconstruction of Indian Polity' (1959), 'From Socialism to Sarvodaya' (1959), and 'Swaraj for the People' (1961).

Jaya Prakash was popularly referred to as “Lok Nayak” that means the people’s leader.

In 1953, Jaya Prakash proposed to Jawaharlal Nehru for more co-operations between Congress and the socialists, though he failed. He, along with some socialists, prepared Fourteen Point Scheme suggesting reform in Indian administration, reform in Indian economic system as well as constitutional amendment. Jaya Prakash Narayan tried to build the socialist ideology to highlight constantly on national struggle for independence against imperialism and on social revolution. He pleaded for reconstruction of Indian polity based on inner swaraj and realised that unless socialism was transformed into Sarvodaya, people could not be ensured freedom, equality and brotherhood. Mahatma Gandhi considered him as the greatest Indian authority on Socialism. Jaya Prakash resigned from Socialist Party (during that period, it was known as Praja Socialist Party) in 1954 and devoted himself to the Sarvodaya Movement of Vinoba Bhave.

Gandhi’s death had a profound impact on the transformation of Jaya Prakash Narayan’s political and social thought and turned him from socialist to sarvodaya. He wanted to build up Indian democratic set up according to Sarvodaya thought. He urged for decentralisation of power. Jaya Prakash appreciated the techniques of Bhoodan Movement regarding it as fair and effective alternative to Communist revolution. He joined Bhoodan Movement and worked closely with Vinobaji. Jaya Prakash criticised the parliamentary democracy of India and wanted to reform it. During this phase, he basically tried to remove the defects of modern democracies. He believed in people’s self rule to do away with the defects and failures of western democracy.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **Sarvodaya Movement**

The term “Sarvodaya” is basically a compound of two Sanskrit words “Sarva” that means all and “Udaya” that means uplift. So, Sarvodaya means uplift of all. The term “Sarvodaya” was first used by Mahatma Gandhi as the title of his Gujarati translated book of John Ruskin’s *Unto This Last*. Gandhi used the term as the ideal of his own political philosophy. Gandhi was of the view that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all and a lawyer’s work has the same value as the barber’s. The Sarvodaya Movement had the target to transform each and every village of India into a self supporting and self dependent unit and thus to establish a network of such village communities. It believed in decentralisation of power and replacement of Rajniti by Lokniti.

After Gandhi’s death, his disciples continued working to promote Sarvodaya Society that Gandhi dreamt. A Sarvodaya Samaj was established after Gandhi’s assassination under the leadership of Vinoba Bhave with an aim to establish a classless society. It would be based on truth and non-violence. The society of such imagination found its expression in Bhoodan Movement led by Acharya Vinoba Bhave. This movement was against the improper distribution of land and was an appeal to the landlords to donate some land to the landless cultivators. Other Sarvodaya workers were Jaya Prakash Narayan, Dada Dharmadhikari, Ravishankar Maharaj, Dhirendra Mazumdar, Shankarrao Deo who were closely associated with Vinobaji and aimed at establishing a coercive free society.

Jaya Prakash Narayan is popularly known for his concept of Total Revolution too, which he conferred in the last phase of his life. It was towards the end of 1973, he realised that it was the youth of the country who could take initiative to reconstruct the socio-economic structure of Indian society. He formulated a scheme of seven fold revolutions -social, economic, political, cultural, ideological, educational and spiritual. Jaya Prakash wanted the revolutionaries to proceed with courage and discipline without resorting to violence at any stage. He even had to go to jail during the emergency period in 1975.

### SAQ

Do you think that Jaya Prakash Narayan was the pioneer in the growth of Socialist thought in India? Discuss.

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#### 4.4 Jaya Prakash Narayan as a True Democrat

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Jaya Prakash Narayan was a passionate lover of individual freedom. His love for freedom makes him a true democrat. His democratic judgments were based on Sarvodaya philosophy. Jaya Prakash always believed in inner swaraj. All the time when he became leader of the Congress Socialist Party, the Praja Socialist Party and the Sarvodaya movement, his main concern was how to make India independent and help to establish a social, economic and political democracy. He was against the policy of centralisation in political and economic system. So, he was not satisfied with the present democratic set up of India and wanted to reform it throughout his whole life. Jaya Prakash placed moral and spiritual values above everything else. According to him, “Unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate the best constitutions and political systems would not make democracy work.” By democracy, he talked about self government of the people.

Jaya Prakash suggested some qualities so that accuracy of democracy can be ensured. These are:

- concern for truth,
- hatred for violence,
- love of liberty and courage to resist oppression,
- the spirit of co-operation,
- toleration for opinions of others,
- the sense of responsibility,
- belief in human quality and
- ability to lead a simple life.

Jaya Prakash believed that a democracy must have spiritual basis. When people practising democracy would believe in truth and non-violence, then only the spirituality could be achieved. People must be ready to face all oppressions with courage and confidence. He said that in an adequate form of democracy, the people who are conscious and aware of their own responsibilities should be satisfied.

Jaya Prakash wanted to establish both political and economic democracy. These two could not be separated from each other, he believed. So he said, “In this democracy, man will neither be a slave to capitalism nor to a party or the state. Man will be free.” Jaya Prakash pleaded for participatory democracy through decentralisation of authority. In his book *Swaraj for the People*, he wrote, “What I have in mind is what Gandhiji often used to emphasize namely, that as you proceed from the bottom level of government to the top, each higher level should have less and less functions and powers.” Panchayati Raj System was the foundation of Jaya Prakash’s views on democracy. He believed that this system would make the government available at the door step of the people and every individual would be able to participate in it. He said that power should be vested in the hands of people and only that much power need to be transferred to the higher levels of authority which would have been unavoidably required. He always wanted that the representatives should always give importance to people’s interest rather than on their own interest. In March 1977, Jayaprakash Narayan led all Janata Party M.Ps to the Samadhi of Gandhiji and asked them to follow the Gandhian path of serving the nation and its people without any selfish motive. This effort showed his deep concern for democracy and service.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Write two main principles envisioned for the Sarvodaya society.
2. What do you mean by “Inner Swaraj”?
3. Write “True” or “False”.
  - a) Jaya Prakash was a thoroughgoing Marxist.
  - b) Jaya Praksh gave importance to moral values for proper working of democracy.
  - c) Jaya Prakash was opposed to Quit India Movement.
4. Briefly discuss Jaya Prakash Narayan’s transformation from socialism to sarvodaya.
5. Analyse Jaya Prakash Narayan’s political thought as a true democrat.

