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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS-POLITICAL SCIENCE

SEMESTER -II

INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

SOFT CORE-203

BLOCK-1

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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ENLIGHTENMENT TO PERFECTION

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavors.



INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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BLOCK-1: INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Introduction to the Block

Unit 1: Pre-Modern Socio-Religious Political thought in India the Diverse Strands.

Unit 2 : Ancient Indian Political Thoughts and Tradition.(Orientalist Discourse and Colonial Modernity)

Unit 3: Silent Features of Ancient and Modern Indian Political Thought.

Unit 4: Early Nationalist Response, Religion political thoughts and ideas.

Unit 5: Moderates and Extremists Dadabhai Naoroji, MG Ranade and BG Tilak, Ideology of Indian political thoughts.

Unit 6: Unit 6 Hinduism Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Rania Krishna Mission in Hinduism and Hindu Political Idea.

Unit 7: Hindutva V.D. Savarkar and M.S. Golwalkar, Background of the Hindu Nationalist Ideology and Nationalism and Motherland.

UNIT - 1: INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT–ANCIENT/PRE-MODERN INDIA

STRUCTURE

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Sources of the Ancient Indian Political Thought
- 1.3 Ancient Indian Political thought
- 1.4 The State in Ancient India
- 1.5 Sovereignty in Ancient India
- 1.6 State and Sovereignty in Medieval India
- 1.7 Religion and Polity
- 1.8 Let us sum up
- 1.9 Key Words
- 1.10 Questions for Review
- 1.11 Suggested Readings and References
- 1.12 Answers to Check your progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- To explain the nature of Indian political thought;
- To explain the meaning and significance of the concepts of Indian political tradition;
- To explain the issues facing ancient and modern India.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

If you want to understand Indian political thought, it is essential to have a broad view of the historical processes through which the ancient or modern polity has emerged. We have civilization which is comparable with the

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Greek civilization and as Plato and Aristotle are considered as the pioneers of western political tradition, so are our ancient and medieval texts on statecraft. Whether it is the concept of monarchy, republicanism, council of ministers, welfare state, diplomacy, espionage system or any other political concept/institution which is known in modern political parlance, all these have references in our early political traditions. State, society and governance are interlinked to each other. If we look at our past we will find that there was a time when people used to live in small groups based on kinship ties and there was no need felt for all authority to control people's life. But with the growth of population and clashes between groups of people, the need was felt for an authority who would provide the required protection to his people and whose order would be obeyed by all. With the coming of groups of people together, society came into existence which was followed by the emergence of state and the art of governance. So in a way we can say that individual needs led to the emergence of society and it is the collective need of the society which in turn led to the formation of various structures and theories related to state and governance. Thus, the social-historical context becomes a determinant factor in the evolution of state as well as the ideas related to statecraft. Keeping this in mind when we look at our past we find that starting from the Vedic society till the establishment of the British rule India passed through various phases and also had undergone various political experiments. All these traditions and experiences in one way or other have contributed in making what we call modern Indian political thought. It is not possible to deal in detail all these developments in one Unit. Therefore, our focus in this Unit will be to familiarize you with the major trends in ancient Indian political thought. With the help of historical texts like *Manusmriti*, *Arthashastra*, *Fatwa-i-Jahaiidari*, *Ain-i-Akbari* which are considered as important treatises on statecraft, we will try to explain the evolution of the Indian political thought. In the first section, we will introduce you to the tradition based on Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain literature, then the Islamic political tradition and finally, the relationship between religion and state in India.

1.2 SOURCES OF THE ANCIENT INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

It is, in fact, very difficult to obtain a particular book or a piece of literature that describes the various sources of the ancient Indian political thought, which are scattered all over India. However, some dedicated scholars have made efforts to gather all the scattered information and arrange them in a comprehensive manner for better understanding of the subject.

The following is a brief description of some of the important sources of political thought:

1. The Vedas: The Vedas are regarded as the authentic works of Gods at the time of the creation of the world and so are considered the original source of information. Though Vedas do not describe the political system that existed, information can be drawn from the concepts like King, Kingship, Saints or Rishis, etc., and their duties towards the subjects. It is interesting to note that institutions like sabha and samithi that are prevalent even in the modern days have their roots in the Vedic period.

2. The Mahabharata: This Indian epic is considered a classic work on the art of politics. Certain episodes like Shanti Parva provide outstanding information related to political philosophy and administrative system and the political system of the time. The entire art of statecraft, diplomacy, war ethics and strategies, state relations and the like can be very well understood by making a reference to the Mahabharata.

3. The Arthashastra: This work authored by Kautilya is again a masterpiece on polity. According to Prof Altekar, it is mainly concerned with the practical problems of governance and describes its machinery and functions both in times of war and peace. This work of Kautilya also highlights issues like taxation, diplomacy, war strategies and revolution. It is also a handbook of economics as well as administration for the kings.

4. Works of Thinkers: Some of the great works that act as major sources of the political thought of ancient India are the Smritis, Kamandakeya

Neethisaara, Sukraneetisara and the like. Smrithis advocated that a king was the servant of the subjects and that it was not wrong to kill a tyrant. A king was expected to be virtuous, gracious and helpful. Similarly, Kamandakeya Neethisaara was also a source of ancient Indian political thought. It was, in fact, a summary of Kautilya's Arthashastra. The work highlights on king and his family and the monarchical form of government. Sukraneetisara was supposed to have been written sometime between 1200 and 1600 BC. Though that is not available now, the work enlightens about the position held by high officials of the state and their functions, administrative system, monarchy and the political life of the people at large.

1. Inscriptions: Stone and copper inscriptions throw light on the contemporary political life of the people and the administrative system of those days.
2. Accounts of Foreign Travelers: The writings of foreign travellers to India like Megesthanes, Fahien, Huang Tsang and others provide great information about the ancient Indian society, administration, trade and industry and the like.

1.3 ANCIENT POLITICAL THOUGHT

Ancient Indian Political thought is part and parcel of the ancient Indian Philosophy. Indian philosophy means the philosophy which originated in the Indian sub-continent. A central principle of Indian Philosophy is the concept of 'dharma'. The rules and regulation of Dharma is contained in the 'Dharmasastras'. Dharma means the right duty of a person. It means virtuous path⁵³. It means the "higher truth"⁵⁴. It is the moral law or natural law. It is the natural order of things. It is the cosmic⁵⁵ order. It is the social order. It is the ethical⁵⁶ behaviour. Dharma means the duty and responsibility of the individual and the society. Dharma means service to the community also. Dharma means self-expression also. People must live according to Dharma. It must govern the life of the individual and the society. It means that each human being has a purpose of life. Each person has a duty in life. He must perform his duties. This is the only method of

purification of his soul⁵⁷. By this way he will get 'nirvana' or 'moksha'. Besides Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism also believed in the concept of Dharma. There are different types of Dharma also. They are as follows: 1. Vyakti dharma (the dharma of an individual). 2. Parivarika dharma (family dharma) (also called kutumba dharma). 3. Samaja dharma (dharma of society), 4. Rashtra dharma (national dharma). 5. Manava dharma (the dharma of mankind). 6. Varna dharma (professional dharma or dharma of each caste). 7. Apad dharma (special dharma for exceptional/abnormal situations). 8. Yuga dharma (dharma for an age). 9. Ashrama dharma (dharma for stage of life). Following Dharma in life is Justice. Not following Dharma is injustice. It is the duty of an individual to maintain dharma in his life. It is the duty of the head of family to maintain dharma in his family. It is the duty of the ruler to maintain Dharma in his country. There shall be rules and regulations for the individual, the family, the society and the country to maintain dharma. Maintaining Dharma means justice.

