
UNIT 13 MODERATES, EXTREMISTS AND REVOLUTIONARIES

(GOKHALE, TILAK AND BHAGAT SINGH)

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13.1 INTRODUCTION

The Indian National Congress was not a monolith and consisted of groups with different shades of opinions and beliefs. The Indian National Congress, which was established in 1885, had three main aims: 1) to bring together political workers from different parts of the country, 2) to promote national consciousness among the people and 3) to educate the people and influence public opinion in the interest of the country. It developed over a period of time through three stages of leadership, often described as Moderate, Extremist and Gandhian. The stages of development of Congress leadership were more or less concurrent with the three distinct phases in its history: 1885-1905, 1905-1919, and 1920-1947. Though there were other prominent Congress leaders, it was the leadership of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi that represented the essence and character of the Congress during the respective periods.

In the early years of the twentieth century, especially when the mass phase of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal ended in 1907, a new aspect was added to India's struggle for independence by the emergence of revolutionary groups. These groups

advocated the use of revolutionary terrorism as a political weapon and attracted a number of youth from all over the country, thereby contributing to the spread of national consciousness. Bhagat Singh typically represented the character of the revolutionaries in 1920s.

Aims and Objectives

After studying the unit, you will be able to understand

- the emergence of the three strands of Indian National movement- moderate, extremist and revolutionary
- their ideologies and methods of work
- their contribution to the Indian National movement
- the significant similarities and differences between the ideas of Gandhi and Gokhale, Tilak, and Bhagat Singh.

13.2 THE MODERATES

During the early years (1885-1905) the Indian National Congress, henceforth referred to as INC, provided a common stage for the leaders from diverse parts of the country. Though the Congress represented the entire nation, members of some classes, castes, occupations and provinces were more conspicuous than others. The members of the educated middle class were predominant in numbers. The members of the Brahmin caste were comparatively higher to those of other castes. While a number of journalists, doctors and teachers were also members, it was the lawyers who dominated in the occupations. The members from Bombay, Bengal and Madras presidencies were more in number compared to members from other parts of the country. The masses and the landed class were conspicuous by their absence. In short, the Congress was by and large a middle class affair, and it was but natural that majority of the members of the INC belonged to the middle class during the early years since it was this class that took to modern education and played a pioneering role in its foundation.

The Congress, since its establishment, was under the influence of Moderate leaders, most of whom were first generation English educated Indians. The moderate leaders were influenced by Western political ideas and practices, especially by the political philosophy of liberalism. The liberal philosophy of moderate Congress leaders gave emphasis on: 1) dignity of the individual 2) Individual's right to freedom c) Equality of all irrespective of caste, creed or sex. This liberal philosophy guided the moderate leaders of the Congress in opposing the autocratic attitude of the British government, demanding rule of law and equality before law, and advocating secularism. Some of the prominent moderate leaders who became presidents of the Congress in its early years were Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, P. Ananda Charlu, Surendranath Banerjee, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Ananda Mohan Bose and Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Some other moderate leaders were Mahadev Ranade, Madan Mohan Malaviya, G. Subramaniya Iyer and Dinshaw E. Wacha.

13.2.1 Ideology and Methods of Work

The moderate leaders made modest demands from the British rulers in a very cautious and peaceful manner, mainly for two reasons. Firstly, most of the moderate leaders had an enduring attachment for the British way of life, a belief in the British sense of justice

and fair play and a deep sense of gratitude towards British rulers. They believed that it was the association with the British rule and English education that had exposed them to modern ideas such as liberty, equality, democracy and dignity of the individual. Moreover, they were convinced that it was only due to the British rule that the much needed law and order, and effective administration had been established in India. Secondly, the moderates were also aware that the INC was a young organisation in its early stage of development. They did not want to incur the wrath of the British rulers, which could have resulted in suppression of their activities and nipped the Congress in the bud.

The moderates genuinely believed that India had gained from the political connection with the British and often acknowledged their loyalty to British rule. However, this did not mean that they were not patriotic. The moderates disfavoured a direct confrontation with the British rulers, but wanted to change their rule to reflect the interests of the country. Later, when many of the moderate leaders realised that British rule had done a lot more harm to the country than good, they underwent a change of heart and began to press for 'Swaraj' or self-government for India within the British Empire. They were aware that national consciousness among the Indian people had to be promoted and consolidated before throwing a direct challenge to the British rule.

The historian Bipan Chandra has summed up the political method of the Moderates as "constitutional agitation within the four walls of law and slow, orderly political progress." The moderate leaders adopted the strategy of influencing and organising public opinion to compel the British to approve their (moderates') demands bit by bit. Their political strategy was to emphasise building-up public opinion in India as well as outside India, especially in Britain. In India they sought to promote national consciousness and educate the people on political issues by submitting petitions to British authorities, organising meetings, passing resolutions and giving speeches. Outside India, in Britain, they made efforts to familiarise the people of Britain and the Parliament with the 'real' conditions in India. They carried out active propaganda to influence the public opinion in Britain by sending delegations of leading Indians to Britain. In 1889, a British Committee of the INC was founded. In 1890, this Committee started a journal called 'India'. Dadabhai Naoroji spent a major part of his life in Britain and played an exemplary role in propounding India's case.

13.2.2 Contribution of the Moderates

The moderate leaders of the Congress tried to generate public opinion on all important measures of the Government. The Congress programme during the early phase (1885-1905) can be divided under three categories:: 1) constitutional and administrative reforms 2) social reforms and defence of civil rights and 3) economic reforms.

One of the major demands of the moderate leaders was proper representation of Indians on the Legislative Councils as well as increase in the power of these Councils. The moderate leaders also pressed for reforms in the administrative system. They vehemently argued for 1) increase in the number of Indians in the higher echelons of administration 2) separation of judiciary from the executive 3) promotion of primary education, technical and higher education 4) establishment of agricultural banks to prevent the farmer from being exploited by the money-lender 5) development of irrigation to avoid famines 6) extension of medical and health facilities 7) reform of the police system which was dishonest, inefficient and unpopular.

The moderate leaders voiced their opinions on issues related to territories outside India. They opposed the annexation of Burma, and the attack on Afghanistan and the tribal people of the North-western India. They demanded improvement in the condition of the Indian workers who had migrated to other countries like South Africa, Malaya, Mauritius, West Indies and British Guyana.

The moderates, who had developed a firm commitment to the principle of democracy, also tried to safeguard the Civil Rights of the Indian people, and supported social reforms in Indian society. According to them, a vigorous movement to eradicate social evils and backwardness was necessary to make India fit for self-government. They defended the freedom of speech, the Press, thought and association. Their advocating of these ideas popularised them among the Indians.

It was, however, in the economic critique of colonial rule that the Moderates played their most important role. The Moderate leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji and Mahadev Govind Ranade made scathing criticism of the economic policies followed by the British rulers in India. The moderate leaders through books, newspaper articles and speeches exposed the British Government's economic exploitation of India. The Drain Theory, in which the moderates argued that wealth from India was being drained to England, exploded the myth that British rule was good for India. The moderates demanded changes in official policies on industry, agriculture, tariff, transport and taxation that would improve the system of India.

13.2.3 Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915)

Gopal Krishna Gokhale, one of the most prominent Moderate leaders of the INC, was born on 6 May 1866 in Kotaluk village of Ratnagiri District (Maharashtra). He belonged to the first generation of Indians to receive college education. He graduated from the Elphinstone College in Bombay in 1884 where he became extremely proficient in English and developed a liking for poetry of Tennyson and Browning. During his college days he was exposed to western political thought and the writings of John Stuart Mill, Edmund Burke, John Bright and John Morley. Though later Gokhale made a scathing critique of the British colonial rule, his respect for English political theory and institutions that he acquired in his college years remained with him for the rest of his life. After graduating, Gokhale played an important role in establishing the Deccan Education Society at Poona in 1885. Gokhale devoted 18 years (1885-1902) teaching at the New English School and Fergusson College, Poona. In 1888, he became the secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress and began his career as a public figure. He actively participated in the meetings of the INC between 1889 and 1896, and was instrumental in holding the annual session of the Congress in Poona in 1895. In the annual sessions of the Congress, Gokhale spoke on subjects close to the hearts of the moderates, especially about administrative reform. Gokhale went to England to give evidence before the Welby Commission in 1897; worked as a plague volunteer in 1898; and finally in 1900 and 1901, worked as an Elected Member of the Bombay Legislative Council. After retiring from the Fergusson College in 1902, he devoted the last 13 years of his life as elected member of the Imperial Legislative Council. Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society in 1905. Though a moderate who had faith and trust in British democracy and ideal of equality and fraternity, Gokhale always acted in the Imperial Council as a leader of opposition. In his speeches he gave emphasis on the poverty and economic exploitation of the masses, social reforms, the need for communal harmony and universal education and need to spiritualise politics.

13.2.4 Gokhale and Gandhi

Gandhi valued the contribution of the moderates in laying the foundation of the Indian National movement. He was aware that it was Moderate leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji who had exposed the exploitative nature of British rule. According to him, deriding elderly leaders like Naoroji and Gokhale would be like kicking “the very step from which we have risen”. Gandhi’s concern for social reform was a legacy of the moderates; he wanted his followers to question unjust social practices and had included a number of social reforms in his Constructive Programme. At the same time, however, he did not agree with the approach of constitutional agitation followed by the moderates. He was especially against petitioning which admitted the inferiority of the Indians. Unlike the moderates, Gandhi did not consider British rule as good and indispensable. For him British rule was an evil rule. Moreover, the Western style democracy and secularism, which was eulogised by the moderates, was not acceptable to Gandhi.

Gandhi shared a very special relationship with Gokhale. Gokhale’s firm belief in the need for spiritualisation of politics, communal harmony and universal education inspired Gandhi and considered Gokhale as his ‘political guru’. Gokhale not only strongly supported Gandhi during his struggle in South Africa but also helped him to collect funds for the relief of the suffering there. Gokhale guided Gandhi to travel in India for one year and gain experience of the Indian problems and conditions and only then concern himself with politics. Gandhi derived the principle of spiritualisation of politics from Gokhale. He also learnt from him that the means for bringing about change in society should be pure, peaceful and legitimate. Gandhi said: “Gokhale taught me that the dream of every Indian who claims to love his country, should be not to glorify the country in language but to spiritualize its political life and institutions. He inspired my life and is still inspiring in that I wish to purify myself and spiritualize myself. I have dedicated myself to that ideal. I may fail and to the extent I fail, I am an unworthy disciple of my master”. Gandhi had great respect for Gokhale; when Gokhale died, Gandhi took a vow to walk barefoot for a whole year.

Gokhale and Gandhi differed on certain issues relating to modern technology, Western education and industrialisation. Gokhale criticised certain ideas put forward by Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj*. According to Gokhale, though the village industries were of importance, to survive in a competitive world it was necessary for the Indians to accept modern means of technology and energy for production of goods. Gandhi did not accept Gokhale’s faith in constitutional method as a means of achieving political reform. He did not have faith in Western education while Gokhale made utmost efforts to spread it in India. Unlike Gokhale, Gandhi was religious but his religious ethos was tempered by rationalism. Gokhale and Gandhi had a different style of functioning. The speeches of Gokhale were addressed not to the masses but to the educated middle class; he worked for the masses, but did not work among them. In contrast, Gandhi chose to work not only for the masses but also among them.

13.3 THE EXTREMISTS

The rise of extremism on the Indian political scene was not sudden. In fact it had been growing steadily since the uprising of 1857. Though the uprising was brutally suppressed by the British, the ideas of ‘Swadharma’ and ‘Swaraj’, which had kindled the uprising continued to linger on as an undercurrent among the Indian people. The English educated

class had remained aloof from the uprising. In the latter half of 19th century, the work of leaders like Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekanand, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, and Vishnusastri Chiplunkar and Sri Aurobindo instilled a sense of pride in the ancient Indian civilisation. They were successful, to a certain extent, in promoting political radicalism and bridging the gulf between the masses and the English educated class. The work of the moderate leaders had also exposed the evils of British rule and promoted the spread of national consciousness. The 'peaceful' methods used by the moderate leaders were not effective in making the British Government accept their demands. As a result a number of politically conscious people became frustrated and disillusioned. At the end of the 19th century, a strong feeling arose among the people that more radical political action was needed to force the British to accept popular demands.

Various international events also gave impetus to the growth of extremism in India. Revolutionary movements in Ireland, Russia, Egypt, Turkey, China and the Boer War in South Africa made the Indian leaders aware that the British rule could only be challenged by putting a united stand against it. The defeat of the Italian Army by the Ethiopians in 1896, and the Russian Army by the Japanese in 1905, showed that the Europeans were not invincible. All these instilled a sense of self-respect and self-confidence in the Indian Nationalists.

The extremist leaders of INC like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai and Aurobindo Ghose articulated radical political ideas against colonial rule. The first three of them became famous as the trio of extremist leadership: Lal-Bal-Pal. They became prominent after the Partition of Bengal in 1905. Their radical ideology and programme became popular during the movement against Partition of Bengal, also known as the 'Swadeshi Movement'

13.3.1 Ideology and Methods

Unlike moderates, the extremist leaders neither believed in the goodness of the British rule nor in their sense of justice and fair play. They were aware that the British were driven by selfishness and had come to India to exploit her resources. Since exploitation of India was the chief motive of the British, the extremists did not expect them to take a sympathetic view of the popular demands of the Indian people. Therefore, it was necessary to use pressure to make them accept the demands, not by petitioning or praying like the moderates, but by openly agitating against them. For the Extremist leaders like Lokmanya Tilak, 'Swaraj' was a 'birth right' and was not at all dependent on British assurances.

The extremists' programme of action was radically different from that of the moderates and aimed specifically at arousing emotive indignation against British rule and thereby promoting active involvement of the masses in the agitations. The extremists aimed at preparing the masses for the struggle to gain 'Swaraj' by educating them, uniting them and instilling in them a sense of self-respect, self-reliance, and pride in their ancient heritage. Aurobindo Ghose and Lokmanya Tilak had played a major role in developing the blue print of the extremist programme, which involved the following activities:

- a) 'Boycott' of foreign goods and promotion of 'Swadeshi' goods to give impetus to the growth of indigenous industry and commerce.
- b) Non-cooperation with the bureaucracy; this included 'boycott' of governmental activities.

- c) Establishment of schools and colleges that gave education in the Indian languages and instill in the students pride for the glorious heritage of India, make the students nationalistic and public spirited in character and knowledgeable, self-reliant and independent in spirit.
- d) 'Passive Resistance' to British rule by non-payment of revenue and taxes and by organising separate 'indigenous administrative institutions' parallel to those of the British at the level of villages, talukas and districts.