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## 4.5 Critique of Parliamentary Democracy

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Jaya Prakash Narayan was a great critic of parliamentary democracy. He felt that the present democratic system is highly defective. He studied the structure and functioning of democratic government of various European countries as well as of Indian democratic system after the implementation of the new constitution. After independence, majority of Indian had the positive faith on the adoption of the constitution that it would result into translating the high aspirations of national movement. But Jaya Prakash and some others got disappointed with the working of the democratic polity in India. He found that one basic defect of the democratic structure in most European countries and India was the increasing concentration of powers at the higher levels of government. As a true democrat, he always believed that power should be vested in the hands of people only. The higher authority should be given only that much power what would have been unavoidably needed. He has written and given speeches several times about the limitations of parliamentary democracy.

**Firstly**, Jaya Prakash Narayan stated that the most serious defect of present parliamentary democracy is its highly centralised nature. The government becomes so strong that people cannot take any active part in the functioning of democratic institutions. Jaya Prakash was of the view that people could cast vote only at the time of election. Powers were actually concentrated in the hands of a small, dominant group. The people were ruled much in the same manner and by same kind as the British used to do during colonial period.

**Secondly**, according to Jaya Prakash, in the present parliamentary system of democracy, the authority started from the above that made its base very narrow. It is like an inverted pyramid that stands on its head and wants that it should made to stand on its base. He always believed that in a true democratic set up, the authority should be started from down below.

**Thirdly**, Jaya Prakash had no faith in written constitution, division of powers etc. He said that it would hardly be able to guarantee freedom to the people. These are meaningless until and unless moral values and spiritual qualities develop in the public.

**Fourthly**, Jaya Prakash criticised the role of the political party in the present parliamentary democracy. Political parties got engaged with corrupt and undemocratic practices in order to come to power as well as to retain in power. He rejected parliamentary system of democracy

in India based on party politics. Moreover, the control of the party leader is so rigid that it again results in centralisation in party system too. Jaya Prakash stated that those who could speak well dominated politics and managed to come to power irrespective of all considerations whether they were sincere about their duty or not.

**Fifthly**, Jaya Prakash was of the view that along with the political party the election system was another defect in the present democratic set up. Election was wastage of time and money for him. He stated that it creates rifts within the ranks of political parties as well as rivalry between competing elites. Political parties use some sensitive issues like casteism and communalism in order to win in the election.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **Jaya Prakash Narayan's Rejection of Party System**

His arguments in favour of his rejection of party system are:

- Through the principle of the individual vote, the individual became atomized and the state became the arithmetical sum of individuals;
- A party came to power with only minority support where there were more than two parties;
- The people were intensely subjected to manipulative mass media and thus they were often unduly influenced;
- Political parties indulged in half truths and outright lies and the real interest of the country was forgotten;
- There was no proper link between the government and the individual voter;
- Elections were expensive.

Jaya Prakash Narayan, *Towards Revolution*, Everyman's Vol. XXVII, No. XIV, March-April, 1969, p.144.

**Sixthly**, Jaya Prakash also pointed out the defects in legislative assemblies in parliamentary democracy. According to him, in actual practice, it is the minority that rules over the majority. From his practical experience Jaya Prakash stated that in any constituency so many candidates contest in the election and that candidate who get more votes than his other opponents win the election though he may not get more than fifty percent of the total votes. Likewise, the



majority party in the legislature may not have got majority of the total votes polled in the election. Even in the cabinet meetings it was seen that only a few powerful ministers took the decisions as experienced by Jaya Prakash. That is why he said that the present day legislative system resulted in the rule of minority over the majority.

**Lastly**, according to Jaya Prakash, the western parliamentary democracy sought to combine political liberalism with capitalist economy as well as some features of welfare state. This type of democracy was undoubtedly unfit to implement true socialism. Western democracy, he felt, ignored the organic nature of the society and in this society, greed led to conflict and bureaucratic oligarchy. He was of the view that dominance of private corporations and bureaucracy led to the centralisation of power. Bureaucracy has grown very powerful and overburdened with more than enough work. Jaya Prakash noticed oppression in every form of bureaucratic administration.

Thus Jaya Prakash was very disappointed with the centralizing tendency of parliamentary system of democracy and felt that it could not have been the best of models of government for India. He wanted the reformation and reconstruction of Indian political institutions to make them more democratic and put forward the idea of communitarian democracy or participating democracy.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **Jaya Prakash's views of Indian Democracy**

A basic flaw discovered by Jaya Prakash in the democratic structure prevailing in India after independence was increasing concentration of powers at the higher levels of government. According to him, the politics of party and power had corrupted Indian democracy and defeated its basic values of human freedom, equality and cooperation. Regarding Indian democracy, Jaya Prakash said, "Parties backed by financial organisations and the means of propaganda could impose themselves on the people, how people's rule became in effect party rule, how party rule in turn, became the rule of a caucus of coterie; how democracy was reduced to mere casting of votes; how even this right of vote was restricted severely by the system of powerful parties, setting up their candidates from whom alone, for all practical purposes the voters had to make their choice; how even this limited choice, was made unreal by the fact that the issues posed before the electorate were by and large incomprehensible to it." By renouncing the corrupting agents of democracy, *i.e.* party-politics and power-politics, he sought

to realize the dream of withering away of the state, which both Marx and Gandhi had visualised long back. He advocated for Sarvodaya democracy based on non-violence. This kind of system would not need any police and army for protection and would not consist merely of formal institutions. It would replace centralization of power, the majority principle as well as the existing party system by welfare society, decision by consensus of opinion and partyless democracy etc. He also advocated that if the people felt that their representatives had proved incompetent, they would have the right to ask for their explanation and recall them. It was a supreme democratic right, he believed. He believed that the constitution of free India had failed to include this right in its ambit. So, he proposed a system for India based on partyless democracy, which would involve greater political consciousness, social and economic equality, faith in purity of means, indirect election, nonviolent dispositions, etc. He also extended the idea of organization of the local bodies free from party politics.