1.4 THE STATE IN ANCIENT INDIA

The ancient Indian political thinking considered state as a necessary institution for the protection of human life as well as for the achievement of higher ideals. The following were the major functions of the State as according to ancient Indian political thought:

1. Law enforcement: As a civilized entity, the ancient Indian state recognised the need and effect of rules and regulations for leading civic life. Accordingly, they have developed a sound system of law making, law enforcement and adjudication. With its own methods of separation of powers and checks and balances, the system proved to be one of the most efficient, the human kind has ever seen. People were not the source of law. They were not sovereign to make laws. The sources of law were the four sources of dharma, vyavahara (evidence) charita (history, customs and practices), and raja saasana (proclamation by the sovereign king). There shall be criminal, civil and mercantile law.

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2. Administration: Ancient India had generally republican form of government. However, Kautilya proposed a system which is centralized in character. The bureaucracy as proposed by Kautilya had as many as 30 divisions, each headed by an Adhyaksha. Unity of Command and Unity of direction, as propounded by the modern management theories were well followed by Kautilya. Bureaucrats were provided with a fixed salary apart from other benefits. Kautilya also arranged spies to detect corrupt officials and booked them. According to him, “just as fish moving under water cannot possibly be found out either as drinking water or not drinking water, so government servants employed in the government work cannot be found out while taking money for themselves”. Some of the major works of the bureaucracy involved quality control of goods, currency system and the system of weights and measures. The traded goods carried a state stamp as a mark of quality and legal measures.
3. Protection of people, territory and sovereignty: Protection of peoples, their territory and sovereignty was the major objective of the state. The ancient Indian state performed the duties efficiently and effectively by developing its own machineries for the same. The Mauryan state maintained a citizen’s register also. They had a system of passport and visa also.
4. Social order and equity: Maintenance of culture, traditions and practices were important for the life of a civilization. That is exactly what the ancient Indian state was performing.
5. Administration of a constitution: The ancient Indian state was based on the sound principles of administration, whether it they were written or not. A constitution was fundamental to the governance of a state. There shall be constitution for the state at the state level. There shall be constitution for the various associations at their levels. The later should confirm to the former.

6. Social development: A static society is bound to perish. Growth is the first and last proof for life. The ancient Indian state recognized this fact. Modernisation and development were not alien concepts to the ancient Indian state.
7. Amalgamation of religious concepts: The ancient Indian state was successful in effecting an amalgamation of ancient Hindu philosophy into the state craft without converting the state into a theocratic entity devoid of reason. While Hinduism as a way of life influenced the state, it did not destroy the secular nature of administration.
8. Tax administration: Often, some of the western political thinkers like T. H. Green and Henry Maine chose to depict ancient Indian State as a mechanism for tax administration, out of their inability to appreciate the Indian system from outside their times. Finance is definitely one of the most important elements of the state even today. It means that ancient Indian political system maintained a sound system of finance administration which was very essential for the survival of a state. The observation of the western thinkers could be taken as a complement rather than a mis-appreciation. The particular nature of the ancient Indian tax system was the fixed time, rate and the mode of payment. Citizens paid toll tax. Farmers paid one sixth of their produce as tax. Hermits also paid taxes. There were taxes for pilgrims also. Every trade or services were to pay taxes including dancers, soothsayers and even prostitutes. Use of public roads and water ways also entertained taxes.
9. The Dharmasastras proposes Rajadharma as the duties of the king. The primary duty of the king is the protection of his subjects. It is the highest dharma. In the protection of his subject, the king must be able to give his life as prize. The must be able to protect his subjects not only from enemies but also from thieves, corrupt officials, and enemies of the king. It is also the duty of the king to look after the welfare of the people. The king must be able to protect the poor, the destitutes, the crippled, the blind, the orphans, those suffering from

calamities etc. It is also the duty of king to build hospitals for men as well as animals, build rest houses, place for food and water and plant shade trees along high ways. It is the duty of the king to administer a proper system of punishment. It will keep his subjects obedient and law abiding citizens besides making them happy.

1.5 STATE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN ANCIENT INDIA

Social formations in the mid-first millennium B.C. RomilaThapar has explained transition from lineage society to state (R. Thapar, History and Beyond, collection of essays). In lineage society the basic unit was the extended family under control of the eldest male member. The size of the family was dependent on economy and environment and it was the genealogical relationships which tied the families together. It was through kinship - and rituals, that the chief exercised his authority over the clans. Differentiation came in within society between the ruler and the ruled because of kin connections and wealth. However, shift from pastoral to peasant economy, population growth, social and cultural heterogeneity along with other factors led to the emergence of state systems. In the opinion of RomilaThapar conquest, extensive trade, the decline of political elite and democratic processes led to the change towards state system. The Vedic period represented the lineage system but later on growing stratification in society indicated the tendency towards state formation. With the formation of state the issue of governance of the state became a major concern of the society. In the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata we find the reference to Mutsyanyaya, a condition in which small fishes become prey to big fishes. This analogy was given to explain the anarchic condition in a society where no authority exists. To avoid this type of crisis, people collectively agreed to have a set of laws and to appeal to the god for a king who will maintain law and order in society. It is also argued that without appealing to any divine agency people on their own selected a person on whom the authority was vested to protect human society. We find references to both Divine Origin of

Kingship as well as Social Contract Theory of Kingship. Though theological and metaphysical environment had a strong influence in shaping the ancient Indian thinking, various studies on ancient Indian polity suggest the emergence of polity as an independent domain. Whether it was a Divine Origin of Kingship or Social Contract, we find monarchy as the dominant form of government in the early Indian polity. The seven constituents of the state as prescribed in the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata are as follows:

- a) Swamin or the sovereign,
- b) Amatya or the officials
- c) Janapada or the territory,
- d) Durga or the fort,
- e) Kosa or the treasury,
- f) Danda or the Army,
- g) Mitra or the Allies.

