

## Sociology Daily Answer Writing

Week 3 - Day 2

### Model Structures

#### 1. Discuss the Social background of Indian nationalism.

20

(As not much content is available on this topic, detailed discussion is provided here, you have to use this content selectively in your answer)

#### Model Structure

##### Introduction:

- Factors which Prepared Background of Indian Nationalism

##### Main Body:

- The British government, Christian mission and English education were three main sources of colonial impact on Indian society.
  - The British government replaced the indigenous systems of administration and governance. The mission made efforts to convert Indians to Christianity. British educationists tried to spread education to bring about a change in the outlook of the indigenous population.
- The British community in India also had an influence on the people in different parts of the country. The port, towns and coastal areas were more affected, at least in the beginning of the British Raj.
- The emergence of a national consciousness, the realization of the value of organization and of the importance of agitation led to the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. Formation of Congress was a strong foundation of Indian nationalism.
- Changes in Mode of Production and Economic contradictions- Contradictions of British rule were exposed for the first time in the economic field and they were highlighted in the writings of many prominent nationalists like Dadabhai Naroji and R C Dutt.
- Unequal control over forces of production and export of surplus was exposed by early nationalists.

- Images of pre-colonial fabled riches of India were contrasted with the abject poverty of British India. The Swadeshi Movement further strengthened loyalty to the national economy.
- A R Desai also suggested that the rise of nationalism was rooted in the anti-imperial and anti-bureaucratic ideology.
- Political awakening- First significant move was made in the form of the establishment of Indian National Congress in 1885.
  - It was realised by the national leadership that the way towards achievement of nationalistic goal is through political power. Political struggle led to gradual reforms and it also led to mobilisation of masses.
- Role of charismatic personalities- Many charismatic leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Subhash and Tilak also played a leadership role in mobilising millions of masses and united them. These leaders made the masses understand the social and economic contradictions of British rule.
- Role of modern ideas and education – Indians, in the colonial period, read about western liberalism and freedom. Yet, they lived under a western, colonial rule that denied Indians liberty and freedom. This kind of contradiction shaped many of the structural and cultural changes. Indian nationalist leaders were quick to grasp this irony and took these ideas to masses. Use of vernaculars was capitalised to spread the ideas of modernity & democracy.
- Role of middle class- Colonialism created new classes and communities which came to play significant roles in subsequent history. The urban middle class was the main carrier of nationalism and it led the campaign for freedom. The emerging middle class began, with the aid of western style education, to challenge colonialism on its own ground. Ironically, colonialism and western education also gave impetus for the rediscovery of tradition. This led to the developments on the cultural and social front which solidified emergent forms of community at the national and regional levels. Leaders from the middle class also formed early political organisations.
- Cultural revolt- Colonial interventions also crystallised religious and caste based communities, and they, too, became major players. In fact, attacks on cultural identities

became the basis of the First War of Independence of 1857. Cultural arrogance and a sense of superiority of white British also provoked Indians to prove them wrong.

- Along with secular ideals of liberty and self-rule, cultural dimensions were also highlighted by leaders like Tilak, Annie Besant and Savarkar. They declared that freedom or Swaraj was their birth-right and thus, they fought for political, cultural and economic freedom.
- Reformist and revivalist agenda – Social reform agenda was also clubbed with the agenda of liberation. Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Dayanand Saraswati preached nationalism as well. A R Desai saw socio-religious movements as an expression of national awakening due to contradictions between the old value system and new economic realities. The First War of Independence sought to revive the glorious period of Indian history and Bahadur Shah Zafar was chosen as its symbol.
- Impact of global events – Events like the Russian Revolution aroused the revolutionary spirits in India as well. Defeat of imperial powers like Italy, at the hand of Ethiopia, also boosted the morale of nationalists in colonial countries like India. Socialist nationalism also grew, in the meanwhile, in the 1930s, both within and outside the Congress.
- Communalism and divisive politics – The British policy of divide and rule also sowed seeds of a parallel nationalism which ultimately led to the bifurcation of the nation at the time of independence.
- A R Desai considers that Indian Nationalism as a product of material conditions in India and nationalism was non-existent before the arrival of the British.
  - New material conditions were a result of industrialisation, new land policy and Modernisation. British rule led to economic disintegration as well as economic reforms, which led to the birth of new social consciousness and class structure, through which nationalism followed.
  - Different classes like industrialists and peasants had their own grievances, which along with common desire for freedom led to the birth of nationalism.
  - According to him, the role of education in the birth of nationalism is overplayed and instead, change in material conditions was the real cause.
  - Class based inequalities and contradictions, according to Desai, determine the nature of social change. A common exploitative land tenure system, a uniform

emergent pan-Indian working class and new classes were other contributing factors.