**SAQ**

“Jaya Prakash Narayan was a true democrat” – Give two reasons in support of this statement.

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**4.5.1 Jaya Prakash Narayan’s Concept of Participating Democracy**

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Jaya Prakash Narayan called for the replacement of the present parliamentary democracy of India with what he called as “Communitarian Democracy” or participating democracy based on decentralisation of power. As he realised that the party politics had been destroying the very roots of democracy. So he felt that the whole system should be changed. There would be a partyless democracy and

decentralisation of authority. He adopted the idea of participating democracy from Yugoslavia. He saw that in Yugoslavia, the people's committees managed the local affairs and enjoyed enormous powers. Jaya Prakash observed that it was the only country in Europe where maximum participating democracy as well as maximum participating socialism could be found. So, he took the idea of participating democracy and wrote his book 'A Plea for the Reconstruction of Indian Polity' in 1959. In this book, he explained his concept of participating democracy or communitarian democracy.

The notion of communitarian democracy as advocated by Jaya Prakash was much different from parliamentary democracy. He suggested that co-operation and co-sharing would be the core values of communitarian democracy so that the interest of all individuals could be articulated in the decision making of the country. Therefore, he emphasised on moral and ethical qualities of democracy and for he was of the view that moral regeneration should be brought about by different means like service, sacrifice and love of voluntary workers. Jaya Prakash mentioned some methods to introduce communitarian Democracy.

First, he pleaded for a decentralised, participatory and grass root oriented political order that we can see in the panchayati raj system as existing in the country since ancient period. He tried to broaden the base of local level of government in order to ensure active and more participation of people in the decision making. He called it as "swaraj from below". He recommend five levels of decentralised polity i.e. village level, block level, district level, provincial level and central level. At each level, there would be selection of members through community consensus instead of election and the principle of majority would be replaced by unanimity. It would help to keep the political system free from party politics. The Gram Sabha, to be formed at village level, would act as the backbone of grass roots democracy. In such a decentralised and federal structure only, the true spirit of democratic governance could be inculcated to the masses.

Another method of communitarian democracy, according to Jaya Prakash Narayan, was reconstruction of economic system. He was opposed to the exploitative and competitive economic structure as prevailing in capitalist system. He pleaded for decentralised as well as village oriented planning system in India. Jaya Prakash argued that at village level development plans should be planned with increasing consolidation at block and district levels. The provincial and central levels should provide only technical and logistical support to formulate and execute such planning at village level.

Jaya Prakash Narayan also wanted to have a Sarvodaya society in order to execute his concept of participating democracy. The Sarvodaya society would be free from party politics and all people would dedicate themselves to the service of the society. He expected all the political parties to co-operate in the establishment of Sarvodaya society. There would be no possibility of class struggle in Sarvodaya society as it believes in brotherhood. Like Gandhi and Vinobaji, Jaya Prakash also emphasised on rational theory of social good and harmony. He was of the view that Sarvodaya society would bring dynamic changes to Indian democracy through truth, love and non-violence.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **Jaya Prakash Narayan's views on Panchayati Raj**

Jaya Prakash opined that introduction of Panchayati Raj system is the only way to realise participating or communitarian democracy. He emphasised on reviving and reinvigorating the panchayati raj system or what he called as '*swaraj from below*'. Jaya Prakash suggested five levels of decentralised polity consisting of village, block, district, provincial and central levels. He proposed that the basic and lowest unit of political organisation would be the Gram Sabha(village assembly) consisting of all the adults of the village. They will meet once in a month to discuss about the village matters. The members of Gram Sabha will choose the members of Gram Panchayat, which shall be the executive organ of Gram Sabha. In similar pattern, the members of Gram Panchayat will select members of Panchayat Samiti. The Panchayat Samiti would be the middle level of panchayati raj, located at the administrative unit of block. Finally, the apex of the panchayati raj was conceptualised in terms of District Panchayat or Zila Parishad. The members of Panchayat Samitis would choose the members of Zila Parishad. After District Panchayat, there would be Provincial Panchayat and then Central Panchayat. Jaya Prakash also highlighted that difficulties may arise in the establishment of such a system. So, he laid down some conditions to overcome any difficulties. He suggested that people should be given proper education. Political parties should not interfere in the activities of various institutions of Panchayati Raj. Effective powers and real authorities as well as financial autonomy should be given to these institutions. The village authorities should have control over civil servants working under their jurisdiction.

Jaya Prakash considered that economic decentralisation is equally important along with political decentralisation for the effectiveness of Panchayati Raj System. He emphasised on small machine and labour intensive economy for full utilisation of local and regional resources. Village industries must be integrated with village agriculture.

Jaya Prakash's concept of participatory democracy was based on the excellence of the political and economic institutions of ancient India. In order to reconstruct Indian polity he also emphasised on concepts like individual freedom, social collaboration, gramdan, administrative efficiency, free from any kind of oppression as well as free from any differences based on caste, creed and religion.

**SAQ**

Do you think that Jaya Prakash Narayan's concept of participating democracy can reduce political violence in India? Give two arguments in favour of your answer.

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**4.5.2 Critical Analysis**

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The political and social ideas of Jaya Prakash Narayan as well as his contribution towards India are undoubtedly praiseworthy. However, his scheme for the reconstruction of Indian polity has been criticised by some scholars. Critics are of the view that Jaya Prakash's idea to reform the political system is based on imagination only and regard him as utopian. His idea of partyless democracy is criticised on the ground that the method of consensus or indirect nomination for choosing members for provincial and central legislature is not workable in a vast country like India. Another criticism against Jaya Prakash's notion of participating democracy is that it is not easy to persuade all the political parties with different political ideologies to cease party belongingness and to work together in the establishment of Sarvodaya samaj. Even if they work together, there will no end to their

differences. Critics also find that in partyless democracy, there will be no contact between the common people and the members of the provincial or central legislatures. Moreover, the disproportionate focus on Panchayati raj as the nucleus of the post-independent Indian polity appears absurd for others.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Write “True” or “False”.
  - a) Jaya Prakash Narayan was in favour of capitalist economy.
  - b) According to Jaya Prakash the Panchayat Samiti would be the middle level of panchayati raj in his partyless democratic system.
  - c) Jaya Prakash’s participating democracy was based on decentralisation of both political and economic power.
2. Evaluate Jaya Prakash Narayan’s political thought as a critic of parliamentary democracy.
3. Critically analyse Jaya Prakash Narayan’s concept of partyless democracy.
4. How did Jaya Prakash Narayan want to bring reform in Indian democratic system? Discuss.