All these are considered as the natural constituents of a state. Swamin or the king is considered as the head of this structure. Next to him is the Amatya or the council of ministers through which the king governs the state. Jallapada means territory having agricultural land, mines, forests, etc. Durga or fort suggests the fortification of the capital. Kosa or treasury the place where collected revenues are kept. Danda refers to the power of law and of authority. Mitra is the friendly state. Looking at this structure of state one finds lot of resemblance with the attributes of the modern state. Manusmriti strongly advocated for a political authority. Manu was of the opinion that in the absence of a political authority, there would be disorder in society. It is the duty of the king to ensure justice in the society and protect the weak. 'By taking his due, by preventing the confusion of the castes (Varna), and by protecting the weak, the power of the king grows, and he prospers in this (world) and after death. (from Manusmriti cited in A. Appadorai, Indian Political Thinking). Manu was in favour of social hierarchy and caste system and his notion of justice was based on diverse customs and practices of different castes. He suggested that though the king derived his authority from god, in practice he should be guided by the brahmanas. If one looks at the rationale behind this organisational structure, one may easily find that

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the principle of decentralisation of authority was the guiding principle behind this organisation. He also advocated an assembly of the learned as well as the officers of the state to advise the king and this shows his concern for the public opinion. Members were expected to be objective and fearless in taking decisions on the basis of dharma. Village and district authorities were suggested to function independently and only when there was any need, the king was expected to help. Welfare of the general people was one of the major concerns of the king. 'If the inhabitants of the cities and the provinces be poor, the king should, whether they depend upon him immediately or mediate, show them compassion to the best of his power Wiping the tears of the distressed, the helpless and the old, and inspiring them with joy, constitute the duty of the king'. (Mahabharata-Shanti Parva, cited in A. Appadorai, Indian Political Thinking). Commenting on the political ideas explained in the Manu Smriti, V.R.Mehta in his Indian Political Thought, has remarked that 'It is indeed astounding to know that very early in the development of Indian political thought, the ideas of decentralisation, welfare state and public opinion are so clearly spelled out'.

In terms of early Indian political thought, Arthashastra by Kautilya gives a more detailed picture of statecraft. Scholars are of the opinion that Arthashastra is not the work of one Kautilya and the date of Kautilya is also a matter of debate among historians. It is also argued that there are interpolations in the Arthashastra. On the chapters dealing with the king and his family, Arthashastra tells us as to how a king should control his senses and discharge his duties, how a king should protect himself from any threat on his life and the importance of selection of right counsellors and priests. There is an elaborate discussion on the civil law explaining various measures required for an effective administration and on criminal law to take care of those people who are considered as a threat to the country. Kautilya cautioned the king to be vigilant about the motives and integrity of his ministers and also talked about general selfish nature of people, - bribery and corruption inherent in administration. He suggested that through reward and punishment, the king should set a standard for others to follow. In his opinion, the king is above others but not above 'dharma'. Here dharma

means obeying customary and sacred law and protection of his subjects' life and property. This was considered as the basic duty of a king. Suggestions have also been given to deal with friendly and hostile neighbours, organisation of armies, for spies to keep a watch on internal and external developments. We are told that army should be placed under a divided command since this is a sure guarantee against treachery. The notion of welfare state is further strengthened in Arthashastra. The king is expected to protect agriculturists from oppression and to take care of the orphans, the aged and the helpless. Happiness of his people should always be the concern of a wise king, otherwise he may lose people's support; a good king should take up welfare activities in the interest of all. According to Kautilya 'in the happiness of his subjects lies the happiness of a king, in their welfare, his welfare. The king shall consider as good, not what pleases, himself but what pleases his subjects' (Arthashastra). Another important concept which we come across in the ancient political tradition is the concept of Danda. Danda primarily implies the sense of coercion or punishment. Danda is required for discipline. If the laid down norms of the state which are basically determined by sacred and customary laws are not obeyed by any individual or if anybody is involved in an activity which goes against the interest of the state, the king has every right to punish the guilty. So disciplining the citizens was an important activity of the king. The Buddhist canonical literature suggests that a monarch should rule on the basis of the Law of truth and righteousness; he should not allow any wrongdoing in his kingdom and should look after the poor. A king was considered as a chosen leader of the people and his important duty was to protect his people and to punish the wrongdoers.

Tiru-k-Kural, compiled by Tiruvalluvar during the second century A.D., is considered as one of the famous classics of Tamil literature. In this text, along with other facets of life, we find important ideas related to polity. It talks about an adequate army, an industrious people, ample food, resources, wise and alert ministers, alliance with foreign powers and dependable fortifications as essentials of a state. King's qualities and duties, responsibilities of the ministers, importance of spies to keep watch on

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various activities within the state, diplomacy, etc. are other important issues on which we find mention in the Tiru-k-Kural. 'Statecraft consists in getting support without letting your weakness be known' (Tiru-k-Kural, cited in A.Appadorai, Indian Political Thinking).

Though monarchy was predominant in the ancient Indian polity, reflected to republic are also found in literary traditions. Since Alexander, the Great's invasion of India in 327-324 B.C. we come across references to many places governed by oligarchies from Greek and Roman accounts of India. Later on, the Buddhist Pali canon tells us about the existence of many republics, mainly in the foothills of the Himalayas and in North Bihar. It is suggested that these were mostly tributary to the greater kingdoms but enjoyed internal autonomy. An example of this was the Salyas who were on the borders of modern Nepal and to whom the Buddha himself belonged. Another such example was the Vrijjian confederacy of the Lichhavis who resisted the great Ajatasatru. Steve Mulilberger, in an article entitled 'Democracy in Ancient India' has written that 'in ancient India, monarchical thinking was constantly battling with another vision, of self-rule by members of a guild, a village, or an extended kin-group, in other words, any group of equals with a common set of interests, This vision of cooperative self-government often produced republicanism and even democracy comparable to classical Greek democracy.' From various accounts, the picture of north India-between the Himalayas and the Ganges-during the 6th and 5th centuries B.C. The existence of a number of Janapadas and that this was also the period of growth of the "towns and cities in India. In the Janapadas, there were Sanghas or Ganas managing independently their territory. Details of the working of such assemblies can be found both in Brahmanical and Buddhist literature. From Panini's account (5th B.C.), we find references to the process of decision making through voting. In the Buddhist literature, we find rules concerning the voting in monastic assemblies, their membership and their quorums. All these point to the fact that democratic values and public opinion were very much respected in ancient political tradition in spite of the dominant trend of monarchical government.

Check Your Progress 1

Note:i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Explain political ideas in Ancient India.

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2. Explain the major political features of Ancient India.

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1.6 STATE AND SOVEREIGNTY IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

Medieval Political Thought means the Political thought which originated in the medieval period. Medieval period means roughly from 5th century AD to 15th century AD. In the medieval period in Europe, two political thinkers were well known for their political philosophy. They were Thomas Aquinas (also known as St. Thomas Aquinas) and Dante Alighieri

Coming of Islam in India and the establishment of the Muslim political authority marked the beginning of a distinct phase in the Indian political thought. Islamic political thought is centred on the teaching of Muhammad and the belief in the universality of the law of the Koran. In contrast to the Vedantic philosophy, the Muslim considers Koran as the only and final authority. Before the coming of Islam, the political structure in India was not based on the philosophy and belief of a single text. Various religious traditions contributed towards the development of political traditions in ancient India. In Islamic thought the Shariat based on the Koran is considered as the final authority and the purpose of the state is to serve the Shariat. In matters of governance, the Muslim elite were influenced by political ideas in Islam. Based on two authoritative texts written during the

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Muslim rule in India—Fatwa-i-Jahandari and Ain-i-Akbaridealing with the nuances of governance- we can formulate our ideas about the dominant trend of the political thought of medieval India. Fatwa-i- Jahandari was written by KhwajaZiauddinBarani. In this book Barani recapitulates and further elaborates the political philosophy of the Sultanate on the basis of his earlier narrative, Tarikh-i-Firozeshahi. Some scholars are of opinion that Barani's ideas carry a sense of religious fanaticism. Keeping in mind the fact that Barani belonged to a period when Islam was just making its ground in India; we may overlook this limitation in Barani's ideas. Apart from this limitation, Barani's ideas related to kingship in medieval period are of immense importance. The king as the representative of God on earth is considered as the source of all powers and functions of the state. Barani is of the opinion that whatever means the king adopts to discharge his duties is justified so long as his aim is the service of religion. In the following passage, we find Barani's suggestions to the king as to how to discharge his functions as the head of the state.