The Extremist leaders disfavoured the use of violence against British rule and did not approve the methods of political murder and assassination used by the Indian revolutionaries. However, they did take a sympathetic view of the activities of the revolutionaries. For them the young revolutionaries were no doubt misguided and reckless but their violent actions were provoked by the equally violent repressive policies implemented by the British Government.

13.3.2 Significance of the Extremists

There was a fundamental change in the nature of Indian nationalism under extremist leadership due to their forceful articulation of the demand for 'Swaraj' and use of more radical methods than those of the moderates. Their concept of nationalism was emotionally charged and based on rich interpretation of Indian religious traditions. The Extremist leaders tried to reorient Indian religious traditions to worldly life and link them with the national liberation struggle. Aurobindo Ghose reinterpreted Vedanta philosophy, which advocated unity of man and God and based his concept of nationalism on it. To him national work was the work of God, which should be done in the spirit of Karma Yoga because the true nationalist was an ideal Karma Yogi, who performed his functions in the spirit of disinterestedness. The service of the millions of Indians was service of God because God was present in them. The extremists conceived the nation as 'Mother India', which represented united power or Shakti of millions of her children. Tilak reinterpreted the message of the Gita in his famous book *Gita Rahasya*. To Tilak, the Gita gave a message of disinterested action with full self-knowledge rather than that of *Bhakti* or *Sanyasa*. National work done for general welfare was a type of disinterested action. The new nationalism of the extremists was an "attempt to create a nation in India by reviving the spirit and action of the ancient Indian character." They vehemently opposed foreign rule. According to them, a good or just government was not a substitute for self-government and freedom was an inalienable right of all human beings.

The extremists emphasised the mobilisation of people against foreign rule by launching political movements. If the nation was not ready to undertake political movement, then it was the duty of the leaders to prepare the people for it. The extremists were ready to suffer imprisonment, deportation and other physical suffering for the sake of mobilising the masses for struggle against foreign rule. They saw struggle against foreign rule as a full time activity and devoted their whole life for it. The demonstrations, processions undertaken by the extremists brought about an involvement of the common people in agitations against British rule. They also made use of popular symbols like Shivaji, and religious symbols like God Ganapati and Goddess Kali for mobilising the people. Thus, under the Extremist leadership, the Indian National Movement gradually began to acquire a mass character. However, the extremists could not fully exploit the potential of mobilised people or of their radical methods like boycott and passive resistance. They were successful in arousing the urban middle and lower classes, apart from mobilising the peasants and workers.

The Extremist leaders used religious symbols in arousing the masses; however, they did not mix religion and politics. Their concept of nationhood encompassed all religions in India. Though the 'Dharma' advocated by leaders like Tilak and Lajpat Rai looked like it had a Hindu connotation, for the extremists, it actually meant 'universal moral law' under whose unifying influence, the different religions and communities in India would coexist peacefully.

13.3.3 Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920)

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the foremost Extremist leader, was born in a middle class family in Ratnagiri District (Maharashtra) on 23 July 1856. His father, Gangadhar Pant, was a school teacher and a scholar of Sanskrit. The influence of his father instilled in Tilak love for Sanskrit and respect for ancient Indian religion and culture. Tilak graduated from Pune in 1875 and later studied law. Believing that the best way to serve the country was to educate the people, Tilak, along with his friend Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, founded the New English School in Pune in 1876. However, he soon realised that merely educating young children was not enough and the people should also be aware of the condition of the country. To achieve this, they started two weeklies in 1881, 'Maratha' in English and 'Kesari' in Marathi. In 1885, they started the Deccan Education Society. Tilak was also one of the leading Sanskrit scholars in India. He studied the classical literature in Sanskrit on metaphysics, religion and astronomy and wrote a number of books. Tilak, along with Aurobindo Ghose, was instrumental in developing the action programme of the extremists: Boycott, Swadeshi, National Education and Passive Resistance. To bring the masses together, he started the Ganapati Festival in 1894 and Shivaji Festival in 1896, mobilise the masses and accelerate the attainment of Swaraj. He gave the slogan 'freedom is my birth-right and I will attain it'. He suffered imprisonment for trying to mobilise people against British rule. The British authorities arrested him in 1908 for writing an allegedly seditious article in 'Kesari'. He was deported to Mandalay, where he wrote his famous commentary on Gita, the 'Gita-Rahasya'. After being released from Mandalay in 1914, he played an important role in the signing of the Lucknow Pact in 1916. In the same year he founded the Home Rule League for the goal of achieving Swaraj.

13.3.4 Tilak and Gandhi

Gandhi considered Gokhale as his 'political guru', but at the same time he also described himself as a 'true disciple' of Lokmanya Tilak. Two things, which they had in common, were "love of country and the steady pursuit of Swaraj". Gandhi remarked that "no one perhaps realized the evil of existing system of government as Tilak did". The root of Gandhi's theory of political disobedience lies in political tradition of the extremists. Gandhi's principles of Satyagraha were drawn from ideas of passive resistance developed by Aurobindo Ghose in his essay on 'Passive Resistance'. Gandhi further developed the interpretation of *Gita* as given by Aurobindo Ghose and Tilak. They had interpreted it as the philosophy of Karma Yoga, or performance of action in the spirit of disinterestedness. Gandhi adapted this interpretation to his views on truth, non-violence and service of the people by giving it a moral and nonviolent dimension. Gandhi's concept of Anasakti Yoga was an advance over the Nishkama Karma Yoga of Tilak. Tilak opined that man should perform disinterested action while doing work assigned to him in the Varna society. Gandhi's Anasakti Yoga meant that man should undertake action in a detached manner while performing his Swadharma or duty of man in present circumstances. By linking Swadharma with the message of *Gita*, Gandhi was able to connect it with moral and non-violent action. According to Gandhi in the present circumstances it was the duty of man

to avoid war; therefore, Anasakti and war could never go together. Though Gandhi developed and improved upon Tilak's interpretation of Gita, he acknowledged the greatness of Tilak's 'Gita Rahasya' and wrote, "I believe this commentary on the Gita will be a more lasting monument to his memory".

Gandhi developed his political strategy on the foundations laid by the Extremist leaders. In a sense Gandhian politics was a continuation of Tilak's politics; many issues which were close to the heart of Tilak like democratisation of Indian politics, anti-colonialism, passive resistance and his interpretation of *Gita* were later taken up by Gandhi. In fact, Gandhi based his strategy of agitation on the principles of Swaraj, Swadeshi, national education and boycott which had been enunciated by the extremists. He agreed with Tilak that 'Swaraj was a birthright' and learned from him the importance of enlisting the support of the masses in a movement against British rule. Like Tilak, Gandhi deemed it necessary to sacrifice and endure suffering in the cause of the country.

Gandhi admired Tilak for "his indomitable will, his vast learning, his love of country, and above all, the purity of his private life and great sacrifice". Gandhi was also conscious that his method was different from the method of Tilak. Gandhi differed with regard to the meaning of 'Swaraj' and means to achieve it. The extremists wanted to expel the British but were in favour of keeping the western institutions established by them. Gandhi did not have much faith in Western institutions like parliamentary democracy, army, industries, law and railways. For the extremists there was no place for saintly qualities in the sphere of politics, while Gandhi gave highest priority to morality and nonviolence in personal life and public action. The Extremists and Gandhi differed regarding the relationship between the means and the ends. Tilak favoured the use of plurality of means to achieve 'Swaraj' for the country. Though he thought that purity of means was desirable, he did not see this as a rigid rule. Tilak maintained that British rule in India was immoral and therefore if 'Swaraj' could not be achieved by using pure and non-violent means, then there should be no hesitation in adopting other lesser means. For Tilak it was the purity of the goal of 'Swaraj', which mattered the most. Gandhi did not agree with Tilak's ambivalent position about ends and means. He believed that the means must be ethically right, pure and non-violent; if not, the end itself would lose its value. He did not agree with Tilak's view that 'falsehood should be paid in the same coin'. To Gandhi, falsehood and untruth could only be countered by truth.

13.4 THE REVOLUTIONARIES

Though the Indian National Movement was largely non-violent, a small revolutionary movement did emerge in the early decades of the 20th century. In 1897, the Chapekar brothers had assassinated two unpopular British officials at Poona. In 1904, V.D. Savarkar had established a secret revolutionary society known as the Abhinav Bharat. However, it was the failure of the Swadeshi movement that gave real impetus to revolutionary activities, a first of its kind. The brutal suppression of the Swadeshi movement by the British and the ineffectiveness of passive resistance advocated by the extremist leaders provoked the youth of Bengal to engage in individual heroic actions like assassinating unpopular officials.

In Bengal, a number of societies like 'Anushilan Samiti' and 'Yugantar' came into existence and planned assassinations of unpopular British officials. Revolutionaries like Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki made attempts to kill unpopular British officials. Syamji Krishnavarma, V.D. Savarkar and Lala Har Dayal, Madame Cama and Ajit Singh

coordinated the revolutionaries in Europe. The British framed a number of draconian laws to suppress the revolutionaries. In this early phase, the revolutionaries did not try to organise a mass armed revolution; instead, they focused on acts of individual heroism.

The second wave of revolutionary activities commenced in the early 1920s. The withdrawal of Non-Cooperation in 1922 made the youth more radical. In North India, revolutionaries organised themselves under Hindustan Republican Association (HRA), and later, under the leadership of Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad. In Bengal too revolutionary activities were revived under the leadership of Surya Sen.

13.4.1 Ideology and Methods

The revolutionaries questioned the non-violent strategy of struggle adopted by the INC, as they believed passive resistance could not be effective against the British. They believed in adopting violent methods and aspired to organise an armed mass revolution to drive away the British from the country. However, they adopted the path of the Irish nationalists and Russian Nihilists in the short term- the path of heroic action or revolutionary terrorism. The assassination of unpopular British officials was done by the revolutionaries to achieve three things: (a) to strike fear in the officials (b) to remove the fear of the Indian people and (c) ignite a feeling of national consciousness.

The second wave of revolutionary activities in the 1920s had a different character. The revolutionaries gradually moved away from individual heroic action and were attracted by the possibility of armed mass struggle. A number of them also came under the influence of Socialism. In 1924, the Hindustan Republican Association was formed with the aim of organising armed revolution against the British. But the British suppressed the movement by arresting a number of revolutionaries and implicating them in the Kakori Conspiracy Case in 1925. The revolutionaries of North India like Bhagat Singh and Chandrasekhar Azad came under the influence of socialist ideas. In September 1928, they renamed their organisation as the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) to reflect their newly acquired ideology, which gave importance to socialist principles and revolution by the masses. Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt made a public propaganda of this changed ideology during their trial in a court for throwing a harmless bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly in 1929. In Bengal too, individual heroic action was replaced by group action. A group of revolutionaries, led by Surya Sen, carried out a large-scale armed attack on the Chittagong armoury of the government in April 1930.

13.4.2 Role of the Revolutionaries

The revolutionary movement in India could not survive the harsh measures initiated by the British against its leaders. Bhagat Singh and his fellow revolutionaries were tried for the murder of Saunders in the Lahore Conspiracy Case and were hanged on 23 March 1931. Chandrasekhar Azad was killed in a shooting encounter with the police at Allahabad in February 1931. Surya Sen was arrested in February 1933 and hanged. Many other revolutionaries were arrested and sentenced to jail; some were sent to the Andaman Jail.

The revolutionaries could not sustain their activities because they failed to get a consistent and active support of the people and failed to develop a base among the Indian masses. Moreover, their use of violence as a political weapon gave a justification to the British to counter them by using more violence. The revolutionaries failed in achieving their long-

term goal of armed mass revolution against the British. Nevertheless, the selfless sacrifice of the revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, Surya Sen and hundreds of others gained for them unparalleled popularity among the people. Many, however, did not agree with their method of using violence for achieving independence.

13.4.3 Bhagat Singh (1907-1931)

Bhagat Singh was born on September 28, 1907 at the village Khatkar Kalan, tehsil Banga, district Jalandar. Bhagat Singh's family background and the political events happening in Punjab played an important role in shaping his ideas. His grandfather, Sardar Arjan Singh was a member of the Arya Samaj, which represented nationalist aspirations in Punjab. His father Kishan Singh and uncle Swaran Singh were political activists and were involved in a number of agitations against the oppressive British rule. Bhagat Singh's elder uncle was the famous revolutionary nationalist leader, Ajit Singh, who had founded the Bharat Mata Society (Mother India Society) along with Lala Lajpat Rai in 1907. Bhagat Singh was educated in Dayanand Anglo Vedic High School in Lahore, where he came into contact with nationalist leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and others. Bhagat Singh was inspired by the Ghadar Movement, especially by the sacrifice made by the young revolutionary Kartar Singh Saraba. He considered Saraba as his role model. The Russian Revolution of 1917 also made a deep impact on him by attracting him to socialist ideas. Events like Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (13 April 1919) and failure of Gandhi's Non-cooperation movement to bring Swaraj disillusioned Bhagat Singh. He began to search for new ways to achieve independence. In 1926, he established the 'Navjivan Bharat Sabha' to train and recruit youth for revolutionary activity. Though Bhagat Singh started as a believer in individual heroic action, after 1927 he gradually moved away from it and began espousing radical socialist belief and mass armed action, and played an active role in the H.S.R.A. But the brutal lathi charge on an anti-Simon Commission demonstration on 30 October 1928 led to a sudden change. The great Extremist leader, Lala Lajpat Rai was killed due to the blows of lathis. In retaliation, Bhagat Singh, along with Chandrasekhar Azad and Rajguru, assassinated Saunders, the British officer in charge of the lathi charge. Later, on 8 April 1929, Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt threw a harmless bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly to protest against the suggested black laws and used their trial proceedings as a forum for propaganda of their changed socialist and revolutionary ideas. Bhagat Singh was tried in the Lahore Conspiracy Case and executed on 23 March 1931, in spite of massive protest by the Indian masses.

13.4.4 Bhagat Singh and Gandhi

One of the reasons why Gandhi wrote 'Hind Swaraj' was to counter the ideology of violence adopted by the Indian revolutionaries. He wanted to tell them that they were following a 'suicidal policy' as violence would beget violence, and that it was no solution for India's ills. Only the 'use of a different and higher weapon' would protect India's civilisation. He did not agree with the arguments of the revolutionaries who justified the using of force for the British expulsion. According to Gandhi, use of force would only get us what the British got. It will not result in 'Swaraj'. Unlike the revolutionaries, Gandhi did not believe that mere physical expulsion of the British was necessary to gain Swaraj for India. Gandhi's concept of Swaraj had a much higher connotation than the Swaraj of the revolutionaries. He also attacked the view of the revolutionaries that there was 'no connection between the means and the end'. For him, ends and means were equally important.