After going through this unit, now you have come to know that Jaya Prakash Narayan was an indomitable personality as well as a heroic leader of India. During his student life, the philosophy of Bhagavad Gita and Gandhiji’s ideas influenced him a lot. When he was in U.S.A. he came under the influence of Marxism, but that did not last long. He lost his faith on Marxism because of its denial of individual liberty.

You have also come to know about the role played by Jaya Prakash during the freedom struggle of India, specially in the Quit India Movement. He had even gone to jail for his active participation in the movement. He was the main figure behind the formation of the Congress Socialist Party in India and was involved with it till his resignation in 1954. After that Jaya Prakash closely worked with Vinoba Bhave in the Sarvodaya Movement. Throughout his life, he tirelessly worked for the salvation of the people and even suffered a lot. He always believed in individual freedom and tried to establish a society where people would be free from any kind of oppression and exploitation.

After reading this unit, you are now able to know why Jaya Prakash criticised the parliamentary democratic system and was not satisfied

with the present form of Indian democracy. He was always against centralisation of power and authority. That is why he wanted that the party system should be abolished. He emphasised on radical ideological programmes for the reconstruction of political, economic as well as social structure of the country and proposed the concept of Sarvodaya Samaj.

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## Unit 5

### Jaya Prakash Narayan : Total Revolution

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5.1 Introduction

5.2 Objectives

5.3 The Concept of Total Revolution

5.3 The Concept of Total Revolution

5.4 Causes of Jaya Prakash Narayan's Total Revolution

5.4.1 Jaya Prakash Narayan and Bihar Movement

5.5 Jaya Prakash Narayan's Concept of Total Revolution

5.5.1 Seven Fold Revolutions

5.5.2 Total Revolution – An Assessment

5.6 Summing Up

5.7 References & Suggested Readings

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### 5.1 Introduction

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In the previous unit of this block, we have already discussed about Jaya Prakash Narayan's journey from socialism to sarvodaya and his struggle to bring reform in India both in pre-independence and post-independence period. Dissatisfying with the present form of parliamentary democratic system in India, he projected communitarian or participating democracy to carry out sarvodaya based socialist programme. Jaya Prakash pleaded for decentralisation of political, administrative, economic as well as of judicial powers. Throughout his life, he worked for socio-economic reconstruction of India.

In the later period of his life, Jaya Prakash Narayan suggested the idea of Total Revolution, specially during Bihar Movement. He called for



mass upsurge against the widespread corruption and centralisation prevailing in Indian democracy. Jaya Prakash wanted the youth of the country to protest without using any violent means. By the term “Total Revolution”, he meant a new kind of evolution to bring change not only in the government, but also in the society and in individual. Jaya Prakash’s journey from Marxism to Gandhism resulted in Total Revolution. He was highly impressed by Gandhi’s thought on socio-economic problems and the techniques through which Gandhi wanted to bring reform in the contemporary socio-economic and political reality. Like Gandhi, Jaya Prakash also adopted moral values, decentralisation of economic and political power as well as non-violent methods to achieve the goals of total revolution. In this unit, you will come to know about the concept of Total Revolution as well as Jaya Prakash Narayan’s mode of action that propelled the movement.

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## 5.2 Objectives

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Jaya Prakash Narayan remained outside electoral politics for the whole life and worked as a social activist for reconstruction of Indian democracy. In the later years of his life he even led the youths of the country despite his ill health. After reading this unit you will be able to

- conceptualise the terms “Revolution” and “Total Revolution”
- explore the causes of total revolution
- know the role of Jaya Prakash Narayan in the Gujarat Movement and Bihar Movement
- analyse various plans and programmes formulated by Jaya Prakash for total development and socio-political and economic reconstruction of India.
- assess the success and failure of Jaya Prakash Narayan’s total revolution.

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## 5.3 The Concept of Total Revolution

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By the term “Revolution”, we mean a radical change in the established order through organised movement. A revolt is a challenge to political authority. A section or sections of society launch an organised struggle to overthrow not only an established government and regime but also the socio-economic structure which sustains it, and replace the

structure with an alternative social order. The Greek philosopher Aristotle linked revolution to the desire for equality and honour. According to Plato, revolutions occur when institutions, such as the Church or the State, fail to instil a system of values and a code of ethics in the society that prevent upheaval. Some thinkers define revolution as a structural and institutional transformation in the existing social relationship and institutional bases of the society. According to Wilbert E. More, “Revolution is a type of change which engages a considerable portion of the population and results in change in the structure of government”. Thus, by revolutionary change, we may mean any element of change –may it be a change in the dominant values of the community or its social structure, institutional, leadership or elite component, or legal or violent change.

The concept of Total Revolution was a further extension of Gandhian thought on social change. Gandhi believed that in order to bring change in the society, an individual must, first of all, change himself. By social change, Gandhi meant far-reaching and novel changes in the entire social organisation. The concept of total revolution was for the first time evolved by Gandhian disciple Vinoba Bhave during the 1960s. Vinoba’s main objective was to articulate his desire for the need of a comprehensive movement in the country which would transform all the aspects of life in order to ‘mould a new man ... to change human life and create a new world’.

He saw common man suffering from the maladies of unemployment, corruption and price-rise because of corrupted and authoritarian regime. He saw that power was being concentrated in Prime Minister’s hand. He wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi questioning about fundamental rights of the citizen and independence of judiciary. He also wrote about corruption in administrative and political life. He wrote letters to all members of parliament, but he did not receive any response. Jaya Prakash became more and more determined on his belief that for reconstruction of the socio-economic structure of Indian society, there was no alternative rather than the practice of self discipline and the establishment of participating democracy. It was towards the end of 1973 at Paunar ashram of Vinoba Bhave that he felt an inner urge to give such a call to the people.