According to Al Barani, "It is the duty of the Sultans before they have made up their minds about an enterprise or policy and published it among the people, to reflect carefully on the likelihood of its success and failure as well as its effects on their position, on the religion and the state, and on the army. Barani's opinion the king should devote himself to governance of his state in such a way that helps him in reaching nearer to God. Welfare of the religion and the state should be the ideal of a good state. A king should be guided by wise men. Bureaucracy is required to run the administration and Barani is an advocate of blue blood aristocracy. He talks about the necessity of hierarchy in administration and points out the composition, classification, nature and relation of bureaucracy with the Sultan and the people of the state. He is emphatically against the promotion of low-born men. He writes that "The noble born men in the king's court will bring him honour, but if he favours low born men, they will disgrace him in both the worlds"he says that kingship is based on two pillars- administration and conquest and it is on the army that both the pillars depend. He also emphasises on king's concern regarding internal security and foreign relations.

Along with the enforcement of the Shariat, to Barani, dispensing of justice is an essential function of a sovereign. Implementation of law and obedience to law should be the primary concern of a king. Barani refers to four sources of law:

a) the Koran

b) the Hadish (traditions of prophet)

c) the Ijma (opinions and rulings of the majority of Muslim theologians and

d) Qiyas (speculative method of deduction).

To this he added Zawabit or state law as an important source of law in administering the state. With the changing complexion of society and the growing complexities of administration in addition to the accepted principles of traditional Islamic law, Barani advocated for Zawabit or the state laws whose foundation is non-religious. State laws cannot be contradictory to the orders of the Shariat and its primary objective is to regulate the works of various governmental departments and to foster loyalty. Barani also talks about the recognition of individual rights, i.e. the rights of wife, children, old servants, slaves, etc. and he considers the recognition of people's rights as the basis of the state. Punishment was considered as an essential means to maintain discipline in the state. Barani refers to various circumstances of the punishments, particularly the death punishment to be awarded by the king. The real importance of Fatwa-i-Jahandari lies in the fact that it shows in what ways the original Islamic theory of kingship went through changes over the years in the Indian context. Barani's vast experience in the working of the Delhi Sultanate and the prevailing social order get reflected in his political ideas.

The other valuable text on statecraft explaining the dominant trend of political ideas during the Mughal rule in India is AbulFazl's Ain-i-Akbari. AbulFazl was one of the most important thinkers of the sixteenth century India. Being a great scholar having sound knowledge of different fields of learning in the Muslim and the Hindu traditions, he had contributed in

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formulating many of Akbar's political ideas. AbulFazl was influenced by the idea of the divine nature of royal power. He made a distinction between a true king and a selfish ruler. A true king should not be concerned much about himself and power, rather people's well-being should be his prime concern. To him, an ideal sovereign is like a father who rules for the common welfare and is guided by the law of God. Though AbulFazl believed in 'the divine light of royalty', he did not envisage any role for the intermediaries to communicate the divine order; AbulFazl says, 'Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun.. ..Modern language calls this light farriizidi (the divine light) and the tongue of antiquity called it kiyankhwerrah (the sublime halo). It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of any one'. The Ulemas and the Mujtahids, like the Brahmins in Hinduism, acted as authority and interpreter of customary laws to king. But in AbulFazl's formulation, the intermediaries are not required to interpret religious and holy law and the king himself is expected to judge and interpret holy law. AbulFazl writes that "When the time of reflection comes, and men shake off the prejudices of their education, the thread of the web of religious blindness break and the eye sees the glory of harmoniousness, Although some are enlightened many would observe silence from fear of fanatics who lust for blood, but look like men.. .. The people will naturally look to their king and expect him to be their spiritual leader as well, for a king possesses, independent of men, the ray of divine wisdom, which banishes from his heart everything that is conflicting. A king will, therefore, sometimes observe the element of harmony in a multitude of things. Now this is the case with the monarch of the present age. He now is the spiritual guide of the nation'. At the core of his political ideas was the belief that the king should be guided by the principles of universal good and to fulfil his royal duty, he could go beyond the holy law. This was a significant shift in matters of governance compared to earlier political thinking. The reforms introduced by

Akbar through the abolition of JIZYZ collected from the non-Muslims or a ban on cow slaughter reflected the spirit of new political theory articulated in Ain-i-Akbari. AbulFazl was a believer in strong centralised monarchical

government and for better governance he advocated the distribution of works among various departments. It was with the help of a highly centralised bureaucracy that the Mughal sovereign ruled over the empire. AbulFazl's classified society into a four tier system, where rulers and warriors occupied the first position. Learned people were placed in the second category, artisans and merchants in the third and the labourers belonged to the fourth category. Although this was not based on an, egalitarian philosophy he talked about the importance of each category for the welfare of the state. Thus the picture of political authority that emerges from the study of Ain-i-Akbari was of a centralised monarchy and the governing principle of the state was the wellbeing of its people.

Check Your Progress 2

Note:i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1. Discuss the importance of authority during the Medieval Period.

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- 2. Discuss the ideas of sovereign authority during the Medieval Period.

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1.7 INDIAN RELIGION AND POLITY

Discussion on the ancient Indian political thoughts will remain incomplete if we do not take into account the relationship between religion and polity. Let us begin with the views shared by Gandhi and MaulanaAzad regarding religion and politics. Gandhi said that those who talk about the separation of religion and politics do not know what religion is. Maulana Azad wrote, that 'There will be nothing left with us if we separate politics from religion'. It is