Bhagat Singh criticised the political methods used by the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi, though he accepted that it was Gandhi who aroused political consciousness in the masses, started a mass movement and trained them to fight against injustice. As Bhagat Singh felt the withdrawal of the Non-cooperation movement without a sufficiently important reason clearly showed that Gandhi and the Congress were in not favour of 'revolution' and were inclined towards 'conciliation' with the British. To Bhagat Singh, the Congress was a party of the middle classes, white collared people and small traders; it did not represent the peasants and the workers. In his opinion, the Congress could never provide revolutionary leadership until it broadens its base to include the peasants and workers.

Gandhi clarified his stand on the activities of the revolutionaries in many of his writings. He admired their courage, commitment and sacrifice but not their use of violence, as violence is counterproductive and harmful and was a wrong course to achieve Swaraj.

Gandhi and Bhagat Singh were opposed to each other in approach; Bhagat Singh believed in violence, and did not shy away from using it to achieve independence. Gandhi believed that only complete adherence to non-violence would free the country. Gandhi and Bhagat Singh represented two different strands of India's struggle for independence.

13.5 SUMMARY

In this unit we have studied the ideology, methods and contribution of the three different strands of Indian National Movement- the moderates, extremists and revolutionaries. The moderates stood for the constitutional method of attaining responsible government, believed in petitioning and prayer, and had faith in the goodness, justice and fair-play of the British. The extremists advocated both constitutional and extra-constitutional means for the achievement of 'Swaraj', which was considered by them as a birth-right of every man. To counter the British rule, they developed the four-point programme of Swadeshi, Boycott, National Education and Passive Resistance against the British. The revolutionaries abhorred British rule and advocated the use of violence to get rid of the British from India. Initially they undertook acts of individual heroic action by assassinating unpopular British officials, but later began advocating collective armed action against British rule.

We have also reviewed the contribution of Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bhagat Singh and studied the similarities and differences of their ideas and methods with those of Gandhi. Gandhi considered Gokhale to be his 'political guru' and was influenced by his ideas about spiritualisation of politics, communal harmony and education. Tilak gave a mass orientation to the struggle against British rule by mobilising the masses, and set an example for others to follow by undergoing imprisonment and making tremendous sacrifices for the sake of the country. Gandhi further improved upon and continued their programme and considered himself as a 'true disciple' of Tilak. Bhagat Singh was attracted by Marxist and socialist ideology and tried to reorient the objective of the revolutionaries from individual heroic action to mass armed struggle against colonial rule. He criticised the Congress for being 'conciliatory' towards the British and not supporting revolution. Gandhi appreciated the sacrifice and commitment of the revolutionaries but disapproved of their method of violence. Thus, there was a fundamental difference in their approach though their common goal was to achieve independence for India.

13.6 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

- 1) Critically examine the ideology and methods of the moderates.
- 2) Discuss the four-point action programme developed by the extremists.
- 3) Explain the statement 'Mahatma Gandhi further improved upon and continued the programme of the extremists'.
- 4) Assess the contribution of Bhagat Singh to the Indian Freedom Struggle.
- 5) Explain Gandhi's critique of the revolutionaries.

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UNIT 14 JINNAH AND SAVARKAR

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14.1 INTRODUCTION

The Indian Freedom Struggle had many luminaries who contributed immensely with their ideologies. But some of them did not necessarily find Gandhi's leadership as inspiring and held on to their respective ideologies steadfastly. Prominent among them are Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of the state of Pakistan and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who had leanings towards right-wing ideology. Both were critics of Gandhi's leadership in the national freedom movement. Their ideologies had an overwhelming influence on some sections of their respective communities. This Unit attempts to make the learner understand the varied perspectives of these distinguished men, and how their ideas shaped a part of nation's history.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand

- The political ideology of Jinnah
- His parting of ways with Congress and demand for a separate state
- Ideological leanings of Savarkar
- His espousal of the Hindu Rashtra

14.2 MUHAMMAD ALI JINNAH

14.2.1 Early Years (1875-1904)

Mammad, as his pet name goes, was born to Mithibai and Jinnabhai Poonja, an Ismaili Shia converted from a Hindu Kucchi family. He was educated briefly in Bombay and mainly in Karachi. After completing schooling, he was recommended for apprenticeship to a British firm. In London, Jinnabhai shortened his name to its present form. He gave up the apprenticeship and registered at the Lincoln's Inn and qualified for the Bar at the young age of 19. He returned not to Karachi but to Bombay in 1896. For three years, his practice would not pick up. In 1900, for a short period, he accepted the post of Acting Presidency Magistrate. Thereafter, he became one of the most successful lawyers at the Bombay Bar.

14.2.2 Early Political Career (1904-1912)

In London, Jinnah had come close to the Moderate leader Dadabhai Naoroji, who was seeking election to the House of Commons. He won by a narrow majority. Jinnah would visit the Parliament and also get to know a number of Liberal Party members. In India, Jinnah attended the 1904 Congress session in Bombay, where he met Gopal Krishna Gokhale, his future mentor, for the first time. The year 1905 was marked by the Partition of Bengal. This gave a fillip to the Swadeshi Movement, particularly in Bengal and Maharashtra, both in its peaceful and revolutionary forms.

The following year, a Delegation of Muslims, led by Aga Khan, met Viceroy Minto, who demanded special privileges to make up for the harsh treatment meted out to the Muslims for their participation in the 1857 uprising. The Viceroy was more than receptive to their demands. Following this, the Muslim League was established to "protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Mussalmans of India". The Aga Khan, though absent, was elected the president at this Dacca meeting.

Jinnah, non-existent in the above development, was busy in Calcutta, working as secretary to Dadabhai Naoroji presiding over the Congress session. He helped draft the Presidential address that talked of 'Swaraj' for the first time. This reflected the new nationalist spirit, though Swaraj, then, meant Dominion Status within the Empire.

In 1908, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, though politically not on the same side of the Moderate-Extremist divide, engaged Jinnah to defend him at his sedition trial. Jinnah argued that it was not sedition for an Indian to demand freedom and self-government in his own country. Still, Tilak was convicted.

The Morley-Minto scheme of Reforms, given effect to in the Indian Councils Act 1909, created a separate electorate for the Muslims and under a system of weightage, enabled the Muslims to obtain more seats in the various councils than their population in the country.

Jinnah was against separate electorates and, at the 1910 Allahabad Congress, condemned its extension to the local bodies. Ironically, he was among the first batch of Muslims chosen to represent the community under the new Act. In the Imperial Legislative Council, he proved to be a worthy disciple and colleague of Gokhale. Together they got the system of Indentured labour to South Africa abolished. Jinnah's Wakf Validating Bill was the first private bill to be enacted by the Council. Jinnah's credentials as a liberal, secular Moderate constitutionalist were well established by this time.

14.2.3 Congress-Muslim League Unity (1912-1920)

The year 1912 marked a liberal phase in the history of the Muslim League. President Shafi presented the new Constitution and invited Jinnah to join the League. The next few years saw Jinnah's efforts to get the League closer to the Congress. In 1913, Jinnah joined the Muslim League while continuing to be in the Congress. He belonged to the Congress and the Muslim League, and was a respected figure not only in the Government camp, but also in India and in England.

Sarojini Naidu, also a disciple of Gokhale, wrote a book *Mohammed Ali Jinnah, an Ambassador of Unity*, in which she emphasised that Jinnah's ambition was to follow in the footsteps of Gokhale. Gokhale's death in early 1915 followed by that of Pherozeshah Mehta left Jinnah as the spokesman for the Moderate camp. Annie Besant and Tilak were pioneering the Home Rule movement. A Congress liberal, Mazhar-ul-Huq, was presiding over the Muslim League. Jinnah took upon himself the task of getting all these groups together and set out to obtain consensus on the agreement that he had drawn up. The object was "national unity which has brought Hindus and Muslims together, involving brotherly service for the common course". A.C. Muzumdar, presiding over the Lucknow Congress session in 1916, welcomed Tilak's new party. Tilak was willing to make common cause with Gokhale's disciple. The Muslim League and the All-India Congress Committee resolved to make a joint demand for Representative Government in India.

The Congress made vital concessions to the Muslim sentiments, particularly the three main demands of the Muslims, viz. separate electorates, extent of Muslim representation, and the safeguards. In a way, the 'Lucknow Pact' endorsed the assumptions on which the Morley-Minto reforms had enacted in 1909. This reflected the Hindu-Muslim unity in making a common political demand on the British Government.

In August 1917, the Montague proclamation was issued: "The policy of His Majesty's Government is that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British empire..."

At that time, Gandhi was a mere witness to these events. Since his return from South Africa he was trying to understand India. He was being slowly drawn into various local movements- Champaran in Bihar, Kheda and Ahmedabad in Gujarat. At the Amritsar Congress in 1919, Tilak, Gandhi and Jinnah, all received Montague's initiatives with enthusiasm.

But within weeks, the introduction of the Rowlatt Bill spoiled the situation. When Gandhi tried to apply his 'satyagraha' technique, he realised that the masses needed to be trained in non-violence. After some 'Himalayan' failures, and withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement, Gandhi gradually convinced the Congress party of the soundness of his philosophy.

Jinnah, however, could not accept Gandhi's new approach. Muslims in India were pained that following Turkey's defeat in the war, Britain had taken over the holy places including 'the Kaaba'. Britain had also gone back on their promise to protect the Khalifa. The Muslims started a Movement to protect the Khilafat, and sought Gandhi's guidance. The Khilafat Movement had religious implications and Jinnah was against bringing religion into politics. Gandhi saw in this an opportunity to get the Muslims into the mainstream nationalist politics and to make them abide by non-violence. This was the first major

national non-violent mass uprising in history, but it also marked the parting of ways between two powerful personalities. 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.

14.2.4 Jinnah: Parting of Ways (1920-1930)

Jinnah continued to work for Hindu-Muslim unity. At the Muslim League sessions, he would plead against a political party for Muslims. In the Imperial Legislative Council, he would work in cooperation with Motilal Nehru. His objective, while presiding over the 1924 session of the League, was “a complete settlement between the Hindus and Muslims as was done in 1916... without in any way being antagonistic to the Congress”.

In 1926, Motilal Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad floated the Indian National Union and Jinnah, along with M.R.Jayakar, fought and won the elections on that ticket. When the statutory Simon Commission was appointed in 1927, Gandhi called for a boycott and nearly all leaders, including Jinnah, joined in. He was also in the All-parties Conference that tried to respond to the British challenge and draft an acceptable constitution. The Nehru Committee had compromised on Dominion status instead of Independence. It had also, after much deliberation, suggested Joint Electorates.

Jinnah looked at Separate electorates as a necessary evil. He was willing to consider other safeguards that would ensure protection to the minorities as an interim measure. In March 1929, the Nehru Report came up for discussion at a meeting of the Muslim League in Delhi. To accommodate the different schools of thought among the Muslims, Jinnah moved a resolution containing ‘Fourteen Points’. At this stage, while a number of safeguards were suggested to protect the Muslim as well as Hindu minorities as an interim measure, the principle of Separate Electorates was being given up. But the Hindu Mahasabha members in the Congress came in the way and an opportunity to do away with separate electorates was lost.

Now, Jinnah, in danger of losing his grip over the Muslim League, withdrew. After its ultimatum to the Government for accepting the Nehru Committee Report before 31 December 1928 was not heeded, the Lahore Session, with Jawaharlal Nehru as president, passed the ‘Purna Swaraj’ resolution that marked a radical departure for the Indian Nationalist movement. Further, Gandhi had undertaken the Dandi March. The Satyagraha movement that enveloped India and the British oppression that followed equally abhorred the constitutionalist Jinnah.

14.2.5 Round Table Conferences (1930-1932)

Jinnah and his associates, who had boycotted the Simon Commission, now inexplicably accepted a nomination from the Viceroy for the drafting of a Constitution for this country under direct British auspices.

Jinnah participated in the First Round Table Conference. He pointed out that “there were four main parties sitting round the table now. There are the British party, the Indian Princes, the Hindus and the Muslims.” Jinnah had recognised over the years a wide range of special Muslim interests, needs, and demands; but this statement marked a new departure and became a major theme of his Pakistan strategy.

In December 1930, when presiding over the Muslim League at Allahabad, Mohammed Iqbal gave public expression to the idea of a northwest Muslim State, may be within the Indian Federation. It marked a subtle beginning of the conception of Pakistan.

In December 1931, Jinnah again left for England. He participated in the Second Round Table Conference, but stayed on in London and practised at the Privy Council. His parting message to the Muslim youth contained an emphatic claim for communal rights and safeguards, though he also repeated that communal unity was essential for Swaraj. The discord between the Hindus and the Mussalmans was sapping the strength of India and making the claim for self-government sound like hollow mockery. Jinnah appeared to aggravate the disease deliberately, which he was most anxious to heal.

Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald had realised that it was difficult to find an answer to the communal problem. On January 14, 1931, Aga Khan, Jinnah and Shafi called on the Prime Minister and warned him that unless the Government's policy statement contains an announcement of satisfactory safeguards for the communities, most of the Muslim delegates will dissociate themselves from the Conference.

M.C. Chagla, one of the closest associates of Jinnah tried to analyse: "Why did Jinnah change? There could be many possible explanations for this. He had to be a leader, and the prime mover in whatever cause he worked with. With the emergence of Gandhiji in Indian Politics, Jinnah felt that his importance would gradually diminish. Jinnah was a complete antithesis of Gandhiji. While Gandhiji believed in religion, in abstract moral values, in non-violence, Jinnah only believed in hard practical politics."

In 1934, Jinnah returned to India. The Government of India Act 1935 had given effect to most of what he wanted. In view of the elections due in 1937, Jinnah announced the formation of a Muslim League party to fight the elections. He fought the election on the Muslim League manifesto claiming special treatment to the Muslims. The League did not do too well and formed government in only three provinces while the Congress formed ministries in most provinces.

So far, Jinnah had only the Congress to contend with. Hindu Mahasabha, like many other groups in the twenties and the thirties, was under the Congress umbrella. Jinnah's lawyer friend M.R.Jayakar had strayed towards the Mahasabha. Savarkar too joined the battle vigorously. Meanwhile, Jinnah determinedly argued on basis of his Two-Nation theory.

14.3 VINAYAK DAMODAR SAVARKAR

14.3.1 Early Years (1883-1906)

Vinayak, popularly known as Veer Savarkar, was born in Bhagur, near Nashik, on May 28, 1883, to Damodarpanth and Radhabai. His father was well to do, knew English and well versed in Indian classics. Though Savarkar was to become an advocate of casteless society, his early years were conditioned by his pride in belonging to the Chitpavan Brahmin heritage.