Jaya Prakash was very inspired by the peaceful revolution in Musehari sub-division of Muzzaffarpur, a stronghold of Naxalites in Bihar, and re-settlement of the Chambal Valley dacoits. Jaya Prakash’s faith on the power of the people basically the students further strengthened by the Nav Nirman Andolan of Gujarat that resulted in dissolution of the elected government of the state. He realised that only the youth of the country could take up the work of bringing about total revolution in

the country. Thus he finally arrived at his idea of total revolution. On June 5, 1974, Jaya Prakash raised his famous slogan *Sampoorna Kranti* (Total Revolution), in a speech at a huge rally in Gandhi Maidan in Patna. His speech titled *Towards Total Revolution* reflected his political passions. After the very beginning, he clarified that their struggle was not a movement, but a total revolution, because of which the protestors had to make sacrifice, undergo sufferings, face lathis and bullets, and had to go to jails.

Nav Nirman Andolan reached a peak point in Gujarat in 1974. Students' protests in Bihar had also started under the leadership of Jaya Prakash Narayan. Jaya Prakash incorporated various elements from different philosophy in his total revolution. He combined the revolutionary ethos of Marxism with the inclusive approach of Gandhism for transforming the society. According to Jaya Prakash, the Gandhian method of passive resistance or Satyagraha would be the instruments of social change in total revolution. The concept of total revolution was an effort to bring into existence the Gandhian humanist version of an ideal society. It has been pertinently observed in a recent study that Jaya Prakash's Total Revolution was a continuation of the preceding movement for non-violent revolution through Bhoodan and Gramdan. He himself said, "There is hardly any difference between Sarvodaya and Total Revolution. If there is any, then Sarvodaya is the goal and Total Revolution the means. Total Revolution is basic change in all aspects of life. There cannot be Sarvodaya without this".

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **The Nav Nirman Andolan**

The Nav Nirman Andolan was a protest in Gujarat against corruption in politics and misgovernance of the Congress government. It was led by the students and middle class people who first raised their voice against increased price of food and Congress government's false promise to remove poverty from India. In 1971, India defeated Pakistan and Indira Gandhi was re-elected as the Prime Minister with her slogan "Gareebi Hatao". But soon people realised that the slogan "gareebi Hatao" was changed to "Gareeb Hatao" as the government did not give any importance to the miseries of common people basically what they had to face after the 1972 famines in Gujarat. The movement started when the students of L.D. College of Engineering, Ahmedabad went on a strike as a protest against increased mess charge of food. The middle class people and industry labourers also joined with them and they formed Nav Nirman Yuvak Samiti. The opposition

parties like Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Congress (O), SP, CPI (M) also supported the agitators. There were allegations of corruption against Chimanbhai Patel, the Chief Minister of Gujarat. They called for bandhs and dharnas demanding the resignation of the Gujarat ministry. It also resulted in violent activities between police force and common people. The government resigned and the President's rule was imposed on February 9, 1974. Jayaprakash Narayan visited Ahmedabad and admired the students for their effort. He even asked them not to stop their protest until their demands were fulfilled. Morarji Desai also started hunger strike on March 11, 1974 demanding the dissolution of the Assembly. Under immense pressure from students' community supported by opposition parties, the government got frightened and dissolved the Assembly on March 15, 1974. Fresh election was held in Gujarat in 1975 where the Congress was defeated. Thus the Nav Nirman Andolan inspired other movements in the country in later period.

**SAQ**

Define Revolution with example (Write within 20-25 words).

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**5.4 Causes of Jaya Prakash Narayan's Total Revolution**

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Though the idea of total revolution was the last intellectual contribution of Jaya Prakash, but one can find the roots of it in various plans, programmes and proposals prepared by him since his days began as the founder of Congress Socialist Party. In 1934, when Jaya Prakash was in Socialist party, he formulated *Fifteen point programme* of All India Congress Socialist Party that clearly indicated his progressive and reformative mind. He firmly stood for the reduction of land revenue, the limitation of expenditure as well as the nationalisation of industries. Likewise, the *Thirteen Point Programme*

formulated by Jaya Prakash in 1946 was also a reflection of his constructive ideas for Gramraj. In 1953, Jaya Prakash and other socialist leaders prepared a *Fourteen Point Scheme* to serve as the basis of cooperation between the Congress and Praja Socialist Party. In this scheme also, he emphasised on establishing economic equality, progressive development of state trading, elimination of all restraints that hampered agricultural productivity and also on amendment of the constitution to bring necessary reforms. During the Sarvodaya phase, Jaya Prakash got more involved with Vinoba and pleaded for a Sarvodaya Samaj to be based on truth and non-violence. He emphasised on the reconstruction of Indian polity and economy through increasing decentralisation of power for the realisation of inner swaraj as well as improvement in the character of the individuals comprising it.

Jaya Prakash's call for Total Revolution was a result of his dissatisfaction with the defects of the ongoing political, economic as well as social system of India. Some of them were:

- Jaya Prakash Narayan was not satisfied with the parliamentary form of democratic system in India and the party politics. Centralisation of power had resulted in the plentiful growth in the power of bureaucracy and people had hardly enjoyed the right to take part in the decision making. He was of the view that Indian democracy should be transformed into people's democracy and power should be in the hands of people in true sense.
- Jaya Prakash was opposed to the conservative caste system rampant in Indian society. He recommended the members of Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini to take lead to organise the Harizans and the other weaker sections of the society. He also pleaded for social change and reforms in social structure.
- Jaya Prakash was not satisfied with the condition of the Indian women in post-independence period. He witnessed lower literary rate among women, the sufferings and pain of women because of problems like dowry and untouchability. He wanted that the youth should protest and initiate struggle against such evils and women should have enjoy equal rights and freedom in the society.
- Even though Zamindari system had been abolished and measures had been taken for land reform, but still the living conditions of the small and marginalised landowners and agricultural labourers were not improved. The villages were still in the grab of higher castes and rich landlords. Jaya Prakash realised that even the Bhoodan movement failed to

improve the condition of the poor and landless labourers and the agrarian unrest in Bihar. The zaminders and landowners distributed land to landless peasants. But later it was known that most of those donated lands were either government land that which later fell under the Zamindari Abolition Act or land that could not be used for cultivation or disputed land. Jaya Prakash got frustrated with these kind of fraudulent ways of Zaminders and landowners. So, he was sympathised with cause of Naxalite Movement and in 1969 at a conference in Delhi, he said, “ I have ever sympathy for the Naxalite people. They are violent people. But I have every sympathy for them because they are doing something for the poor ... Thousands of sharecroppers are being evicted because the landlords have the right to resume the land; because these poor people do not have even chit to prove that the land was in their cultivating possession. They cannot prove it in a court law. Do you think that mere mantras of shanty to save the situation ... What India needs today on the political agenda is non-violent social revolution. Otherwise violence will grow.”

### **Stop to Consider**

“The movement of 1974 was not started to throw Indiraji out of power. I saw a distant dream beyond this movement. It gave me the vision of such a revolution that could have changed the society completely. The slogan of revolution was Total Revolution. It was about changing the whole life - all aspects of life of both man and the society i.e. the system of marriage, the caste relations, politics, economy have to be changed and that was the urge in it.<sup>33</sup> Again, he wrote, "This is a golden opportunity for changing the entire moral climate of the country and bringing about amoral revolution... It is idle to expect that the politicians and administrators will be reformed while the society remains as it is. The dishonesty that has permeated politics has percolated from the top into the entire social order. This disease is not confined to Bihar only.”

-----**Jaya Prakash Narayan *Total Revolution***, pp.16-17

- Jaya Prakash was dissatisfied to see the corrupt practices in politics and in administration. According to him, one of the

main causes of underdevelopment in India was the widespread corruption in the political and administrative system. Jaya Prakash came to know about black marketing, hoarding and profiteering in the food grain distribution system. He said, “We have had enough bitter experience of the kind of controls imposed by the government .... We will catch hold of the whole sellers and the mill-owners if they are found to be indulging in corrupt practices.” He aimed at uprooting of corruption from political and social system in India.

- Jaya Prakash criticised higher techniques in production, heavy industrialisation, globalisation and technological encroachment. According to him, these were of no use for common people. On the contrary, these would increase state capitalism leading to corruption, wastage as well as inefficiency in administration. It would also create and increase the number of unemployment in the country as the general people had no role in public enterprise except as workers and consumers. The gap between rich and poor had been increasing day by day.
- Jaya Prakash wanted revolutionary changes in education system of India. He was of the view that the education system remained basically the same as it was under the British rule. The purpose of education should be to produce and organise people for the nation. So, he wished for abolition of job oriented degree education. Rather he emphasised on introducing special, vocational and professional education in the country. Jaya Prakash stated that involvement of students in movement for social change was also an educational process. It strengthens their commitment and devotion towards the society.

At first, Jaya Prakash Narayan tried to make the people conscious about their situations and then he appealed to the leaders of political parties. But he did not get any positive response from them. Then he started to believe that only a powerful revolution could bring about changes in India and for that the youth of the country needed to be organised. He also prepared some plan and techniques for the revolution to save democracy.

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### 5.4.1 Jaya Prakash Narayan and Bihar Movement

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Earlier in 1974, Jaya Prakash became the leader of students' movement in Bihar that gradually transformed into a popular movement known as Bihar Movement. Though the movement started in March, 1974, but it was only a result of certain developments and events in different parts of rural and urban Bihar. It was a fight against government corruption, increasing price, unemployment, caste discrimination etc. In Bihar, it was seen that caste ruled roost in the state and even the parties were identified on the basis of caste. The dalit peasants demanded the urge for equity, respect for their women, payment of minimum wages, an end to the beggar system, implementation of the Land Ceiling Act, redistribution of land and the water bodies for agricultural purposes in favour of marginal farmers. The Bihar Chhatra Sangharsh Samiti (BCSS), a committee of non-communist students, was the central organisation of the movement.

On March 16, 1974, the Bihar Chhatra Navjawan Sangharsh Morcha (BCNSM) organised processions at several places like Patna, Muzaffarpur, Begusarai, Sahebganj, Motihari against increased price. Their slogan was "Bihar bhi Gujarat Banega" means the situation of Bihar was also going to be like Gujarat where the Nav Nirman Andolan was at peak point during that time. They became aggressive when the government did not respond to their demands, and organised militant struggle. On March 18, several hundred students gathered near Raj Bhavan and the State Assembly preventing the Governor from attending the assembly. It resulted in direct clash between police and the protestors.

Jaya Prakash had already raised his hope on students' community basically from students' agitation in Gujarat. He addressed the youth of the country at Kanpur in 1974 and said, "The country is fast heading towards a new revolution. There is another 1942 movement in sight to change the course of history". It was during the movement, Jaya Prakash called for peaceful total revolution. On June 5, 1974 Jaya Prakash gave speech at Patna rally to organize a protest at the Bihar Legislative Assembly. It resulted in the arrest of 1600 agitators and 65 student leaders by July 1, 1974. Although the rally wanted the dissolution of Bihar Assembly, their main aim was to achieve that freedom for which thousands of the country's youths made sacrifices. Jaya Prakash said, "Educational institutions are corrupt. Thousands of youths face a bleak future. Unemployment goes on increasing. The poor gets less and less work. Land ceiling laws are passed, but the number of landless people is increasing. Small farmers have lost their lands." In order to succeed in achieving the goals of total revolution,



Jaya Prakash formed “Chhatra Yuva Sangharsha Vahini” with some fully trained and devoted workers. The Bihar movement turned into a mass demonstration in 1974 and people demanded for immediate changes in the political, social and educational systems. At that time, Jaya Prakash also asked people of Bihar as well as of India to have unity among themselves in order to bring full transformation in Indian political framework.