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interesting to note that these two great Indian thinkers belonged to two different religious traditions but both were of the opinion that religion cannot be separated from politics. It may be little bewildering as to how we can claim secularism as the guiding principle of the Indian political tradition. It may sound contradictory but if we analyse carefully, the inner meaning of political ideas expressed in our various religious traditions, it would be clear to us as to how religion and state are integrated in our political philosophy. The history of India shows that ours is a unique civilisation which has, over the years, accommodated various religious traditions. In every religion, whether it is Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Sikhism or Christianity, with the evolution of society and new developments, various sects emerged having differences in expressing their loyalty to the almighty. However these differences were not meant for establishing one's superiority over the other. Each religion talks about moral values and one's duty towards the other and the society at large. References to the virtues of honesty, humility, selflessness, compassion for the poor, etc. are scattered in the teachings of various religious orders. In the sections on ancient and medieval polity, which we have discussed in this unit, you might have noticed that the cardinal principle of kingship as suggested by various texts was to take care of the interests of his subjects. Nowhere the distinction has been made among subjects along religious lines although there might have been individual rulers who deviated from this principle. Those deviations should be considered as aberrations rather than the guiding principles of kingship; here it would be pertinent to refer to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan who said that 'the religious impartiality of the Indian State is not to be confused with secularism or atheism. Secularism as here defined is in accordance with the ancient religious tradition of India. It tries to build up a fellowship of believers, not by subordinating individual qualities to the group mind but by bringing them into harmony with each other. This fellowship is based on the principle of diversity in unity which alone has the quality of creativeness. (S.Radhakrishnan, Recovery of Faith, 1956). The point to be noted here is that the meaning of secularism is based on our religious tradition. When we look at our past, we find that in the days of Brahmailical domination, a

section of our society started looking for alternative ways to realise the ultimate truth and this search resulted in the emergence of Jainism and Buddhism. Many people including the ruling authority welcomed the new religious traditions. Similarly when Islam came to India there might have been attempts by a few to make Islam, state religion but we find that the same period witnessed the growth of Sufism or Akbar's Tauhid-i-Ilahi (called Din-i-Ilahi) which focused on universalist. The same period is important for the growth of Bhakti movement. The Bhakti doctrine preached human equality which is considered as direct impact of Islamic thought. It dreamt of a society based on justice and equality in which men of all creeds would be able to develop their full moral and spiritual stature. The Sufi orders had an influence on the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, and among the followers of Guru Nanak were both Hindus and Muslims. A Muslim chronicler of Shivaji wrote that Shivaji, during military campaign, tried to avoid any insulting action against the Muslims 'and if a copy of the Quran was captured by his soldiers, it was supposed to be respectfully restored to the Muslims'. (Muhammad Hashim Khafi Khan, Munta Khabul Lubab, Tr. by J.Dawson, 1960). There will be no dearth of references in our various religious traditions to suggest that at the core of our various traditions lies the spirit of tolerance, universalism and compassion for the humanity. These teachings from religious traditions are expected to be the guiding principles of governance. Rajdharma suggests more about the sovereign's responsibility towards his subjects rather than misuse of power given to the sovereign by his subjects. It is within this framework that one should try to interpret the coexistence of religion and polity in India rather than finding the meaning of secular state as state divorced from religion. So when many modern political thinkers give importance to religion in their political philosophy, we must try to understand its significance in proper historical perspective. At the same time one has to be cautious about the misuse of religious sentiments for particular sectarian interest.

Check Your Progress 3

Note:i) Use the space below for your answer

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ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Discuss about religion and polity background in Indian Politics.

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2. Which way religion influenced the polity in ancient or pre-modern India

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1.8 LET US SUM UP

The unit deals broadly with the evolution of the Indian political thought till the time of modern, period. We have discussed the emergence of state and how various texts explained in detail about the role of the sovereign. Monarchy was no doubt the predominant form of government, but within it the roles of its various constituents have been clearly spelt out. Concept of bureaucracy, welfare state, individual rights, and public opinion, mentioned in various texts, give the impression of a very developed scientific thinking prevailing in our early traditions. Values and morality were given more importance to individual likings in the matters of governance. Cutting across time, the dominant ideology of the state was to protect the interest of its people. Religious idealism was given prominence to promote harmony and universalism within the state. In the backdrop of this discussion, we will now move on to the development of the modern Indian political thought.

1.9 KEY WORDS

Sovereignty in Ancient India: The first historians to write the political and social history of ancient India. Sovereignty belonged to the community and government was only a trustee.

Medieval India: The period of Indian history that is between the ancient India and the modern India. The start of the medieval period marks a slow collapse of the Gupta Empire (240 – 590) that resulted in the end of the Ancient India.

Matsyanyaya: Theory of *Matsyanyaya*, which proposes that in periods of chaos, when there is no ruler, the strong devour the weak, just as in periods of drought big fish eat little fish. Thus, the need for a ruler was viewed as absolute.

Zawabit: The term “Zawabit” literally mean “State laws” in Persian language but it is used contextually as “Secular Decrees” issued by the Mughal state undersigned by the ruler.

1.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Explain the major features of political ideas in Ancient India.
2. Discuss the important ideas regarding sovereign authority during the Medieval Period.
3. In what way has religion influenced the polity in pre-modern India?

1.11 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

Altekar, A. S., 1958: State and Government in Ancient India, 3rd Ed.

Motilal Banarsidas: Banaras.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India.

Beni Prasad, 1927: Theory of Government in Ancient India (Post Vedic),
Indian Press: Allahabad

1.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 1.3
- 2) See the sub-section 1.3

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See the sub-section 1.4
- 2) See the sub-section 1.4

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See the sub-section 1.5
- 2) See the sub-section 1.5

UNIT - 2: TRADITION

STRUCTURE

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Indian Political Thought

2.2.1 Nomenclature

2.2.2 Matsyanyaya

2.2.3 Dharma and Danda

2.3 Indian Political Thought : Sources

2.3.1 Drawbacks and Limitations

2.4 Characteristic of Indian Political Thought.

2.4.1 Political Life conceived within the framework of Dharma

2.4.2 Influence of Ethics

2.4.3 The Influence of Caste based Social Structure on Politics

2.4.4 Government as a Partnership of the Upper Varnas

2.4.5 No Clear Distinction between State and Society

2.4.6 Monarchy was the normal form of Government

2.4.7 The Government was not Sovereign

2.4.8 Other Distinguishing Features

2.5 Buddhist' Contribution to Indian Political Traditions

2.5.1 Democratic Nature of the Buddhist Sangha

2.5.2 Theory of the Origin of the State

2.5.3 The Principle of Righteousness

2.6 Contribution of Kautilya

2.7 Let us sum up

2.8 Key Words

2.9 Questions for Review

2.10 Suggested readings and references

2.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- To explain the nature of Indian political thoughts and tradition;
- To explain the meaning and significance of the concepts of Dharma and Danda
- To explain the basic concepts of Indian political tradition;
- To explain the issues of modern India.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit is intended to introduce you to the main features of Indian political thought. It will give you a bird's eye view of the major issues as well as acquaint you with the basic approaches to the study of this theme.

The beginning of the systematic study of ancient Indian political thought can be traced back to the nationalist movement. Most of the important works on Indian political thought were written during this period in response to the criticism that ancient India made no contribution to political thought and political science was not a separate and distinct science in India. The widely held belief among the scholars was that the Hindu science of political wars, infact, a part of Hindu Philosophy or Hindu religion. This opinion, though incorrect, seems to have been created on the account of the different names given to the concepts like 'politics', 'political science', and 'state'. Many scholars face this problem as they make an attempt to study the development of political thought within the framework of analysis provided by the West. Given an entirely different historical setting and socio-cultural contexts of India, it is a futile attempt to discover in it the same concepts and categories, which are the characteristics of European thought. We must understand that social and political thought is intimately related to social and political milieu in which it originates. A study of ancient Indian political ideas must, therefore, be undertaken keeping in mind ancient Indians' view of life, the

system of social organization that prevailed and the characteristics of Indian monarchy etc.