From his childhood he was inspired by the revolutionaries Wasudeo Balwant Phadke and the Chapekar brothers, who had taken up arms against the British. The execution of Chapekar brothers for the Rand Murder in 1899 had provoked Savarkar into the vow: "...For the freedom of my country I shall, in armed warfare, be a martyr like Chapekar, or become victorious like Shivaji, and crown my Motherland with Swaraj...To regain the independence of my country I shall raise armed revolt, and shall fight till I die while killing the enemy."

Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a strong nationalist was editing the newspaper '*Kesari*'. Savarkar, from his school days was familiar with the happenings reported therein. Tilak

believed in Hindu identity and Hindu Sanghatan. His political strategy was based on 'Shatham prati shthyam' and 'Sadhananam Anekata'. Savarkar was influenced by both the nationalist and Hindu sanghatan motivations.

Savarkar had, while at school in Nashik, started several groups. Rashtrabhakta Samooaha was a secret society. Its public face 'Mitra Mela' was started in January 1900. Soon there were many Mitra Melas in Maharashtra. Savarkar wove these members into 'Abhinav Bharat', a secret society on the lines of Mazzini's 'Young Italy'.

When he joined Fergusson College in Pune, Savarkar had an opportunity to inspire revolutionaries among the students and to work with Tilak in the Swadeshi Movement; and started to protest against Viceroy Curzon's Partition of Bengal in 1905. A bon fire of foreign clothes was organised by Savarkar and Tilak addressed the procession. Tilak recommended Savarkar for a scholarship to study in London that was arranged by Pandit Shyamaji KrishnaVarma (1857-1930).

14.3.2 Savarkar in London (1906-1910)

Krishna Varma was a Sanskrit scholar who was deeply influenced by the founder of Arya Samaj Maharshi Dayanand, Lokmanya Tilak and the sociologist Herbert Spencer. He had started a journal *Indian Sociologist*, founded the Indian Home Rule League and set up India House as a hostel for the young students.

Savarkar reached England in July 1906 ostensibly to study law but really in search of revolutionaries from Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China, to learn how to organise a revolutionary movement. Krishna Varma welcomed the young revolutionary with open arms. Savarkar immediately set for himself certain tasks. He presented Mazzini's philosophy to the Marathi readership through translation and a long preface. He started a number of Hindu and Sikh festivals in London, as also celebration of the Golden Jubilee of 1857 uprising. He set up Free India Society, which was open to all, but was meant to be a conduit for Abhinav Bharat. He sent delegates to the International Socialist Union at Stuttgart who unfurled India's flag designed by him. Krishna Varma, while supporting all these activities preferred the safety of France and left London's India House in charge of Savarkar. In the first issue of *Talwar*, an organ of the Abhinav Bharat, Savarkar had predicted a war in Europe in 4 or 5 years. The liberation of India was to be achieved by a preparation for war, which included:

- i) The teaching of Swadeshi and boycott, imparting national education and creating a national spirit;
- ii) Purchasing and storing of weapons in neighbouring states;
- iii) Opening of small bomb factories;
- iv) Purchasing weapons in foreign countries and smuggling them into India;
- v) Adopting guerrilla tactics whenever possible;
- vi) Waiting for a favourable opportunity to rise in revolt; and
- vii) Carrying patriotism and politics into the ranks of the Indian military forces and seducing them.

Savarkar favoured the use of bombs and selective assassinations to terrorise the British. When such events took place in India, Lord Morley authorised suppressive measures. Tilak was sentenced to six years in jail and sent to Mandalay. This came as a thunderbolt to the Indians in London.

One of Savarkar's associates, Madanlal Dhingra, asked his leader, "whether the time for martyrdom had really come." Savarkar's epigrammatic reply was: "If a martyr is determined and ready, that fact by itself generally implies that the time for martyrdom must have come." Dhingra's attempt to kill Lord Curzon, just returned from India, failed. But he was successful in killing William Curzon-Willey, ADC to Lord Morley. This was just a few days before Gandhi arrived in London for negotiations with the British Government. Dhingra's trial was a formality. He did not defend himself except through a written statement that was drafted by Savarkar.

In 1906, Gandhi had visited India House and met Shyamaji and Savarkar. He visited Savarkar even after the Dhingra episode. As they discussed the political situation, even Gandhi's lieutenants from South Africa were converted by Savarkar to his school of violence. Savarkar clarified his position in *Talwar* started from Paris in November 1909:

"We feel no special love for secret organizations, or surprise and secret warfare. We feel that whenever the open preaching and practicing of truth is banned by enthroned violence, then alone secret societies and secret warfare are justified as the inevitable and indispensable means to combat violence by force."

Gandhi believed in total openness even with his oppressors. Despite their differences, Gandhi presided over the Dussehra celebrations in London that Savarkar addressed. It was agreed upon that neither side would refer to the controversial issues.

Consequently, Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj*, as an answer to the Indian School of Violence and its prototype in South Africa. "I came in contact with every known anarchist in London. Their bravery impressed me, but I felt that their zeal was misguided. I felt that violence was no remedy for India's ills." *Hind Swaraj* can be read as a narration of dialogue between Savarkar as the 'Reader' and Gandhi as the 'Editor'.

The British Collector of Nashik, Jackson, was killed in December 1909. It was found that the Brownie pistol that was used was sent by Savarkar from India House in London. This led to Savarkar's arrest. Savarkar's strategy was to avoid a trial in India. The British Court ruled otherwise. While he was being taken to India for the trial, Savarkar tried to escape at Marseilles by jumping out of the porthole of the ship. He was rearrested on the French soil and handed over to the British guard on the ship. Savarkar tried to make 'jurisdiction' an issue at his trial. The International Court of Justice in The Hague gave a verdict in favour of Britain. Savarkar was ultimately sentenced to transportation for two terms of life imprisonment, a total of 50 years in jail and sent to the Andaman Islands. This marked the end of Savarkar's revolutionary phase.

14.3.3 Savarkar in Andamans (1911-1920)

The hard life in the cellular jail transformed Savarkar in several respects. He discovered that the Jail Administration had chosen Muslim warders over the largely Hindu prisoners. He also found that religious conversions were being encouraged. Savarkar started *Shuddhi*. This led to continuous confrontation. Finally, a truce had to be called. But such events led to hardening of Savarkar's attitude towards Muslims.

The second major change took place when the Secretary of State for India Montague proclaimed the Government's intention of gradual introduction of Responsible Government. Then followed Montague's Report in 1919. Savarkar sensed an opportunity to fight for India's freedom by constitutional means.

Savarkar was anxious to join the mainstream struggle in India. He made repeated attempts to secure release, promising assistance in war effort and then in working the proposed Reforms. In the May 26, 1920 Gandhi wrote in *Young India* pleading for the release of Savarkar on the ground that he was no longer carrying on revolutionary activity. Savarkar brothers were brought to India but kept in jail until 1924.

14.3.4 Savarkar and Hindutva (1920-1924)

While in Jail, Savarkar wrote the *Essentials of Hindutva*. He made a distinction between various terms Hinduism, Hindutva and Hindudom. Hindutva, he defined, as far more comprehensive, referring not only to the religious aspects of the Hindu people as the word 'Hinduism' does, but also their cultural, linguistic, social and political aspects. He mentions two important criteria: India as a *Pitrubhumi* and India as a *Punyabhumi*. He shows how the Bauddhas, Jains, Sikhs, Lingayats and the so-called untouchables and tribals, all fall within this category. He replaced the Veda-oriented definition of Tilak (to include non-vedic sects and religions) and the territorial definition of an Indian as assumed by the Congress (to exclude the Muslims). He defined India as a territory indicated by the river Indus on the one hand and the Oceans on the other (*Asindhusindhu paryantah*).

Further, he reasoned out how the Christians, the Parsis and the Jews are not antagonistic. He viewed Muslims as owing extra-territorial loyalty to the Turkish Khalifa. At the end of the War, when the British ill-treated Turkey, most Indian leaders, for different reasons, supported the Khilafat. Gandhi's support, in particular, upset Savarkar.

He enunciated Hindu Nationalism as the basis of the Indian nation. He disliked the special privileges that were granted to Muslims by the British and endorsed by the Congress in association with the Muslim League in the Tilak-Jinnah Lucknow Pact of 1916.

14.3.4 Savarkar and the Hindu Sanghatan (1924-1937)

Savarkar was released from jail, but kept under detention in Ratnagiri, on condition that he would not indulge in any political activity; he decided to devote himself to Hindu Sanghatan. He began working for the Hindu Sabha, started by his elder brother Babarao, as a non-political body.

Savarkar wanted to integrate the untouchables into Hindu fold as a part of the Hindu Sanghatan. He spent most of his time for this and used innovative methods. He started a restaurant to be run by the Untouchables; he built Patit Pavan Mandir as a pan-Hindu temple, he found new professions for them such as playing in a band and arranged for *sahabhajan* cutting across castes. He restarted *Shuddhi* movement to reconvert those who had been converted to Islam or Christianity by inducement, coercion or deception.

Despite his pride in the Hindu religion, Savarkar identified seven shackles that have tied up Hindu community socially: Vedoktabandi, Sindhubandi, Shuddhibandi, Vyavasyabandi, Sparshabandi, Rotibandi and Betibandi, which he wanted to fight against.

In March 1927, Gandhi visited Ratnagiri and met Savarkar. Gandhi sensed the latter's revolutionary zeal and felt it could be used for some constructive purpose under the changed circumstances. While there was some congruence in their views on social issues, there was considerable divergence on issues like *shuddhi*. Gandhi was as much against re-conversion as against conversion.

During the Ratnagiri period, Savarkar was continuously warned that his sentence of life transportation was not lifted. This prevented him from anti-British political activity. To

some extent, the British were able to tame Savarkar. Now, his political writings were directed more against the Muslims and against Gandhi, whom he treated as a British loyalist and a Muslim apologist. Savarkar did not endorse the 'Salt Satyagraha' movement called by the congress.

14.3.5 Savarkar and the Hindu Rashtra (1937-1943)

Savarkar's younger brother, Dr. Narayan was active in the Congress, and invited Vinayakrao to join it but the latter chose not to. Babarao's 'Hindu' influence became more significant for him. In his presidential addresses to the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar explained his Hindutva thesis elaborately. He mentioned that two antagonist nations were living in India, side by side. He pointed out that Gandhi's Congress was assuming that the two communities had actually merged while it was only their dream. He felt that acceptance of 'Hindutva' was essential for Indians.

He appealed to his followers to join the military. When the Second World War started in 1939, he was happy at the opportunity for Hindus to learn military skills at the expense of the British rulers, to be used against them later. He equally welcomed the opportunity offered by the Japanese through the Indian National Army.

14.4 JINNAH: TWO NATION RESOLUTION 1940 AND AFTER

In Sind, Bengal and the Punjab, the Muslim League formed ministries with the help of other parties, including Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress, but where the Congress had won majority they formed their own ministries. In the United Provinces, there was an understanding that the Congress and the League would collaborate. But the Congress preferred to go ahead and formed its own ministry. There developed a feeling that this ministry was unfair to the Muslims.

When the Viceroy brought India into the war without consulting the provincial ministries, the Congress decided to give up office and resigned from the Legislature. Jinnah asked the Muslims to observe Friday, December 22, 1939 as the Day of Deliverance.

At the 1940 Lahore session of the Muslim League, Jinnah's presidential address was emphatic and the Muslim League passed the Pakistan resolution. India, which was one country, and the people of India who constituted one nation till then, was as per Jinnah becoming two separate nations.

With Jinnah and Savarkar talking of the Two Nations in India, the problem was getting aggravated. In various attempts to solve the problem raised by Jinnah's demand of Pakistan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Jinnah had reached an agreement. But Jinnah insisted on its being approved by the Hindu Mahasabha, which promptly vetoed it.

During the War period, there were different views propagated by different leaders. There were those who wanted to take advantage of the problems the British were facing. Subhash Bose escaped from detention, and, with the help of Germans and the Japanese, built up the Indian National Army to fight the British. Some others wanted to help the British in the war effort against the Japanese, making Freedom a post-war condition. In 1942, Stafford Cripps came to India with proposals that assured 'Freedom' on termination of the War. These also included seeds of autonomy for provinces, enabling the Provinces to opt out. Gandhi described Cripps Proposals as 'Post-dated cheques on a crashing

Bank.’ Gandhi’s view was that the Japanese had no reason to eye India except the British presence. He wanted the British to ‘Quit India’ and let the Indians handle the Japanese threat and all other problems.

In August 1942, Gandhi decided on a mass movement. Jinnah’s reaction was against the movement. He viewed it as an attempt to coerce the British to hand over the transfer of power to the Hindu majority, leaving the minorities and others at the mercy of the Congress rule.

Jinnah’s strategy was to call Congress a party of the Hindus and Savarkar accused Gandhi of being pro-Muslim; Ambedkar would not let Gandhi speak for the Untouchables. That Gandhi represented large masses of Indians, irrespective of religion or caste or class, was conveniently ignored by the British, who had their own interests to protect.

Gandhi and its important leaders were imprisoned. This gave an opportunity to Jinnah and the Muslim League to consolidate their position and win the post-war elections. The same could not be said of the Hindu Mahasabha. In spite of repeated appeals by Savarkar for Hindus to vote against the Congress and for the Hindu Sanghatan, the Hindu Mahasabha was unsuccessful.

Though there were numerous efforts at negotiations that would lead to smooth transfer of power, various political and communal groups stuck to their rigid stance. This enabled the British to monitor the events to serve their own ends. At the end of the War and with the Labour party coming to power in Great Britain, India’s independence could be taken for granted. The problem was to whom the power be transferred. The clumsy negotiations, the communal riots and the impatience of the leaders, who had taken part in a long drawn freedom struggle finally led to the partition of the country.

Freedom meant different things to different leaders and parties. For Gandhi, it meant self-rule and self-control for all Indians. For Savarkar it was ‘*Hindu-hita*’ (Welfare of the Hindus). For Ambedkar social justice for the Depressed Classes was more important than political freedom for India, to restrain the tyranny of caste Hindus. For Jinnah formation of Pakistan out of Muslim majority seemed to define India’s Freedom.

Gandhi was insistent that even if the country is to be partitioned, it should be done voluntarily by a free India. He hoped that the British policy of ‘Divide and Rule’ would fail and that Indians would prefer to live together.

After intense negotiations, it was decided to partition the country and Pakistan was founded few hours before India’s ‘Tryst with Destiny’ on the midnight of 14-15 August 1947. Jinnah became the first Governor General of the new Nation Pakistan. He died the next year.