The movement used non-violent methods like dharna, *gherao*, silent protests, demonstrations, processions in order to bring down the state government. Throughout the first half of 1975, Jaya Prakash travelled all over India to mobilize masses against Congress. He was able to capture people’s sentiments through anti-corruption speeches. The most important occurrence was that almost all the opposition parties came under a common cause of “anti-Congress” despite their differences in ideologies.

On 25th June 1975, JP announced a nationwide movement demanding Indira Gandhi’s resignation because she was found guilty by Allahabad High Court for violating electoral laws in 1971 general election campaign. Opposition parties led by J.P. Narayana organised a massive demonstration in Ram Leela grounds on 25 June 1975 for resignation of Indira Gandhi. He announced a nationwide satyagraha for her resignation and asked the military, police and government employees to disregard unconstitutional and illegal orders. Indira Gandhi declared emergency on the midnight of June 25, 1975 and on 26<sup>th</sup> June, Jaya Prakash was arrested.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. Write “True” or “False”.
  - a) The phase “Sampoorna Kranti” was related to Nav Nirman Andolan.
  - b) The main objective of total revolution was to remove Indira Gandhi from power.
  - c) Jaya Prakash Narayan was sympathetic towards the cause of Naxalite Movement.
2. What do you mean by Jaya Prakash Narayan’s concept of Total Revolution?
3. Write two reasons behind the students’ movement in Bihar.
4. What are the main causes of Total Revolution? Discuss
5. Write a note on Nav Nirman Andolan.

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## 5.5 Jaya Prakash Narayan's Concept of Total Revolution

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According to Jaya Prakash Narayan, *Total Revolution* or *Sampoorna Kranti* was a combination of seven revolutions, the main aim of which was to bring about a transformation in the existing society in accordance with the Sarvodaya ideals. These seven revolutions were: social, political, economic, cultural, educational, spiritual and ideological or intellectual. To quote Jaya Prakash, "I have been saying that total revolution is a combination of seven revolutions – social, economic, political, cultural, ideological or intellectual, educational and spiritual. This number may be increased or decreased. For instance, the cultural revolution may include educational and ideological revolutions..... Economic revolution may be split up into industrial, agricultural, technological revolutions etc. Similarly, intellectual revolution may be split up into two – scientific and philosophical. Even spiritual revolution can be viewed as made up of the moral and spiritual or it can be looked upon as part of the cultural and so on." The idea of total revolution reflected Jaya Prakash's commitment towards socialist and humanistic ideals.

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### 5.5.1 Seven Fold Revolutions

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Though Jaya Prakash had mentioned about seven revolutions, but he was of the view that the number may be increased or decreased as per demands of the social structure in a political system. However, we can summarise his idea of seven revolutions as follows:

- **Economic Revolution:** According to Jaya Prakash, emphasis should be given on reduction of grossly disproportionate inequalities in the economic system. Economic revolution includes curbing price rise and inflation, full employment, improvement in agriculture and agricultural labourers and increasing the wages of the industrial workers. He pleaded for self governing rural based industry. Jaya Prakash suggested that the small rural industries would manufacture goods for domestic use. The planning should be at grass root level and the concept of social ownership might be applied to the large industrial establishments.

- **Political Revolution:** Jaya Prakash was determined on reforming the existing democratic system in India. He wrote that “corruption is eating into the vitals of our political life. It is disturbing development, undermining the administration and making of mockery of all laws and regulations. It is eroding people’s faith and exhausting their proverbial patience.” He wanted a system where people can vote in an incorruptible manner with their free conscience. Jaya Prakash said that there would be no political parties. The People’s Committees would set up candidates for election rather than imposed by the central or state parliamentary boards. Political officeholders would be in their duty for minimum two years and all incumbents of high posts in legislature, government, universities and private sector should declare their assets periodically. According to Jaya Prakash, the legislators who betray the trust of the voters should be recalled and government process should be based on discussions of and deliberations upon issues, demands and policies. He wanted the army and the police not to obey unconstitutional and illegal orders of the government.
- **Social Revolution:** According to Jaya Prakash Narayan, unjustified and irrational customs, conventions and practices must be removed from society. He considered caste as the symbol of vocational rigidity and social stratification. So he said that encouragement to inter-caste marriages should be provided. Moreover, there should be only one caste – the human caste. Jaya Prakash emphasised on abolition of all kinds of discrimination from the society. He also laid out plan for creating consciousness among people about various social evils such as dowry system, caste conflicts, communalism and untouchability. One of the important objectives of Jaya Prakash’s total revolution was to change the society as well as individual’s outlook towards the society. He asked the workers of the country to prepare themselves for the long struggle for achieving the objectives of Sampurna Kranti. Jaya Prakash and Sarvodaya workers envisaged a Sarvodaya society that would be non-exploitative, casteless and classless in nature.
- **Cultural Revolution:** According to Jaya Prakash, the aesthetic and ethical values of culture should be imbibed by the people. He emphasised on cultural assimilation and was of the view that people were to be taught to respect the culture of others.
- **Educational Revolution:** Jaya Prakash proposed that educational planning should be linked with economic planning. He always pleaded for vocational education instead of job

oriented degree course. Jaya Prakash witnessed worst forms of nepotism and corruption in the universities. He was of the view that the universities should become pure centres of teaching, training and research and act as motivational centre for promoting mental growth and development. Education should aim at humanization of science and promoting non-violence. Education must create awareness among the submerged and weaker sections of the society.

- **Spiritual or Moral Revolution:** Jaya Prakash was of the view that primordial, conceptual, existential and valuational truth was to be encouraged in place of antinomian dialectics, wrangling and semantic victories. Emphasis should be given to promote moral values like love, affection, respect, good will, magnanimity etc. Co-operation was to be encouraged. Jaya Prakash stated that some prescriptive moral ideals and standards may be deemed to be almost absolute and universally applicable to promote good life throughout the world. Moral values and faith in our own culture must be restored in the society and people must be made both scientific and spiritual. He emphasised on moral and ethical values of both end and means. He believed that unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriately developed, democracy cannot function in the right direction.
- **Ideological or Intellectual Revolution:** Jaya Prakash asserted that a strong opposition, powerful public opinion, free and bold press, intellectual and moral pressure from academics and trade unions were all important to make Indian democracy a vibrant and successful one. He also recommended people to rethink their views and attitudes toward India's democratic functioning.