2.2 INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHTS AND TRADITION

Till recently, many scholars were of the opinion that India did not contribute anything to the evolution of political thought. It was believed that political thought in ancient India, if there was any, was at best a part of Hindu philosophy or Hindu religion. In other words, it was thought that the Hindu science of polity did not have a separate identity. But if we look at the notion of political in various available sources, it is clear that ancient Indian thinkers did have a notion of political distinct from either philosophy or religion. This erroneous conclusion that some scholars came to was because of the fact that they have fixed notions of politics and political science derived mainly from the West. If we can define 'politics' as the "affairs of a territorially organized community held together by allegiance to a common authority", one can hardly agree with those who believed that there was no systematic development of political thought in ancient India.

2.2.1 Nomenclature

The confusion arises because of the large number of parallel terms used in ancient India for politics. There were several names, they were: Rajadharm, which means duties of the ruler, Kshatraditya, the knowledge that the ruler should have, Rajyasastra meaning statecraft or the science of state, Dandaniti, the ethics of awarding punishment, Nitisastra, science of ethics regulating the lives of both the ruler and the ruled and Arthasastra, the art of acquisition and maintenance of land.

2.2.2 Matsyanyaya

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In ancient India, we have a term equivalent to the western concept of the state of nature. It is called Matsyanyaya, the state of big fish devouring the small. In ancient Indian political thought, we come across the term Matsyanyaya which explains the state of affairs in the absence of force or danda. Force is held to be the ultimate sanction behind the state. At the same time, it is emphasised that force cannot be used arbitrarily and various checks have been introduced to see that the person who is entrusted with authority to rule cannot use force at his will.

2.2.3 Dharma and Danda

For Bhikhu Parekh, Hindu political thinkers conceptualized political life in terms of two central concepts namely, dharma and danda. Both are dependent on each other. The term danda means discipline, force, restraint, constraint or punishment. Dharma is that which holds society together. It is derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhr' meaning to hold. Society could be held together when each individual and groups does his or its specific duties. This was sought to be achieved by following the varnashrama dharma. Varnadharmas or adhering to one's duties as member of a group to which one belongs, i.e. caste in Indian context. It was, therefore, the duty of the king to maintain varnadharmas. Varnasamkara i.e. mixture of different varnas, is to be avoided at any cost. There is a vivid description of what happens if members belonging to different varnas do not adhere to their respective varnas as given in dharmashastras, Arthashastra and Mahabharata.

The dharmashastra writers concentrated on exploring the dharma of individuals and social groups, including the government. They, however, did not attempt to provide political dharma as a distinct and autonomous subject of investigation. What they did was to provide a code of conduct covering the entire human life. Politics was incidental to this main concern.

In contrast to the approach of the dharmashastras, the authors of arthashastras were interested in the organisation and mechanics of danda. The Arthashastra of Kautilya gives us a detailed account of the nature and

organisation of government, the nature and method of exercising coercive power, how power could be acquired, strategies and mechanics of retaining power, the possible threat to the varnas, prakritis or the elements of state and the best way to deal with them. The works of the authors of arthashastra were specifically political.

The two approaches of dharmasastras and arthashastra differed mainly in their subject matter. One choosing to explore political life from the stand point of dharma, the other from that of danda. The dharmasastras were legalistic and a religious in orientation, whereas the arthashastras concentrated on institutions and politics and were secular in orientation. Neither approach was complete by itself, nor is this fully appreciated by its followers. The two together constitute the Hindu traditions of political thought.

Check Your Progress 1

Note:i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) What are the various nomenclatures used for the term ‘politics’ in early India.

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2) Describe briefly the concept of Matsyanyaya.

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3) Explain the concepts of Dharma and Danda.

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2.3 INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT: SOURCES

As has already been pointed out, politics in India was not considered an independent and autonomous discipline. One has to dig out the conceptions of politics from the host of sources, which deal about the larger questions of human life, mainly religious and philosophical in nature. There is no one text which deals mainly with politics.

The important sources for the studies of politics are:

- Vedic literature
- Dharmasutras and Smritis
- Epics and Puranas
- Arthasastras
- Buddhist and Jain literature
- Coins and Inscriptions
- Greek and Chinese Accounts
- Other literature sources and Epigraphy

2.3.1 Drawbacks and Limitations

Most of the above mentioned sources being religious in nature, it is very difficult to isolate facts of politics from it. Dharmasutras give an idealised picture of society and politics which hardly reflect the reality. Yet another difficulty is that most of the works on Indian political traditions were written during the nationalist movement with a purpose to counter the imperialist ideology of the Western scholars. The imperialist ideology was developed by some Western scholars who made an attempt to study the ancient Indian history. Their understanding of Indian history was based to assumptions. They are:

- a) The main intellectual preoccupation of ancient Indians was philosophy and it lacked in political or material speculations.

- b) The Indians never knew the feeling of nationality.

The practical implications of these conclusions were dangerous to the demand of self-rule in India. They implied that the Indians were incapable of maintaining their material world and therefore, the British should manage it for them. The second implication was that since Indians had no sense of nationhood, it was in keeping with their traditions that they should be subjected to autocratic rule.

Indian nationalist historians churned out a host of literature to counter the imperialist The Confucian Tradition ideology. Bhagavanlal Inderjit, Bhandarkar, R.L. Mitra, B.G. Tilak and Later K.P. Jayaswal, R.K. Majumdar, B.K. Sarkar came out with their own interpretation of Indian history to prove the falsification of imperialist ideology. They strongly argued that what was prevalent in ancient India was not autocratic rule, but limited monarchy. K.P. Jayaswal in his Hindu Polity argued that the ancient Indian polity was partly like the republics of ancient Greece and partly like the constitutional monarchies such as that of Great Britain. He concluded: “The constitutional progress made by the Hindus as probably not been equaled, much less surpassed by any policy of antiquity”.

While appreciating the contributions of nationalist scholars to inculcate a feeling of self-confidence among the people during the nationalist movement, one must properly understand the limitations of this approach. R. S. Sharma, an eminent historian, has pointed out four important limitations of this nationalist and revivalist approach to the study of Indian political thought. They are:

1. By a fulsome adoration of ancient Hindu institutions, it tended to alienate the Muslims.

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2. The approach gives a false sense of past values. It glossed over the fact that, whether it was monarchy or republic, the two upper varnas dominated the two lower varnas who were generally excluded from all political offices.
3. Many Indians fought shy of the religious aspects of ancient Indian polity and, as if to cover a sense of guilt, took too much pains to prove the secular character of the ancient Indian state. They little realised that even in the Western world, theocracy existed till the first half of the 18th century.
4. In its zeal to prove itself a superior civilization, it hardly showed any interest in studying the ancient institutions in the light of the evolution of primitive tribes as known from anthropology.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) Mention briefly the important sources for the study of Indian political thought.

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- 2) What are the drawbacks and limitations of the sources?