14.5 SAVARKAR: POSTSCRIPT (1948-1966)

What led to India’s freedom will always be a debatable issue. Did the armed efforts made by revolutionaries and the threat posed by the Indian National Army and the Naval Mutiny play a part? Savarkar and his admirers like to believe this. The Constitutionists think that this is a natural culmination of the Queen’s Declaration of 1857 and Montague’s Proclamation of 1917. There can be little doubt that the mass movement spearheaded by Gandhi and the Congress not only led to a smooth transfer of power but also to a continuity in administration that has proved unique amongst all the colonies.

For Savarkar and Gandhi, 'Akhanad Hindusthan' was important for different reasons. Savarkar remarked that "From 'Quit India' the Congress has inevitably landed on 'Split India'. The story of Partition of India is too complicated to apportion the blame. Jinnah, as father of Pakistan, would proudly claim credit for it. Savarkar's followers put the blame at the doorstep of the Congress. However, it was also Savarkar's own inability to influence the course of events.

When freedom came on 15 August 1947, Savarkar unfurled the new National flag along with the '*Bhagwa jaripataka*' on his terrace, all alone. The grief of Partition kept gnawing at Savarkar's followers. Few months later, on 30 January 1948 Gandhi was killed by Nathuram Godse. In the Trial, Savarkar too figured as one of the eight accused. Apart from the approver Badge, Savarkar was the only person acquitted since there was no evidence against his role. The matter did not end there. Some legal matters were not thoroughly explored. Efforts were made officially and unofficially to fill the gaps. A commission was appointed by notification of March 22, 1965 and the enquiry conducted by Justice Jivanlal Kapur. Savarkar's role became highly contentious and remains so to this day. The later part of his life was spent in giving intermittent speeches and writings. He died on 26th February, 1966 due to ill-health.

14.6 SUMMARY

Jinnah and Savarkar represented two different ideologies that had a profound influence on some of the sections of their communities. While the former stood for Muslim assertion, the latter sought a Hindu Rashtra. Gandhi was opposed to both the stands as he felt it was the amalgamation of these communities that would ensure the existence of a peaceful society. Nonetheless, they did play a significant role in shaping the history of the nation. These influences resonate to this day though not to the extent of inflicting irreparable damages. The only common thread that tied all the communities together was the achievement of freedom in a non-violent, peaceful manner and this mode of leadership was successfully spearheaded by Gandhi.

14.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Briefly examine Jinnah's early political career and his efforts to forge Congress-Muslim League unity.
2. Discuss briefly Jinnah's parting way with Congress and his demand for a separate nation.
3. Examine the early influences on Savarkar that shaped his ideological leanings.
4. Elucidate Savarkar's scheme of a Hindu Rashtra.

SUGGESTED READINGS

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UNIT 15 TAGORE, NEHRU AND AMBEDKAR

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15.1 INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi led the Satyagraha movement in India to attain Swaraj. He mobilised the masses to participate in the nationalist movement. Gandhi's principles of Truth, Non-violence and morality appealed to the masses and a unique bond was established between them. In the course of his Satyagraha, Gandhi had to deal with the contemporaries who were also associated with the nationalist movement, with their own distinct perspectives. Notable among them were Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Gandhi had both agreements and disagreements with them on certain issues but he maintained his close association and friendship with them. They were his contemporaries and close companions in the larger framework of national freedom struggle.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand

- The political philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore
- Political ideas of Jawaharlal Nehru
- The political and social ideas of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and
- Gandhi's close association with these renowned men

15.2 RABINDRANATH TAGORE

'Rabindranath Tagore', popularly known as 'Gurudev', was a renowned poet of international repute, who received Nobel Prize for his literary contribution in 1913. A versatile genius, his interest was not confined to poetry and literary activities. He made notable contributions to religious and educational thought, to moral regeneration and economic reconstruction. His contribution in the field of political philosophy and socio-political reforms is of immense importance for which he is acclaimed as one of the architects of modern India. Tagore had very close friendship with Gandhi. Gandhi called him 'Gurudev' while Tagore referred to Gandhi as 'Mahatma' as early as February 1915, when Gandhi had just arrived from South Africa. They had an intellectual debate over certain issues, and their friendship lasted till Tagore's death in 1941.

Rabindranath Tagore was born at a time when the currents of nationalist, religious and literary movements were prominent. He was influenced by Raja Rammohan Roy and Bankimchandra Chatterjee, known for their immense contribution to the nationalist movement in Bengal. The spirit of patriotism in Tagore was evident even in his early years. In 1875 he attended the Hindu Mela, a patriotic gathering held annually at Calcutta and recited a Bengali poem, 'Hindu mela Uphar', composed by himself. Again in 1887 he recited another poem, attacking Lord Lytton's repressive policy and maladministration. Thereafter through his works, he expressed his patriotic feeling.

Tagore played a prominent role in the Swadeshi movement that swept through Bengal with the background of Partition of Bengal in 1905. He presided over the annual session of Bengal Provincial Congress held at Pabna (now in Bangladesh) and elucidated his plan of making the society an effective agency of creative activity and chalked out a programme for national reconstruction with the village people as the nuclei. Tagore was concerned by the split that took place in the Surat session of the Congress between Extremists and Moderates. In his presidential speech at Pabna, he emphasised the need for resolving the conflict without transcending the limits of discipline. However, Tagore could not reconcile his conscience with the differences prevalent in the Congress. Being a Universalistic, his mind was not confined to a particular political doctrine. He was especially pained by the revolutionary path chosen by few youths, which he considered as a futile attempt, an inconsistent gesture in the great Indian tradition. Though he left active politics, his patriotism made him a close observer of the nationalist movement. He expressed his anguish towards the British government through literary works and letters. His fiery writings inspired many people to plunge into national movement. Tagore strongly condemned Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 13th April 1919 and anguished by the incident, a month later, he returned the title of 'Sir' conferred on him by the British government. In his letter to viceroy, Tagore said, "The rulers who have handy the efficient machinery

to crush the human life and use it against innocent, unarmed and vulnerable people cannot stand on the justification that it was a need of political compulsion”.

Tagore's entire life was devoted to literary writing and was influenced by his love for man and humanity; like Gandhi, he wrote extensively on the issues of history, religion, education, society, polity, village life, civilisation, culture etc. Among these are essays such as the *Bharatbarsh Dharm*, *Swadeshi Samaj*, *Atma Parichay*, *Kalaniketan*, and *Swaraj Sadhana*. He established *Shantiniketan* with the objective of building educational institution outside State-sponsored system and taking students closer to the nature and practical life.

15.2.1 Tagore's Political Philosophy

Tagore propounded the philosophy of practical humanism. He was concerned with man, not as the citizen of a particular state. For him humanity stood above everything. He was aware of the arrogant and irrational power of the British rulers who insulted and injured humanism; as a humanist, he resolved to fight this evil and had firm conviction in the principle of morality, goodness and love and championed individual freedom. He believed that the essence of freedom is illumination of the soul by a process of self-realisation. Therefore for peace, prosperity and progress of man and society the people should be awakened first. According to Tagore man has two entities 'self' and 'the universe' which should be harmonised. Tagore preached Universalism. He believed that cooperation and reciprocity of different cultures and civilisations is the need of present age. The synthesis of different cultures may enlighten the world.

15.2.2 Nationalism

Although Tagore praised western civilisation, he criticised the concept of nationalism which emerged in the West. Tagore was aware that Nationalism has released man from the shackles of feudalism. It has provided an opportunity for the people living in a distinct country to have an independent existence. Nationalism has inculcated desire in the subject people to free themselves from the shackles of foreign rule. However in the practice Nationalism has evils which the poet has criticised. Tagore said that Nationalism has bred disharmony between nation states. It has led to international discord, bitterness and strife. It has inculcated spirit of exclusiveness and intolerance. Above all, love for one's own country has led to hatred for the others. Self-interest and Self-aggrandisement are the features of Nationalism. Greed, material prosperity and the consequent mutual jealousy led the nation to the powerfulness by creating fear of each other. This instinct of selfishness and lust for power are greatest dangers to mankind. When a Nation considers itself greater than people, it attacks the very vital of humanity. The West, under the impact of nationhood, has lost the consciousness; the living bond of society is broken and is replaced by mechanical organisation.

In his book *Nationalism*, Tagore advocated that unlike the West, India sought unity in diversity. Tagore opined that India is a country of divergent races, religions and languages. She has accommodated foreign religions and cultures. This assimilative potentiality of Indian civilisation and social system is immensely unique. The basis of Indian civilisation is society and the spiritual ideal of man, which is eternal. Commenting on nationalism in Japan, Tagore said that Japan took the concept of nation from the west but she has kept intact the spirit of the East. She has her own soul, which must assert itself over all her requirements.

To Tagore, nationalism can serve greater good to humanity if it believes in national self-respect. Nationalism should be based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity instead of suspicion, fear, distrust and national egoism. To him, humanity is greater than nationalism and it can prosper and progress by happy synthesis of the spiritual unity of East and the scientific and technological advancement of the West.

15.2.3 Swaraj

Tagore's view of civilisation was based on reason and goodness in which the individual will not be oppressed. He therefore urged for Swaraj or Home rule. However he had a conviction that the awakening of India was a part of the awakening of the world. According to Tagore, Swaraj cannot be attained by blind obedience to an outside power but only by the realisation of self in the light of intellect. He attributed India's decline and fall to the fact that India had surrendered her right to reason and judge the blind forces of Shastric injunctions and social conventions. Tagore further said, "Those who have failed to attain Swaraj within themselves must lose it in outside world too." Political independence is not the real Swaraj. Swaraj means moral and spiritual transformation of the individual in society. Swaraj, to him, was an internal attribute of man which could not be attained by any external means. It is through political consciousness and the consciousness of the self that Swaraj can be attained in the real sense of the term. Political agitation may end foreign rule but it would not be permanent. Swaraj is futile if the people are not educated or taught to be self-reliant. Thus Tagore's concept of Swaraj is essentially related to self-realisation and creativity. In his own words "The village of which the people come together to earn for themselves their food, their health, their education, to gain for themselves the joy of so doing, shall have lighted the lamp on the way to Swaraj. It will not be difficult therefrom to light others, one after another and thus illuminate more and more of the path along which Swaraj will advance by the organic processes of its own living growth". Tagore associated the welfare of the people with Swaraj. For him the welfare of the people is a synthesis comprised of many interrelated elements: health, work, reason, wisdom and joy. As he said, "If even the people of one village of India, by the exercise of their own power, make their village their very own, then and there will begin the work of realising our country as our own:"

15.2.4 Swadeshi Samaj

When Tagore urged for Swaraj he had a complete image of Swaraj in his mind which tried to preserve the continuity of Indian traditions. Tagore pointed out that the western civilisation revolves around the State; State is the keystone of the political arch. However, in India, society has been the main spring of constructive activity through ages. In his essay 'Swadeshi Samaj' published in 1904, Tagore has elaborately discussed this idea which reveals his emphasis on society. Swadeshi Samaj is a manifesto of Tagore's belief that India's problems are essentially social and must be resolved through society. The fundamental purpose of his scheme was to make society supreme and to promote social co-operation. To Tagore, society is the life force of India's civilisation. But it was crushed under the aegis of the British rule and the society which had hitherto been supreme made secondary. This emphasis on supremacy of the state, he says, led to all calamities in India. State interference of any kind is likely to dwarf individual's inner faculties, weaken the sense of responsibility, destroy the power of self-help and kill initiative. The state's function should be restricted to the extent of hindering of hindrances.

15.3 TAGORE AND GANDHI

Tagore's achievement in literary and creative spheres equals Gandhi's achievement in political sphere. Both of them exhibited the urge to put India in world literary and political thought. They were contemporaries in their works and deeds. The friendship and affection between the two continued inspite of their differences.

Tagore first came to know Gandhi for his work in South Africa through C. F. Andrews, who closely associated with Gandhi in South Africa. Andrews, a prolific correspondent, regularly kept Tagore informed of Gandhi's activities in South Africa. The real interaction between Tagore and Gandhi began in 1914, upon Gandhi's return to India. Gandhi chose Tagore's Shantiniketan to send the members of Phoenix Ashram till his arrival. Gandhi recalled later, "It was here that the members of my South African family found warm hospitality in 1914, pending my arrival from England, and I too found shelter here for nearly a month".

Gandhi visited Shantiniketan on 10th March 1915. To this day it is observed as 'Gandhi punyaha Din' at Shantiniketan every year. It is during February 1915 that Tagore referred Gandhi as *Mahatma* and their association began with the exchange of letters and articles. They expressed each other's confidence and support on some basic issues. In 1920 Gandhi even invited Tagore to visit his ashram. However after 1920 Tagore began to express doubts about some aspects of the political movement led by Gandhi, especially his non-cooperation movement.

Both Tagore and Gandhi were basically humanists. The ideal of Indian independence was the bond between them. They sought to utilise the inner capacities of the people in creative ideals. Gandhi's 'Village Swaraj' and Tagore's 'Swadeshi Samaj' had a common meeting ground and both believed that India's domination by foreign rule was self-made and could be challenged by the soul-force. Both of them rejected material civilisation of the West. On many occasions Gandhi sought Tagore's advice and intellectual support before launching a major course of action. For instance, he wrote to Tagore before the resumption of civil disobedience in January 1932, before his famous fast on the issue of depressed castes and separate electorate and again at the time of his entry at the Guruvayyur temple. Tagore and Gandhi were completely in agreement on the issue of communalism. Gandhi was the gospel of communal harmony and Tagore fiercely criticised communalism through his writings. In 1937 Tagore requested Gandhi to be a Life Trustee of the Vishwa Bharati. In 1934 Gandhi had become 'Advisor' to the Village Industries Association in Shantiniketan at Tagore's request. Gandhi had, on several occasions, mobilised funds for Vishwa Bharati.

There were differences between these luminaries, the foremost being the issue of non cooperation movement which Gandhi launched. Tagore believed that the idea of non cooperation is political asceticism. It may develop into frightfulness in the human nature, losing faith in the basic reality of life. Secondly, Tagore raised the issue of Charkha, in his essay, 'Cult of Charkha' (1925). Gandhi propounded his Constructive Programme for rural development and economic regeneration through propagation of Charkha. Tagore expressed apprehensions about not only its economic efficacy, but also the use of moral language in place of the economic. He criticised the undue emphasis and blind faith in Charkha that distracted attention from other more important factors in the task of all-round reconstruction. He asked, "Is charkha alone capable to bring us Swaraj or remove

our poverty? How long would it possible to hide ourselves away from commerce with the outside world?” Tagore insisted that more than Charkha, it is the internal union of hearts that attains Swaraj. Tagore’s doubts were genuine but Gandhi had his own philosophy regarding the Charkha. For him it was the symbol of Swadeshi and nationalism. Moreover Gandhi had not recommended charkha alone, but a chain of activities for the rural reconstruction. Gandhi and Tagore differed on the efficacy of fasting. Tagore found it painful to contemplate the suffering while Gandhi brought it upon himself by fasting.