### **Stop to Consider**

#### **Techniques of Total Revolution**

Jaya Prakash Narayan clearly mentioned that the method to achieve the goals of total revolution would be non-violence. He wanted the youths and other protestors to proceed with courage and discipline. He asked them not to resort to violence at any stage, so that the government could not find out any legitimate excuse for violently curbing their efforts. The Satyagraha techniques that Jaya Prakash and other revolutionaries used to achieve the goals of total revolution were: persuasion, non-cooperation, civil disobedience, strikes etc. They also used the method of direct takeover and running of enterprises. Jaya

Prakash laid emphasis on mobilisation of student and youth power as the authentic revolutionary force and regarded it as the basis of total revolution. He said that total revolution has to be peacefully brought about without impairing the democratic structure of society and affecting the democratic way of life of the people. To quote Jaya Prakash, “There must also be people's direct action. This action would almost certainly comprise, among other forms, civil disobedience, peaceful resistance, non-cooperation - in short, satyagraha in its widest sense. One of the unstated implications of such a satyagraha would be self-change: that is to say, those wanting to change must also change themselves before launching any kind of action.”

**SAQ**

What is Seven Fold Revolutions?

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### **5.5.2 Total Revolution – An Assessment**

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The total revolution phase of Jaya Prakash’s life had clearly revealed his charismatic personality and re-established him as a great leader. The revolution created turmoil in Indian politics and challenges for the ruling Congress party to continue their regime. But in its operationalisation, it was observed that the practitioners were not so much clear about the idea of total revolution as advocated by Jaya Prakash. It cannot be denied that under the leadership of Jaya Prakash large student’s movements occurred in different parts of the country. But the public perceived that the only objective of total revolution was to subdue all state power at the hands of the people. Likewise, few people tried to take alternative method of some sort of violent activities; but Jaya Prakash was determined in his idea that total revolution could be brought only with peaceful and non-violent techniques on the part of the people.

Jaya Prakash was successful in uniting all the opposition parties having different ideologies to defeat Congress. He had such a hypnotic effect on the political scene that under his guidance and leadership Congress (O), Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party and other socialists merged to form Janata Party and defeated Congress in the next general election in 1977. When Janata Party formed the government, Jaya Prakash was hopeful that the new government would bring change in socio-economic and political structure of India. But he got frustrated to see that the party leaders started to pursue their political ambitions and were attracted towards the corrupting influence of power. So, critics regard Jaya Prakash as dreamer and idealist whose conceptual interventions in the context of total revolution are more theoretical than practical.

In the context of Bihar movement, Ghanshyam Shah mentioned that the groups, classes or interests which dominated the Congress programmes once were the same that supported the movement. So, how can then one expect the movement to bring 'total revolution'? Moreover, question also arises about the inefficiency of the Sarvodaya ideology that guided the total revolution of Jaya Prakash Narayan. Because people have experienced that the working of the Sarvodaya movement of the last twenty five years had not produced any revolutionary changes in society.

Critics are of the view that the revolution hardly had any programme with concrete objectives. Most of the programmes were mobilising programmes to create a tempo for the movement. Therefore, the revolutionaries did not get involved with other programmes. Students were the vanguard of this revolution. As the students were not earning by themselves during that period, so it is obvious that they did not have any hostility against class system. The student leaders who basically came from upper and middle classes were more concerned for jobs, better prospects in life. Therefore, they joined colleges in spite of Jaya Prakash's plea to boycott examinations and educational institutions. They hardly felt that the socio-economic and political systems were unjust. Moreover, the leaders from opposition parties were more concerned about their own interest rather than the objectives of total revolution. They wanted more benefits by bringing about changes in the system. To them, 'Total Revolution' was another slogan like 'Garibee Hatao' to campaign against Congress Party and Indira Gandhi and thus to win in the next election. The Sarvodaya workers who were truly worried about the reconstruction of Indian structure were not interested in election as well as in political power. On the other hand, the political parties who would form government in future were not interested in the broad objectives of total revolution.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. When was the Janata Party formed?
2. When was the national emergency declared by Indira Gandhi?
3. Write “True” or “False”
  - a) Total Revolution was the combination of seven revolutions proposed by Jaya Prakash Narayan.
  - b) The opposition parties used the term “Total Revolution” as their anti-Congress slogan.
  - c) The Congress Party won the general election in 1977 and formed the government.
4. Mention two techniques of Total Revolution.
5. What were the main components of Total Revolution? Discuss.
6. What were the drawbacks of total revolution led by Jaya Prakash Narayan? Discuss in brief.

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## **5.6 Summing Up**

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After reading this unit, now you have come to know about the heroic role played by Jaya Prakash Narayan during 1970s. His whole life was a message of struggle for independence and justice. He witnessed that people are still deprived from their dues and from freedom to take part in decision making even after we got independence. He was not satisfied with the socio-economic, education, moral and political illness existing in Indian society. Therefore, Jaya Prakash felt the necessity to call the people of the country for a peaceful protest to bring reform in Indian democratic system and in the society. He launched the idea of “Total Revolution” or “Sampoorna Kranti” against corruption, manipulation, exploitation, social discrimination, unemployment and rise of authoritarianism in Indian democracy.

After going through this unit, you are now able to understand how and why Jaya Prakash launched total revolution throughout the country. He used different techniques of satyagraha and asked other revolutionaries not to use any violent means at any cost. Though he was not totally succeed to bring transformation to Indian polity and society, but he was successful to intimidate the ruling party and the government. It was only because of his guidance and leadership almost all opposition parties merged to form one party despite having different ideologies. No doubt, Jaya Prakash Narayan was a selfless and dedicated revolutionary activist and a true humanitarian democrat. During the

Janata regime after emergency period, he could have easily secured a top position. Despite public demand for his leadership, he made it clear that power was not his goal. After his death Vinoba Bhave said, “Jaya Prakash considered himself only a *Lok-sevak* or servant of the people”.

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## 5.7 References & Suggested Readings

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