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2.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

2.4.1 Political Life conceived within the framework of Dharma

One cannot find in ancient India any classes exclusively dealing with political and social life, which is comparable to the 'Republic' and the 'Politics' of Plato and Aristotle. A supernatural element is present in all the writings. The divine is omnipotent and is visible in the formation of society and government; the divine purpose is to be enforced by the king, divine punishment reinforces earthly punishment and sometimes supplants it. This is what we find in almost all the texts that deal with the life of the people. But one should not be led to believe the reality. There was a wide gap between the 'sastras', traditions and the actual lives of human beings. The brahminical religion, which is commonly taken as the Hindu religion, was not all-pervasive. There were non-Brahminical traditions, which were materialistic in nature and which played an important role in guiding the activities of ordinary people. Buddhist contribution is significant in this respect. We will discuss about this later.

2.4.2 Influence of Ethics

The social thought in ancient India not only assures certain fundamental principle of morality, but it always seeks to direct the material life as well. The king must consciously stimulate virtue and act as a guide to the moral life, morality as stipulated in the dharmasastras. The state figures considerably in the communal life and the theory of life proceeds to resolve itself into a theory of morality. In short, political science becomes the ethics of the whole society, a science of the duty of man found in the complex set of relations in society.

But when it comes to international relations, one can see the ethical meanings coming to terms with the hard reality. Dealing about diplomacy, Kautilya for example, becomes realistic in a manner similar to Machiavelli. One may notice a sudden fall from ethical heights to the rankest realism in the same writer.

2.4.3 The Influence of Cast Based Social Structure

Caste occupied a prominent place in all social speculation during the later Vedic period and had a direct bearing on the theory of government. Varnashramadharama in the society was fixed on the basis of caste. Each varna was assigned specific functions. It was the foremost duty of the king to see that every individual confined himself to performing functions of the varna to which he was born. Caste was an ascribed status. The individual was not to seek his own interest or expression; he was not to determine his own ambition or ends. Varnashramadharm exalted the society at the cost of human values. Much that was personal gave way to collective elements. Not all castes or varnas were equally privileged in their enjoyment of rights and duties assigned to them. The super varnas – Brahmanas and Kshatriyas – were the ruling class. The duty of an individual was social. Since the varnas were related to each other in such a fashion that together they constituted the social order, if an individual transgressed his duty, he not only violated the order, he, infact, became antisocial. It was in this way that the Hindu theory would overcome the anti-thesis of man vs state or society.

2.4.4 Government as a Partnership of the Upper Varnas

In ancient India, the Kshatriyas, Brahmanas and later the Vaisyas together formed the ruling class. The Shudras were the serving class. 'Kshatra' – the temporal power derived its strength and authority from 'Brahma' - the spiritual power. The Vaisya engaged in such occupations as agriculture and trade provided the economic basis of the state. The priest held the highest

status. He was identified with the God 'Brihaspathy' instead of the temporal power 'Indra'. His function was to interpret dharma and preside over the rituals.

Coronation by the priest was a necessary pre-requisite to the exercise of royal power. Symbolically, it meant that the Kshatriya derived his power from the Brahman. The priest was the chief adviser to the king. Interestingly, unlike in Europe, priesthood in India did not contend for temporal power, a phenomenon that raged in Europe for a considerably long period. The influence exercised by the priestly class was of a peculiar kind. They had the monopoly of education and were the sole interpreters of dharma. No one, not even the king could go beyond their prescription. With its intellectual leadership of the community and religious control, there was no need for the priestly class to organise itself into a church or any such spiritual organisation.

2.4.5. No Clear Distinction between State and Society

The governmental organization and politics were looked at as a part of the larger whole called society. In other words, society was at once religious, political, economic and military. It was generally viewed in a comprehensive manner. The habit of looking at society from a political angle was not cultivated. As a result, there was no clear conception of either the state or the government. Both were interchangeable terms.

2.4.6. Monarchy Was the Normal Form of Government

Since the four fold division of society entrusted the ruling power with the Kshatriya caste, monarchy was the natural outcome. There were also non-monarchical forms of government. Kautilya's Arthashastra for example, mentions 'dvairajya' (rule by two kings) 'vyrajya' (state without a king) etc., There were also 'ganasanghas' which according to K. P. Jayaswal are comparable to modern republics. But still monarchy was the normal form of

government. Though there were non-monarchical forms, they were more of an exception rather than a rule.

2.4.7. The Government was not Sovereign

From its very nature of existence, the government in ancient India could not be regarded as sovereign in the Austinian sense of the term. It did not impart validity to the orders: rather, it shared in its validity. On the contrary, the government had no independent existence of its own. The sustenance of the social order was merely its function. Sovereignty was, infact, ultimately sourced in the divine will. On the part of the individual, there was no unified allegiance, no single loyalty except to society as a whole. Only the pluralistic theory of sovereignty can grasp the Indian phenomenon.

2.4.8. Other Distinguishing Feature

Apart from the above mentioned characteristics, Professor Bhikhu Parekh mentions some other distinguishing features of the Hindu political traditions. They are :

- 1) The Hindu tradition is basically in-egalitarian. Although it developed the idea of the moral equality of all men, it never developed the social, legal and political groups.
- 2) The Hindu tradition of political thought is pluralistic in orientation. The Hindu political writers from the very beginning recognised the autonomy of social groups.
- 3) Political thought in early India was largely uncritical and apologetic of the established social order. Most Hindu writes justified the caste system as the caste based conception of dharma, the largely fatalist concept of karma, the degradation of the Shudras and the slaves, the extensive moral interference of the state and so on. It ignored the whole area of social conflict.

- 4) Many Hindu writers wrote mainly for the attention of the rulers. Their works are largely manuals of ethics or administration; hence, it is largely didactic and practical.

Check Your Progress 3

Note:i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

- 1) List the important characteristics of Indian political thought.

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- 2) What according to Professor Bhikhu Parekh are the distinguishing features of Hindu political thought?

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2.5 BUDDHISTS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO INDIAN POLITICAL TRADITIONS

In contrast to Brahminical literature, we have a different version of the origin of kingship in Buddhist literature. The divine origin theory is not accepted. We have innumerable instances in the Jatakas of elections for the royal office. Some Jatakas contain description of the king – elect being chosen by the purohita or the elders according to his qualities or his Mahajana-Sammata, meaning one who is accepted by all. Generally Kshatriyas of good family were chosen, but caste was not a bar to this election to royal office. In atleast two Jatakas, we find Brahmans elected to the royal office. In another Jataka, we find a low caste man being chosen as a king. If he proved tyrannical, the remedy was naturally a popular revolt of

which we have innumerable examples. These revolts were justified on the grounds that.

- 1) The king-ship arose out of a contract between the subjects and the one chosen by them.
- 2) The sovereign rights of the king were limited to the protection of subjects and punishment of wrong-doers and he was bound by the law.

The people, according to Jataka evidence, maintained their rights and privileges for a long time. They derived their importance partly from their numbers and partly from their organizations.