15.4 JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Few statesmen in the twentieth century have attained the stature of Jawaharlal Nehru. He is a symbol of Asia’s political awakening and is recognised as an indomitable fighter for freedom and international peace. Indian by birth yet western by education, modern in outlook yet influenced by the heritage of India, staunch patriot yet a man with international vision. Nehru was the symbol of a new society - liberal, humanist and equalitarian. Nehru’s public life spanned over a period of 45 years- 30 were devoted to the struggle for independence, and for 18 years he held the dual position of national leader/Prime minister and world statesman.

Nehru began his political activities by participating enthusiastically in Home Rule League established by Tilak and Annie Besant. Nehru joined civil disobedience movement launched by Gandhi and had come under the influence of Gandhi. He faced six months imprisonment during civil disobedience movement. In the early years of 1920 Jawaharlal stood for the ideal of complete independence for India instead of dominion status. Gandhi had reservations about the hasty decision of Purna Swaraj; hence never adopted it as Congress resolution. However, when Nehru became the President of the Indian National Congress at Lahore, the historic independence (Purna Swaraj) resolution was passed on the midnight of December 31, 1929. In the 1930s, Nehru was imprisoned on various occasions for around 6-10 years. He became the President of the Congress again in 1936, 1937 and 1946. During Quit India movement, he was imprisoned for nearly three years. After release, he became the leading spokesman of India in several negotiations with the British. In 1946 he formed the Interim Government of India. On 15th August 1947 he became the first Prime minister of Independent India. Until his death in 1964 he earned reputation for India in the international politics and laid a strong foundation of modern India.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a keen student of History and his ‘Glimpses of World History’ and ‘The Discovery of India’ are the testimonies of it. These texts have made notable contributions in the realm of learning and Indian History.

15.4.1 Political Ideas of Nehru

Nehru was not a political philosopher in the academic sense but he was certainly a man of ideas. His ideas reflected in his writings, speeches and policies which he introduced as the head of the state. It was ideological foresight of Nehru that laid the foundations of a strong, democratic, secular and socialist India.

15.4.2 Nationalism and Internationalism

Nehru was a great nationalist. He supported liberal nationalism and rejected the aggressive expansionist nationalism based on religious or racial superiority. To Nehru, Nationalism as it existed in India was both a composite and a living force. Supporting the nationalist

movement against the arrogant British rule, Nehru said that India's desire to control her own affairs needs no justification. The British rule of 180 years is just a small phase in the long history of India. Nationalism gives strength and unity to the State. He was a firm believer in the right to self-determination.

Nehru believed that in spite of numerous diversities, there is a unity running throughout Indian History. India has an assimilative quality which has created a composite Indian culture. He had a firm conviction that nationalism is not only a psychological feeling but also a rational understanding of nation's rich heritage. He opined that the attempt of European Historians to subvert Indian history, would not allow Indians to have a proper understanding of the prosperous Indian traditions. He therefore tried to Discover India's luminous history and culture.

Nehru's dream was of a strong India, not in the sense of military preparedness but strong by actions, cultures and ideas; strong to serve humanity by peaceful means. There was gradual change in Nehru's Nationalism towards Internationalism. In 1929 he had declared that India wants freedom from British domination but does not want to de-link herself from the rest of the world. After Independence India would make all efforts of International co-operation and establish World Federation. However, World Federation can be established only by independent, sovereign States. After Independence Nehru made efforts in this direction and propounded peaceful means to resolve international conflicts. It was under his leadership that the principle of Non-alignment became the foundation of India's Foreign Policy. In accordance with Internationalism he suggested five principles (Panchasheel) of international relations. viz.1) Non-aggression, 2) Mutual Respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, 3) Non-interference in each other's internal affairs 4) equality and mutual co-operation 5) peaceful co-existence.

15.4.3 Democracy

Nehru's strong commitment to Democracy was deeply rooted in humanism. He criticised authoritarianism, Nazism and Fascism. He was a passionate and genuine defender of freedom. His idea of democracy was closer to Western democracy, with due emphasis on elections, adult franchise, representation, political parties and democratic institutions like Parliament. As a political successor of Gandhi, he emphasised nobility of means.

Nehru had firm conviction that Democracy cannot succeed if there is economic disparity. He associated Democracy with socialism, equitable and just distribution of wealth and means of production. He believed that Democracy and capitalism are contradictory to each other. Democracy implies political power in the hands of all the people, whereas in capitalism the real power goes in the hands of few. In Nehru's ideal of Indian democracy, people were at the centre stage. He defined democracy as an ideology that provides equality and justice to the people. He emphasised the need to create feeling of participation among people, for better relations with government. Nehru favoured Parliamentary democracy for its lasting impact and also for its principles of continuity and change.

15.4.4 Socialism

As a student in London (1910-12), Nehru became attracted to the ideas of Fabian Socialism. Nehru's participation in the Brussels Congress of oppressed nationalities (1926-27) and later his visit to Soviet Union (1927) convinced him that the only key to the solution of problems of India and the world lay in Socialism. In line with the Fabian

tradition, he realised the importance of State and accepted it as a perpetual necessity for realising an egalitarian society. He believed Socialism as an economic theory of state ownership and control of the basic means of production and distribution. It was the economic technique for the liberation of masses from feudal autocracy. Nehru's fascination for Socialism and economic development emanates from his deep concern for the suffering of Indian masses and a strong will to better their lives. However Socialism for Nehru was not just an economic doctrine but a philosophy of life which involved profound changes in habits, instincts, values and motivation. He looked upon socialism as an extension of democracy and Liberty. Democracy has no meaning without equality and equality cannot be established so long as the instruments of production are not owned by the state. He had firm conviction that socialism can be established not by revolution or violence but through democratic, peaceful means without uprooting the Indian tradition.

In 1936 Lucknow Congress, he not only reiterated his belief in Socialism but even expressed the desire that the Congress should become a Socialist organisation. After independence Nehru's approach to Socialism took a concrete shape. The Directive Principles in the Indian Constitution was a clear reflection of Socialism. The Avadi Session (1955) of the Congress adopted Socialist pattern of Society as the national goal. In accordance with it, the 1956 Industrial Policy was drafted. Socio-Economic Planning is the indispensable aspect of Nehru's Socialism. He was inspired by the Russian experiment of planning, during his visit. He believed that the problem of Indian mass poverty and national economic stagnation could not be solved except through planning on socialistic basis. For Nehru, Planning was the process through which production would be increased and greater distributive justice achieved. It was essentially linked up with industrialisation and not ready to pay the price of human suffering for planning, as it did in Soviet Union. The credit for introducing and initialing democratic planning in India goes to Nehru.

15.4.5 Secularism

Nehru was a thorough secularist and no religious creed satisfied his scientific quest for truth and reality. As a humanist thinker, Nehru respected the great founders of religion but he unhesitatingly condemned the role of organised religion in society. He was aware of its dangers and misuse. Nehru had realised the relevance of secular State in order to preserve and protect the composite cultural tradition of Indian Society. It was also essential for the maintenance of social stability and religious harmony among diverse groups. To maintain national unity and orderly progress in a pluralistic society, Nehru considered Secularism as a vital necessity.

It implied that state should not have any religion; neither should it have affinity with any religion but it should protect the rights and freedom of all religious communities. He also believed that material progress should be based on ethical and moral principles and continued his faith in Gandhian principle of spiritualisation of politics.

15.5 NEHRU AND GANDHI

In 1916 Lucknow Congress, Nehru met Gandhi and came under his spell. Their partnership of exceptional energy and integrity survived numerous strains and stresses subjected by upheavals of politics and life. Nehru developed great admiration towards Gandhi for his work in South Africa. It was the cause of Indian Freedom that brought Gandhi and Nehru together and kept their association intact for many a year. Nehru was impressed by Gandhi's tremendous earnestness and devotion to work and the latter

became a fatherly figure to Nehru. He also admired the harmonious poise and emotional interaction that characterised the personality of Gandhi. In a telegram sent to Gandhi in May 1933, when he was about to embark on his twenty-one days fast, Nehru wrote, "I feel lost in strange country where you are the only familiar landmark and I try to grope my way in dark but I stumble. Whatever happens, my love and thoughts will be with you."

Nehru, however, disapproved Gandhi's fasts of self-purification. His rational mind always questioned it. On numerous occasions, Nehru was assailed by doubts about Gandhi's policies: In 1934, on the withdrawal of Civil disobedience movement, in 1937 on the formation of Congress ministries in provinces. There were few instances of clashes between Nehru and Gandhi as well. For instance, at Madras Congress Session of 1927 Nehru moved the resolution of complete independence. Gandhi was absent from the proceedings on this occasion. But when he learnt that Nehru's resolution had been approved, he exclaimed, "The Congress stultifies itself by repeating year after year resolutions of this character when it knows that it is not capable of carrying them into effect". What disturbed Gandhi at Madras session was the tone of Nehru's speeches, his surge to radicalism and his apparent abandonment of non-violence. In a letter of 4th January 1928 Gandhi wrote to Nehru, in which he said, "... Most of the resolutions you framed and got carried could have been delayed for one year. Your plunging into the "republican army" was a hasty step. (Nehru had presided over a Republican Congress at the Madras Session)" A few weeks later Gandhi wrote again, stressing the differences which had come into open. "I see quite clearly that you must carry on open warfare against me and my views. For if I am wrong... it is your duty... to rise in revolt against me. The differences between you and me appear to be so vast and so radical that there seems to be no meeting ground between us. But this dissolution of comradeship - if dissolution must come - in no way affects our personal intimacy".

These differences never clashed to the breaking point. Nehru tried to make compromise partly because of powerful emotional bond and partly because of his conviction that Gandhi's leadership was inseparable during the freedom struggle. On many occasions Gandhi supported Nehru. In 1929 and in 1946, at the time of elections to the post of Congress president, Gandhi supported Nehru against senior leaders like Vallabhbhai Patel and Acharya Kripalani. This time the choice assumed greater importance because of the impending formation of an Interim Government. One month after the election the Viceroy invited Nehru, as Congress President to form an interim Government. Nehru and Gandhi were in agreement regarding issues like commitment to the freedom and unity of India, pluralist society, Hindu-Muslim Unity, composite culture of India, secularism and peaceful and non-violent methods of settling disputes within and between nations. After independence, however, Nehru did not subscribe to 'Village Swaraj', which was so dear to Gandhi.

15.6 DR.BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a social revolutionary, a profound scholar, a charismatic leader of the downtrodden masses. He denounced caste system and fought relentlessly to establish a society based on the democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. He firmly believed that democratic society in India would be possible only when the hierarchical structure of Varna system is dismantled. A giant among intellectuals in legal acumen and Parliamentary skill, Ambedkar was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution.

Born in an untouchable community, Ambedkar bore the brunt of caste discrimination and often faced humiliation for belonging to lower caste. Ambedkar was educated in India and Sayajirao Gaikwad, the Maharaja of Baroda provided scholarship to him for higher studies. Ambedkar did his M.A. from Columbia University and went to London School of Economics. After a brief stint in India, he left for London again; in June 1921, he was awarded M.Sc. in Political Economy by the London School of Economics for his thesis 'Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India'. In 1922, he received the degree of Doctor of Science and Law.

Ambedkar's work in public life developed in three directions: first, awakening and organising untouchables; second, securing political representation for the untouchables; and third, encouraging the depressed classes to take education. In March 1924, Ambedkar founded Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha for the upliftment of untouchables. Ambedkar started fortnightly Marathi newspaper '*Bahishkrit Bharat*' in 1927, through which he started educating the depressed classes, making them aware of their political rights and relentlessly campaigned against untouchability. Ambedkar did not join the Congress movement and concentrated on social reform for he believed that Congress protects the interests of the upper castes. In December 1927 Ambedkar launched his first Mahad Satyagraha, to establish civic rights of the untouchables to draw water from a Public tank called 'Chawdar tank' at Mahad. On 25th December 1927, Ambedkar and other untouchables publicly burnt *Manusmriti*, as they considered it as a symbol of the slavery of the untouchables. In 1930 Ambedkar led another historic Satyagraha for the rights of untouchables' entry to the Kalaram temple at Nasik. This Satyagraha was launched just 9 days before (3rd March 1930) the Dandi March led by Gandhi. These Satyagrahis were peaceful and disciplined and large number of people from depressed classes participated in it.

Ambedkar knew that unless the depressed classes do not get share in the political power, their subjugation would not end. Therefore, while giving evidence before the Southborough committee, appointed by British government in 1918 Ambedkar demanded separate electorate to the untouchables. A similar demand was also put forth before the Simon Commission. The British government nominated him as representative of depressed classes to the three Round Table Conferences to be held in London. These conferences were organised to frame new Act or a Constitution for India in accordance with demands of the people of India. In the First and Second Round Table Conferences, Ambedkar reiterated his demand of separate electorate for the depressed classes and was successful. The Macdonald Award, known as Communal award, granted the depressed classes separate electorate. Gandhi vehemently criticised the principle of separate electorate and began to fast unto death against the award. Dr. Ambedkar had no option but to sign Poona Pact with Gandhi that scrapped the separate electorates. Disturbed by Gandhi's attitude towards untouchables, Ambedkar wrote a book entitled 'Annihilation of Caste' and made a historic announcement at Yeola that the untouchables would leave the Hindu fold and accept another religion.

After 1935 the political scene in India had considerably changed. Provincial autonomy was inaugurated under the Government of India Act 1935. Ambedkar was convinced that Congress would neither take any initiative in the social reconstruction nor would it safeguard the interests of the Depressed Classes. Preceding the 1937 elections to the Provincial assemblies, he felt the need for having Political Organisation of the Labourers and the Depressed and in October 1936 he founded Independent Labour Party. The

Party won 15 out of 17 seats in the Bombay Provincial Assembly elections (Dr. Ambedkar too got elected). In 1942 the British government nominated Dr. Ambedkar as member of Governor General's Executive, as the in-charge of the Labour department. In 1946 Ambedkar founded the People's Education Society which started a number of Colleges for the students of depressed classes. In the same year elections to the Constituent Assembly were held and Ambedkar got elected. In August 1947 he was elected as the chairman of the Constitution drafting committee. After independence Jawaharlal Nehru included Ambedkar as Law Minister. However, he resigned from the post when he saw opposition to the Hindu code bill which he had proposed. He also established Bharatiya Buddha Maha Sabha in 1955. On 14th October 1956 he, along with his followers embraced Buddhism at a historic ceremony in Nagpur.