- K. M. Pannikar notes that “the most notable achievement of British rule was the unification of India”. This was done unconsciously by the British in the interest of the Indian people. They were interested in spreading and consolidating their rule throughout the country. The same argument can be made about the introduction of western education, means of transport, communication, technology and judiciary
- Y. Singh observes that “the contact of the Indian (Hindu) tradition with the West was of a different and radical sociological significance. Historically, it was a contact between a premodern and a modernizing cultural system”. The western tradition had “the scientific and technological world-view based on rationalism, equality and freedom”. Consequently, the Indian tradition, which already had a sort of ‘breakdown’, became further open, liberal, equalitarian and humanistic. The western tradition posed a serious challenge to the Indian tradition. Hierarchy, the principle of social ranking based on birth in a particular caste group, and holism, the ‘organic’ interdependence between different caste groups, based on norms relating to performances of the assigned functions and duties by various groups, were considerably affected by the western tradition.
- M.N. Srinivas defines ‘westernization’ in terms of the change in Indian society due to the impact of British rule in India. The areas of change include technology, dress, food and changes in the habits and lifestyles of people. Mainly led to ideological changes, institutional changes and technological changes. Westernization takes place at three levels: Primary, secondary, and tertiary. At the primary level were a minority of people who first came into contact with western culture and were its first beneficiaries. The secondary level of westernization refers to those sections of Indian society who came into direct contact with the primary beneficiaries. At the tertiary level are those who came to know indirectly about the advice introduced by the British.
  - Westernization has contributed to the re-emergence of a pan-Indian culture on new grounds. Some areas of western impact include education, law, science, technology, new forms of politicization, urbanization, industrialization, the press, means of transport and communication.

- Yogendra Singh calls this the process of ‘cultural modernization, The western impact has brought about “a new great tradition of modernization”. Certainly, this poses the problem of conflict between the indigenous tradition and the western tradition on Indian soil. A synthesis between the two has occurred, particularly in regard to the elite sections of Indian society. Today, ‘globalization’ has far more impact on Indian society. In fact, India is in the process of becoming a global market/centre of economic and professional activities.
- British rule created a new consciousness and structure of institutions and values. As observed by Y. Singh, westernization has created the following: the growth of an universalistic legal superstructure, expansion of education, urbanization and industrialization, increased network of communication and growth of nationalism and politicization of the society. These elements contributed to modernization throughout the country. The judiciary, law courts, legislations for prohibiting child marriage, infanticide and sati, etc., law commissions, land rights, trade, commerce, industries, labour, etc., were enacted. All these factors played a crucial role in the rise of capitalism.
- Historians like Romila Thapar, KM Panikkar and Stevenson argue that despite invasions, mixing and confrontation a single dominant culture never existed in India and no culture threatened the other to subjugation. As a result, composite culture evolved. In such an environment, nationalism in India evolved not out of a common single cultural heritage, but it developed under the same colonial ideology which it fought against.
- National leaders like Nehru realized that to fight colonialism, first regional aspirations have to take a backseat and the spirit of nationalism needs to come to the forefront. Thus, to unify divided India and to prevent its Balkanisation, nationalism was a prerequisite. So, nationalism emerged as an inherent need of an aspiring nation-state.
- Another strand tried to invoke nationalist spirit through reinterpretation of tradition and invoking past glory. Eg. Arya Samaj, revival of traditional festivals like Shivaji Festival and Ganpati Festival by Tilak, etc.

## **Conclusion:**

- Thus, nationalism in India arose as a result of a plurality of factors. It passed through various stages which are marked by various phases of national movement.

## 2. Write a short note with a sociological perspective on the Indigo revolt.

10

### Model Structure

#### Introduction

- The Indigo Rebellion (Neel Bidroho) took place in Bengal in 1859-60 and was a revolt by the farmers against British planters who had forced them to grow indigo under terms that were greatly unfavourable to the farmers.

#### Main Body

- The indigo revolt had implications on different sections of society. These can be analysed from various sociological perspectives:-
  - Functionalist perspective:- The indigo revolters fought against the oppressive capitalists and challenged the authorities of power. This served as a source of inspiration for future revolts in India.
  - Conflict perspective:- The movement highlighted the presence of oppressive class structure - Britishers (bourgeoisie) and peasants (proletariat) were engaged in antagonistic cooperation prior to the revolt. The British planters owned and controlled the means of production via fraudulent means and exploited the peasants' labour, while the latter were bound to work due to their poverty.
  - Structural Strain Theory by Neil Smelser:- He outlines the factors that encourage social movement like structural conduciveness, structural strain, growth, generalised conditions and precipitating factors, lack of social control and mobilization. In the case of indigo revolt, the presence of a Bengali middle class intelligentsia provided a conducive structure which helped propagate the views of peasants, the precipitating factor being the beating up of indigo farmers by lathials of British planters.
  - Relative deprivation theory:- suggests that people who feel they are being deprived of something considered essential in their society (e.g. money, rights, political voice, status) will organize or join social movements. Here peasants faced exploitation in terms of low wages and oppressive working conditions.
- The system of indigo cultivation was inherently exploitative. Emerging in 1859 in the Nadia district, the revolt spread to different districts of Bengal in the 1860s. The peasants

attacked indigo factories with spears and swords. Planters who demanded rent were beaten. Even women participated by fighting with pots and pans.. It led to mobilisation of peasants and the middle class found a cause to play a role. It led to the education of farmers and made legal avenues available to them.

## **Conclusion**

- The revolt inspired the imagination of several writers and poets of the time and set the foundation for future struggles against peasant exploitation in the 20th century.
-