15.6.1 Social and Political Ideas

Prior to Ambedkar's voicing the concerns, the Dalits had hardly any role in the socio-political life of India. The Social reform movement had also not focused on the caste issue. Jotiba Phule was perhaps the first person to detest caste hierarchy and inequality. Ambedkar believed that eradication of caste system should be central in the social reforms, for political reforms are futile without social reforms and equality.

15.6.2 Criticism on Caste System

Ambedkar's life was shaped and influenced by bitter and discriminatory personal experiences for being a dalit. He therefore wanted to enquire into the origin and development of caste system and the practice of untouchability. His rational enquiry of the Hindu religion led him to the conclusion that Varna and caste system is the basis of Vedic culture. According to Ambedkar, Chaturvarna, as a basis of social organisation, is not only based on division of labour but also a division of labourers. Chaturvarna presupposes classification of people into four definite categories, the shudras being at the bottom of the ladder. They were denied all rights and privileges including that of securing education. He further argued that the early period of Aryan society recognised only three Varnas. Ambedkar explained the process of division of society into castes and sub-castes. He said that the subdivision of the society was quite natural but the unique feature was that they lost open-door character and became self-enclosed units. Prohibition of inter-marriage or endogamy further accentuated the caste divisions.

Ambedkar felt that caste system wrought injustice on the lower castes by denying them basic human rights and preventing them from rising to the cultural level of higher castes. Thus untouchables remained uncivilised and backward. Also the caste consciousness prevented the feeling of fraternity in the Indian Society. Dr. Ambedkar foresaw that only a casteless society that has inner strength can defend itself and also attain the goal of Swaraj.

Ambedkar had realised that the caste-based agricultural economy is the root cause of the suffering of the downtrodden and urged the villagers to leave the village and move to cities, to 'Educate, organise and resist' and to assert their rights.

Ambedkar detested the inherent inequalities in the society that provided no scope for individual development and for disabling the individual to choose his occupation; he also lamented on the lack of integrity, fraternity and equality. He thoroughly disliked Hinduism on these grounds and embraced Buddhism for it provided a rationalistic view, democratic principle, morality, the message of love and compassion. It enabled the disciples to modify

or even abandon any of Buddha's teachings, according to a given circumstance. Thus Ambedkar's 'Dhamma' was manifestation of creative reinterpretation of Buddhism.

15.6.3 Nationalism

Ambedkar viewed nationalism as an emotional feeling that has great strength and impossible to root it out. He reiterated that Indians would develop nationalism only when there is integration and respect for basic human rights. In a discriminatory society, the spirit of oneness cannot come into existence. Ambedkar believed not only in political integrity and independence but also in social integrity. Ambedkar's nationalism was not aggressive nationalism, for he knew that it can become irrational and can give birth to intolerance. It was rational and secular. He believed that nationalism based on religion is fundamentally against democracy. Moreover India is a multi-religious country; the nationalist movement was led by both communities to establish a secular democratic state and not a theocratic state.

15.6.4 Democracy

Ambedkar believed that without social reforms, political reforms are meaningless because the state ultimately is a social institution. Social traditions and customs influence the State apparatus. Therefore political reforms alone cannot bring about social revolution. Instead progressive views and ideas evolved from social reform can reflect in the governance of the State.

Dr. Ambedkar refers to Democracy as a system which brings about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people without resorting to disputes and bloodshed. He desired to remove contradictions created by economic and social inequalities. He wanted to establish the principle of one man, one vote and one value, not only in political life of India but also in social and economic life. Thus he wanted political democracy to be accompanied by social democracy. He was convinced that political democracy cannot last without social democracy.

Dr. Ambedkar was a great admirer of Parliamentary system of government. According to him, three important factors are inherent in the parliamentary system of Government. First, hereditary rule has no sanction in parliamentary democracy. Second, no single individual can presume the authority or superiority and cannot carry out administration single-handedly. The law must be made by the representatives of the people. Third, the elected representatives, the legislators and ministers must have the confidence of the people.

Ambedkar pointed out the essential conditions for the successful working of democracy.

- 1) There must be no glaring inequality in the society. Such a division in the society has within itself the germs of revolution, impossible for Parliamentary system to cure them.
- 2) There must be statutory provisions to mitigate the suffering of the oppressed classes and to protect their interests.
- 3) Existence of an effective opposition is an important factor in the working of a successful democracy. The party in power must be subject to scrutiny and vigilance. A strong opposition party can check the misuse of power by the ruling party.
- 4) There must be equality in law and administration. Ambedkar opposed 'Spoils

System' as it existed in USA. He believed that there was a need of a permanent civil service, recruited on the basis of merit for implementing the policy of the government.

- 5) There should not be tyranny of the majority over the minority. In democracy the majority is at the helm of governmental affairs. Enough care should be taken to ensure the safety and security of the minorities and effectively redress their grievances.
- 6) There must be a steady growth of Constitutional conventions and people must be educated in the observance of these conventions.
- 7) Dr. Ambedkar appreciated Harold Laski for his insistence on the moral order as a requirement of democracy. He believed that without moral order, democracy cannot sustain. Conscience of people is a test of democracy. For Ambedkar, democracy was not only a form of government, but also a way of life through which social justice can be established.

15.6.5 Socialism

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of Parliamentary Democracy is reconciled with his concept of socialism. In democracy individual rights are indispensable and they can be protected by socialism. Individual rights are dependent upon the economic structure of the society. He was aware that if left to the market forces, depressed classes would become more vulnerable and would not be able to sustain in the capitalist system. He therefore advocated State Socialism, in which State should control basic industries, so that economic exploitation could be avoided. He recommended economic planning and collective farming and demanded nationalisation of insurance. Ambedkar's State socialism reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Indian Constitution. He used the Constitutional tool for implementing State Socialism since he knew that Constitution is beyond the reach of Parliamentary majority to amend or abrogate it.

15.7 AMBEDKAR AND GANDHI

On 8th August 1930, Ambedkar presided over the All India Depressed Classes Congress at Nagpur. In his presidential speech Ambedkar expressed his disapproval of the Civil Disobedience movement launched by Gandhi. However, Gandhi's Satyagraha had influenced Ambedkar considerably as reflected in the Mahad Satyagraha. Gandhi was a towering figure in Indian politics and Ambedkar had great respect for him for he effectively voiced the concerns of the downtrodden and espoused the removal of untouchability. Ambedkar had made efforts to cooperate with Gandhi in the Untouchability removal programme as early as 1924.

However Gandhi and Ambedkar had differences on certain issues such as untouchability and representation of the depressed classes. Gandhi had faith in Varna System and believed that to eradicate the practice of untouchability, it is not essential to end the Varna system. Ambedkar criticised Varna system for being divisive and emphasised the need of dismantling the caste system in order to end untouchability. He also felt that the issue of untouchability and caste system were relegated to background by the Congress. In his books 'What Congress and Gandhi have done to the untouchables' and the brochure 'Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the untouchables', Ambedkar expressed his views. He therefore decided to work outside Congress party.

Ambedkar aimed at securing political power to the untouchables. He demanded rightful representation of the depressed classes in the legislative council and demanded separate electorate in the First Round Table Conference. However, Gandhi disapproved the idea of separate electorate for untouchables for he believed that the untouchables were part of Hindu Society and separate electorate may divide the Hindu Society. Ambedkar criticised Gandhi's role as representative of the untouchables. Gandhi began fast unto death against the award. Ambedkar had no option but to sign the Poona pact with Gandhi that scrapped the separate electorates but made the provision for the reserved joint electorates. Gandhi succeeded in keeping the untouchables in the Hindu fold and gave a larger share of seats to the depressed classes than the promised seats by the communal award. In spite of that, Ambedkar's bitterness towards Congress and Gandhi continued. After independence however Ambedkar's principle of Separate electorate for untouchables was not incorporated in the Indian Constitution and the provision of reservation for S.C. and S.T. was made to safeguard the interests of the Depressed Classes.

Ambedkar and Gandhi differed in their views about the methods of annihilation of castes. While Gandhi propounded Village Swaraj and villages as the basic units of democracy, Ambedkar advocated leaving village life to condemn caste hierarchy and upper caste domination. Urbanisation was his answer for breaking the chains of the caste system.

Ambedkar and Gandhi stood on the same side on the issue of non-violence; while Gandhi viewed non-violence as a 'principle' and not just policy, for Ambedkar it was primarily a policy. Ambedkar agreed with Gandhi on the issue of purity of means, which to him was an important differentiating feature between Buddhism and Marxism.

15.8 SUMMARY

Gandhi's leadership in the national freedom struggle was unparalleled. Nevertheless he thoroughly valued and respected his distinguished contemporaries, who were also his close associates. Gandhi's ideas converged and differed with those of his associates; but they never came in the way of consolidating their association and drawing strength and inspiration from each other. This Unit dealt with Gandhi's distinguished contemporaries like Tagore, Nehru and Ambedkar. In spite of their differences, they forged amicable relations and worked together for the larger goal of national freedom. Their political maturity and acumen were unparalleled and it is this intellectual convergence along with the mass support that ensured the independence for the nation.

15.9 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Examine at length Tagore's ideas on nationalism, swaraj and swadeshi samaj.
2. Elucidate the political ideas of Nehru with special reference to nationalism and internationalism.
3. Discuss at length Dr. Ambedkar's social and political ideas.
4. Highlight Gandhi's convergent and divergent views from that of Tagore, Nehru and Ambedkar.

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UNIT 16 GANDHI AND THE LEFT

Structure

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16.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall study the complex relationship between Gandhi and the Indian Left. The Indian Left consisted of the Radical Humanists led by M. N. Roy, Indian Communists led by Shripad Amrit Dange and the Democratic Socialists led by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. All these leaders took part in the Indian freedom movement and spent a number of years in jail. They strongly appreciated the contribution made by Gandhi but had their own differences of opinions. M. N. Roy was a harsh critic of Gandhi and despite differences, Dr. Lohia was an ardent admirer of Gandhi. This unit discusses at length Gandhi's relationship with the leaders of Left-wing ideology and how, inspite of differences, they shared the common goal of Indian independence.

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- Gandhi's relationship with the Leftist leaders
- The views of M.N.Roy, S.A. Dange and Dr.R.M.Lohia on Gandhi
- Their critiques of Gandhi's thoughts and views

16.2 GANDHI AND THE LEFT: AN UNEASY RELATIONSHIP

When Gandhi entered the Indian politics, the Left was gaining popularity as the people were influenced by the Great October Revolution of 1917. Gandhi did not subscribe to the socialist ideology as his philosophy was deeply rooted in religious idioms and metaphysics. He deeply believed in God. The Leftist leaders did not appreciate his social and political views but took notice of Gandhi because he mobilised the masses on a large scale against the British. Initially, the Leftist movement in India was weak but over a period of time, there emerged three schools- Radical Humanism, Communism and Socialism. Radical Humanism was a school of thought expounded by M. N. Roy who decided to part company with Marxists to establish his own political party. The Indian Communist party was established in 1925 and Dange was its prominent leader. The Congress Socialist party was established in 1934 and Dr. Lohia was one of its prominent leaders.

Though there was a close relationship between the Left and Gandhi, it was an uneasy relationship because the Left did not approve of the spiritualism of Gandhi, his concepts of trusteeship and decentralisation. The Leftist leaders believed in modernist ideas of progress and politics. They sometimes joined the freedom movement. Sometimes they were out of it. In 1942 they opposed the Quit India movement. But the Congress socialists were followers of Gandhi and they took part in all major Gandhian movements.

16.3 M. N. ROY AND GANDHI

Manavendranath Roy was a great Indian revolutionary who took part in revolutionary movement during the Ghadar movement. Subsequently he left the country and carried out revolutionary activities in Mexico and other countries. He came to Soviet Russia and became a follower of Lenin. He took part in the activities of the Communist International and attended its second conference. He had difference of opinion with Lenin regarding the role of Communists in the national liberation movement. He was instrumental in the establishment of Communist Party in India. Roy subsequently resigned from the Communist India. He was arrested and sentenced to six years of imprisonment. After his release from the prison, he decided to join the Congress party. He sought to provide an alternative leadership to the Congress. He was a critic of Gandhi. Therefore, he established Radical Democratic Party and put forward his own alternative programme which was based on rationalism, secularism, scientific outlook and democracy. In 1942, he opposed the Congress party's Quit India Movement and actively supported the British government because it was his contention that Hitler and Fascism were enemies of humanity and they should be defeated at any cost. In 1946 Roy decided to abolish his Radical Democratic Party and expounded his concept of New Humanism. He wanted to work on non-party lines. In this concept of New Humanism, Roy came closer to Gandhi.

16.3.1 Roy's Critique of Gandhi

Roy was a harsh critic of Gandhi's leadership as well as his ideology. In the third conference of the *Communist International*, Lenin was of the opinion that in the Asian Countries, due to the weakness of the working class movement, the communists should support national liberation movement because it was a progressive force. Roy opposed this line and said that the national liberation movements are dominated by reactionary

elements and the communist association with them would harm the interests of progressive forces. He was of the opinion that Gandhi was a religious and cultural revolutionist and he advocated socially reactionary policies. But Lenin saw progressive elements in his leadership.

Roy returned to India and after his release from the jail he decided to join the Congress. But he did not change his opinion of Gandhi and Gandhism. He felt that Gandhi's religious ideas were reactionary and his concept of inner voice irrational. In modern times, instead of relying on science, he relied on religious superstitions and outdated metaphysics. Religion did not encourage morality as the human reason provided free flow of thought. He did not accept Gandhi's concept of *RamRajya* as he did not approve monarchy and wanted to establish Swaraj or self-rule. Though Gandhi criticised parliamentary democracy, he had suggested remedies to its reform. The monarchy could be no substitute for it. Roy also felt that Gandhi was bewildered about future. Due to reactionary pacifism of Gandhi, the Congress would not grow as a party of forward looking people. Gandhi relied upon backward Indian civilisation for the revival of India. Roy opined that the Indian civilisation had become bankrupt and was backward looking.

Roy was also critical of Gandhi's economic idea. He held that Gandhi's concept of trusteeship was based on wrong assumption as the rich would not help poor at the cost of their own interests. Also his opposition to machine was wrong. He did not realise that the machines reduced the amount of hard labour the man had to perform and produced good quality products in plenty. His glorification of village was misplaced because it represented backward Indian world view. Spinning wheel was no match for machines.

But despite this criticism, Roy said that he understood the greatness of Gandhi because he was instrumental in creating political awareness in the minds of the people. He became an embodiment of primitive, blind and spontaneous spirit of revolt of masses.

16.3.2 New Humanism of Roy and Gandhi

In 1946, at the Conference of Radical Democratic Party, Roy decided to abolish his Radical democratic party and expounded 22 principles of New Humanism and decided to work on non-party lines. In 1948, the party was formally abolished. Roy appreciated the ethical content of Gandhi's philosophy and especially his efforts to pacify the victims of the Communal riots in Bengal. In the philosophy of New Humanism he laid stress upon 4 principles: freedom, abolition of party politics, and opposition to parliament and democracy, decentralisation of political power and replacement of the capitalist economy by co-operative economy. He sought to curb the political power of the state by giving power to people's committees at the grass roots level. Thus, in many respects, Roy came close to Gandhi's ideas. There were similarities between New Humanism and Gandhism as Roy pointed out that the greatest task was to educate people in human values.

Roy wrote an article to show differences between Gandhism and New Humanism. He held that Gandhi was not a true Humanist as his ideas were based on compassion and not on science and reason. He did not consider man as the greatest value but held him as the instrument to fulfil God's Will. His morality was not based on human will but it was based on divine will. New Humanism wanted to resuscitate the values preached by the philosophers of renaissance and enlightenment.

It seems that on many points Roy and Gandhi came closer to each other as they believed in the supremacy of morality and freedom, decentralisation of political power and curbing

of power of the state by empowering people. The difference was in their materialism and spiritualism.

16.4 GANDHI AND THE INDIAN COMMUNISTS

We have seen that M. N. Roy played a key role in the establishment of the Communist Party in India. The Communist Party in India was established in 1925 and slowly its influence spread in different labour areas of the country. In Bombay, Shripad Amrit Dange and his Colleagues, and the revolutionary activists of Tashkand played a key role in the development of the party. In 1924, the British government banned the party and conspiracy cases were slapped against its leaders and were sentenced to imprisonment. The Communists used this occasion to defend their ideology. The Communists continued to spread their influence through their ideology in the court, through their trade unions and kisan sabhas.

The Communists supported the Congress movement for liberation of India though they did not appreciate the policies of the Congress party as they held that the Congress made compromises with the British rulers because of its bourgeois character. After their release from prison, the Communists attended the Congress sessions. In 1942 the Communists supported the British government and considered the Second World War as people's war. In 1946, the Communists supported the revolt of the Naval ratings though the Congress government did not support them.

Like Roy, the Communists were opposed to most of the social and political ideas of Gandhi. They did not appreciate many of the policies of the Congress governments which were formed in 1937. But at the same time, the party supported anti-British policies of the Congress.

16.4.1 Dange on Gandhi and Lenin

Shripad Amrit Dange was a prominent leader of the Communist Party who cut his political teeth during the Non-Cooperation movement. He was a follower of Lokmanya Tilak and continued his legacy of anti-imperialism. He was arrested and sentenced to long imprisonment in the Meerut Conspiracy case. He was a prominent trade union leader and spent 17 years of his life in the jail before and after independence. Dange was a Communist leader who wanted to seek closer relations with national movement.

In 1921 he wrote his book on "Gandhi and Lenin". At that time Dange had embraced Communist ideology but had not mastered the essence of Marxist philosophy. In this book, Dange said that Bolshevism was a science of total change and Lenin was its leader. Gandhi was a principal leader of Indian masses who wanted to overthrow the British rule. In his book 'Hind Swaraj', Gandhi had opposed both imperialism and capitalism. Gandhi wanted peaceful change on the lines proposed by Tolstoy. He said that the tyrants tyrannised because tyrannised souls allowed them to do so. Both Gandhi and Lenin wanted to liberate them. Gandhi believed in individual purification and advocated universal peace. Lenin was more practical because he wanted to destroy capitalism and establish workers' federation through the use of force. Gandhi opposed modern production system while Lenin wanted to collectivise it to secure common good. He wanted to use surplus value for the development of working class. The dictates of conscience would not do, as man should confront evil to achieve social change.

Dange said that Gandhi's method of non-co-operation was based on the principle that the people should build their own state within the state. When the internal state grew to its full measure, the external state would collapse. Internal state meant growing power of non-cooperation movement and external state meant that co-operation would sap the morale of the British rulers. Dange said that the rulers would try to suppress the people's attempt to win Swaraj. To counter it, the alliance of workers and peasants was needed. He appreciated the moral fervour of Gandhi and recognised the revolutionary potential in his method of non-cooperation but did not support Gandhi's opposition to machine and his insistence on decentralisation based on village industry. He termed Lenin as a great revolutionary who had opened new page in the world history and held that it was the continuation of the work began by Tilak and Gandhi. Subsequently, Dange said that he did not now support all the views expressed in the book.

16.4.2 Dange's Assessment of Contribution of Gandhi

Throughout his life, Dange considered Gandhi as his teacher because he taught him that we had to rely on masses to provide support to national movement. Gandhi was honest and sincere but the Congressmen who backed him were influenced by the capitalist classes. It was Dange's contention that it was difficult to overthrow the British rule with the help of non-violence alone and Gandhi learnt this lesson during the non-cooperation movement. In 1922, he withdrew non-cooperation movement because of violence at Chauri-Chaura but he did not withdraw civil disobedience movement in 1931, despite violence at Peshawar and Sholapur. He created unique awareness in the minds of the people about their rights.

Paying this tribute to Gandhi on the occasion of his birth centenary in 1969, Dange wrote that Gandhi was a great leader of anti-colonial movement who taught people to fight against injustice. He advocated Hindu-Muslim unity and tried hard to abolish untouchability. When he was born in 1869 the world was dominated by imperialism and when he died in 1948, the imperial forces were overthrown all over the world. Gandhi played an important role in this process of great change.

Dange opined that Gandhi continuously learnt from the masses and it was not Gandhi who made the people radical but it was the people who motivated Gandhi to launch movements. Gandhi wrote a book called 'Hind Swaraj' in 1909 and in this, he glorified the ancient Indian civilisation, laid emphasis on the backward means of production, pleaded for the path of non-violence. But in due course of time he realised that these ideas could not be implemented in practice. Dange said that Gandhi's concept of trusteeship was flawed because businessmen and capitalists would not accept it. As far as the question of purity of means was concerned, the question of the means to be employed was decided by one's opponent. Infact the violent power of all the oppressors was rooted in the state power. The people had to use violent methods to oppose them. His insistence on spinning wheel and village industry was misplaced because people wanted greater amount of production and higher living standards.

Summarising his arguments, Dange said that history did not change because of great ideas of great leaders. These ideas effected change in the society when the material conditions of the society were conducive to the change and then the ideas caught the imagination of the people. Some of the ideas of Gandhi failed because they were not appropriate to the material conditions of the society. Dange was critical of Gandhi but like M. N. Roy, his criticism was not vitriolic. Dange showed limitations of Gandhi but appreciated his

great contribution to India's freedom movement and the role he played in the emancipation of the people from the foreign rule.

16.5 GANDHI AND THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS

Democratic socialists were the third component of the Indian Left. There were two schools of socialists: the socialists in the Congress led by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the socialists led by Jayaprakash Narayan, Narendra Deo and Dr. Lohia. The Nehru School of Socialists were influenced by the policies and programmes of the British Labour Party. Jayaprakash and his associates were more influenced by Gandhian ideas. In 1934, the Congress socialist party led by Jayaprakash was established within the Congress party. The basic difference between the communist and the socialist parties was that the socialists wanted to bring about socialism by peaceful means and without the support of dictatorship of proletariat. They believed in the decentralisation of political power. The party worked as a ginger group. The most glorious chapter in the history of socialism was Quit India movement of 1942 when the young socialist leaders assumed the leadership of the movement after the arrest of national leaders. In 1948, the Congress Socialist Party decided to come out of the Congress and established the Socialist Party under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narayan.

16.5.1 Gandhi and Ram Manohar Lohia

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was one of the prominent leaders and intellectuals of the Socialist Party. Born in 1910, he had his schooling at Bombay and college education at Calcutta. He studied Ph.D in Economics in Germany and in 1933, secured the degree. He decided to join the Congress party and worked with Pandit Nehru. He went underground during the Quit India Movement but was arrested and put up in Lahore jail. He took part in the Goa liberation movement. He helped the Nepali leaders to form the Nepali Congress. He wrote a number of books on important issues.

The socialist leaders like Jayaprakash, Narendra Deo and Lohia had close relations with Gandhi though they differed with him ideologically. The socialists were atheists and materialists while Gandhi was a believer in God and spiritualism. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia made penetrating analysis of Gandhian philosophy as well as his contribution to the Indian Society.

16.5.2 Dr. Lohia on the Role of Gandhi

Dr. Lohia had closely associated with Gandhi and held many discussions with him. He pointed out that Gandhi's persona left a lasting impression on the people. The greatest contribution of Gandhi was creating an awakening in the minds of the people about their rights. This was a greater achievement than winning Swaraj for India. He was aware of the problems faced by the modern society and did not provide medieval solutions to them. He gave a weapon of Satyagraha in the hands of ordinary Indians to fight against the British rulers. Modern state had acquired tremendous power and it has to be controlled through people's power. We had to instill courage in the minds of ordinary people. Man should rely upon his own strength to fight against injustice. He also pointed out that Gandhi's insistence on the purity of means was important because impure means sullied noble ends. Lohia was doubtful about the correctness of statement that means or ends could replace each other. But Gandhi's point of view was clear. He did not depict the glorious picture of future ends that were to be achieved by human beings and by

forgetting our immediate tasks of overcoming evil. He said that for Gandhi one step towards progress was sufficient. He continuously moved ahead, resolving problems that came his way, learnt from his experiences and changed his opinions where necessary. During the First World War, he supported the British war efforts but subsequently called it 'a satanical rule'. He sought change in the external world as well as in the change of heart of man. His concept of Gram Swaraj was a good example of direct democracy in which people would be free, self-reliant and self-dependent. He insisted that the spirit of Gandhi's ideas should be followed and not the words because the words were spoken in the specific context and their meanings changed.

Dr. Lohia held that *Adi Shankara*, Marx and Gandhi were three great philosophers who tried to resolve the problem of duality. *Shankara* advised people to follow the path of knowledge and ignore empirical reality. Marx wanted to overcome contradictions by abolishing contradiction with the help of armed revolution. Compared to Marx, *Shankara* was liberal. Gandhi believed in the non-dualistic monism of *Shankara* but advocated the path of selfless action; he was not oblivious of empirical reality as he wanted change in it through continuous striving. Gandhi's slow but resolute movement towards progress was the message of his life as he moved ahead resolving day to day problems of the people firmly adhering to the final goal.

16.5.3 Dr. Lohia's Critique of Gandhi

Dr. Lohia opined that like socialism, communism and capitalism, Gandhism could not be considered as the fourth alternative. In fact, important insights of Gandhi could be incorporated in socialism. He criticised Gandhi on three counts: Gandhi's concepts of trusteeship and change of heart, his insistence on spinning wheel and the outdatedness of some of his ideas in modern times.

According to him, Gandhi's concept of trusteeship was not based on the correct understanding of reality as the capitalists and the rich deceive and amass wealth. Similarly, his concept of change of heart could not be implemented because one can change the heart of an individual, but cannot effect change of an institution like bank. If they allowed change of heart, the very survival of the institution would be in danger. In fact, the ultimate goal of trusteeship was collectivisation of means of production and abolition of right to property. It was difficult to achieve these goals without the militant struggle of the masses. Their hearts could not be transformed without straggle.

Spinning wheel or charkha was not relevant today because production had been mechanised and people wanted better living standards. Spinning had become an empty ritual; instead of using charkha, people should be asked to use small machines which would decentralise production; retaining control over the machines would rest with workers. Dr. Lohia did not want to reject technology. He wanted to decentralise it in the hands of individual producers to overcome individual alienation.

Dr. Lohia supported Gandhi's concept of non-violence but he was not sure about its utility in inter-state relations. Lohia categorised Gandhians into three types- those who had assumed power and become ministers; those who lived in the Ashrams, which received liberal government grants; and those who rebel and continuously waged struggles against injustice. He was of the opinion that the rebels represented the true spirit of Gandhi.

16.5.4 Dr. Lohia on Satyagraha

Lohia opined that Gandhi gave the weapon of Satyagraha to the people to fight against tyranny. We have seen that judicial and legal processes often leave the task of giving justice to the people incomplete and people had to come forward to secure their rights. Civil disobedience had to be kept civil and non-violent.

Dr. Lohia was critical of Vinoba Bhave's interpretation of Satyagraha and said that Satyagraha was a continuous process of reforming social and political institutions of their ills. Satyagraha enables one to face a series of defeats in the hope that ultimately truth would triumph and gives inspiration to people to fight against injustice. It should be accompanied by mass participation of people. It taught man to live like a human being with dignity and self-respect and sought to increase the strength of good. It was therefore commendable that Gandhi made even an ordinary person to wield this powerful non-violent weapon.

Dr. Lohia felt that the practice of Satyagraha should be redefined and should consist of civil disobedience, imprisonment, physical labour with digging axe and ballot box. He saw an interconnection between them. He pointed out that civil disobedience was meant to wage fight against injustice, repressive law and oppressive policies of the government. The result of taking part in Satyagraha could be imprisonment and the Satyagrahi should willingly court it. The use of digging axe was a symbol of physical labour which would restore dignity to physical labour and encourage constructive activities in the society. He added ballot box to the list because, according to him, it was the goal of Satyagraha to effect political change through transfer of power. This transfer should take place through the democratic method of elections.

16.6 SUMMARY

In the preceding pages, we have seen how different groups of the Indian Left had tried to understand the social and political ideas of Gandhi. The Left leaders M. N. Roy, S. A. Dange and R.M. Lohia had differences of opinion with Gandhi though all the three admired his contribution in the democratisation of Indian society. They criticised Gandhi for his concept of trusteeship, excessive reliance on non-violence and insistence on spinning wheel and called many of his ideas as outdated. They did not believe in spiritualism and religion, but appreciated the moral fervour created by Gandhi. They also held that we could not usher in a new society without the support of science, technology and rationalism. Machine-based mass production was the need of the hour to provide basic needs of the society and to ensure decent living standards of the people. Dange tried to understand Gandhi's contribution through historical perspective and sought to take his anti-imperialist and democratic legacy ahead. Dr. Lohia wanted to integrate important Gandhian insights into his concept of Socialism. M. N. Roy's concept of New Humanism and his plan of democratic decentralisation had brought him closer to Gandhi. Thus, the Indian Left's engagement with Gandhi was rewarding.

16.7 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What were the causes of uneasy relationship between Gandhi and the Left?
2. What are the basic tenets of New Humanism? How does it differ from Gandhism?

3. Explain the Marxist perspective on Gandhi with the help of Dange's book 'Gandhi and Lenin'
4. Evaluate critically Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia's assessment of Gandhi.
5. Write short notes on the following:
 - M. N. Roy on revolution in Asia.
 - Dange on positive contribution of Gandhi
 - Dr. Lohia's Concept of Satyagraha.

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