2.5.1. Democratic Nature of the Buddhist Sangha

Prof. Rhys Davids is of the opinion that the Buddhist Sangha was founded upon democratic principles. According to him, the Buddhist Sangha “was a kind of republic in which all proceedings were settled by resolutions agreed upon in regular meetings of its members which were held subject to the observance of certain established regulations and the use of certain form of words. These forms and resolutions passed were called as KammaVacas”.

The democratic nature of the Buddhist order is further illustrated by the fact that in addition to the rules and resolutions, we further learn from the Mahavagga and the Culavagga, that;

- 1) The Buddhist Sangha had a body of rules regarding the form of resolutions to be moved in the Assembly
- 2) There was a rule of quorum.
- 3) In cases of difference of opinion it was decided by the votes of the majority.

- 4) Complicated matters were referred to the decision of committees.
- 5) Definite rules seem to have existed regarding such matters as the votes of the absentees.

However, there is nothing to prove that the procedure in the Buddhist Sangha which was basically a religious order was reflected in the 'Ganasangha', which was a political sangha. But in any case, the political ideas envisaged by the Buddhists were a distinct one and differed greatly from the political thought of either the Dharmasastras or the Arthasastras. It is evident in the Buddhist theory of the origin of the state.

2.5.2. Theory of the Origin of the State

The theory of the origin of the state is found in the Dighanikaya. According to it, there prevailed a golden age of harmony and happiness on earth and people being virtuous, led a happy and peaceful life. But after a long period, people became greedy and selfish. Other evils also crept in subsequently. This ideal state passed away. Then, the people approached the best man amongst them and entered into an agreement with him. He was to punish the wrongdoers and in return, they promised to give him a proportion of their harvest. Chosen by the people, he was known as the MahaSammata or the 'Great Elect'. Thus, the Dighanikaya challenges the vedic dogma of divine creation of the social order.

The necessity of the rulers' authority was felt because people became corrupt; consequently, the state came into existence. But even then the criminals and the lawbreakers continued to operate. In the AnguttaraNikaya, Lord Buddha stressed the importance of the fear of severe punishment by the ruler as a deterrent to crimes.

The salient features of the Buddhist theory of social evolution are that it is the continuous moral and physical decline which necessitated a social and political order. A direct consequence of this progressive fall of man was the

rise of the institutions of property, the state and society in a successive sequence. It was the further fall of man that led to the institution of kingship that came into existence as a result of the contract between the community and the most distinguished individual. The rise of the social class is explained, in contrast to Brahminical theory, by a rational principle of voluntary selection of occupations. In this social order, the Kshatriyas take precedence over the Brahmanas. It is always virtue and knowledge that determined superiority. Since the Buddhists did not believe in the caste system, they denied that one of the duties of the king was to maintain Varnashramadharm. They further denied the restriction of kingship to the kshatriyavarna. They did not believe in the sanctity that surrounded the person of the king.

2.5.3. The Principle of Righteousness

In the Buddhist literature, danda does not have a central role. Dharma is to be upheld in more positive ways. The principle of righteousness is different from the Brahminical conception of dharma. It is closer to the Western conception of virtue. According to Brahminical literature, there is a different set of ethical principles for the king. What is adharma to the ordinary people becomes a dharma to the king, when he is engaged in protecting the social order. This is called Rajadharma. Both the Bhagavadgita and the Mahabharata give detailed accounts of the concept of Rajadharma as distinct from dharma to be practiced by the ordinary citizens. Buddhists too consider the primary purpose of the state to safeguard the social order. But this order is understood more in moral terms and dharma must be the standard for all the king's activities. Righteousness is an ethical doctrine as well as a mental discipline. In Buddhism, there is a total application of the principle of righteousness in guiding both internal as well as foreign policies. Righteousness is the king to righteous king. The king is bound by same set of ethical principles as are his subjects. The king, by example causes the happiness or misery of his people. Political righteousness, thus conceived, rises almost to the level of a cosmic principle of creation. It might appear to

be an exaggerated version, but one cannot deny that the conduct of the king influences the behaviour of his subjects considerably. The principle of political righteousness is extended to include the concept of world ruler or chakravartin. The attributes of this ruler comprise not only the universal supremacy and successful administration at home and abroad, but also and above all righteousness. With regard to internal administration, righteousness connotes reciprocal love and affection between the ruler and his subjects. In the sphere of foreign relations, the chakravarti's conquest of the kingdom is achieved not by force but by righteousness. The principles of righteousness means; right views, right intention, right speech, right actions, right livelihood, right effort, right mindedness etc.

Check Your Progress 4

- Note:** i) Use the space below for your answer.
ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1) Why is the king in Buddhist literature called Mahajanasammata

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2) Give a brief account of the nature of the working of Buddhist sanghas.

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3) Explain the concepts of righteousness.

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2.6 CONTRIBUTION OF KAUTILYA

Kautilya is also known as Chanakya or Vishnu Gupta. He was the teacher of Economics and Political Science at the ancient Takshashila University. He was the Prime Minister of first Maurya Emperor Chandra Gupta Maurya. He lived during 350-275 BC. He was born in the 'Kutil' gotra. His father's name was Chankya and he was born at a place called Chankya. Therefore, he came to be known as Chanakya. He was educated in Takshashila University and became a Professor of Political Economy. He studied architecture and medicine also. He became the Prime Minister to the Mauryan Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. He saw the defeat of some parts of India by Alexander the Great. He realised that it is because of the Republican system that existed in the sub continent. Therefore, he was of the opinion that a centralised power is very much essential for the survival of a large state.

Kautilya's 'Arthashastra'⁵⁸ is a great book on Political Science and Economics. The term 'arthashastra' can be translated as "science of political economy". It contains the ancient Indian Political thought. It explains the Hindu concept of Law and Justice. It also contains the Hindu ideas of Kingship and the State. It deals with mode of autocracy⁵⁹, framework of administration, and economics and welfare of the people. The Mahabharata refers to many Arthashastras. But the oldest Arthashastra was discovered in Mysore in 1909 by Prof. Shamasastri. According to popular conviction, it is believed to have been written by Chanakya. In the opening lines of Arthashastra, Kautilya (Book 1, Ch. 1) notes that " this Arthashastra is made as a compendium of almost all the Arthashastra, which, in view of acquisition and maintenance of earth, have been composed by ancient teachers "

Kautilya says that the science of politics is supreme. For him it is the supreme art also. However, he did not say that the science of politics is the only science. He wanted to keep the science of political economy more secular and devoid of any religious influence. Nevertheless, it is influenced

by the current philosophy and religious edicts. Arthasastra is divided into sixteen books concerning almost all aspects of government of a state. It deals with law, economics, military, taxation, diplomacy etc. According to Arthasastra, the foundation of good governance is nothing but knowledge which can be classified into four namely Anvikasi or philosophy, Trayi or three vedas, the four classes or varnas and the four orders or ashrams. The text of Arthasastra has 32 divisions, 15 books or parts and 150 chapters. Book I is concerned with kingship. Book II is concerned with civil administration. Books III and IV deal with civil criminal and personal law. Book V deal with the duties and responsibilities of the courtiers. Book VI deals with the nature and functions of the seven elements of the state. The last books are concerned with the problems connected with foreign policy, warfare etc.

Arthasastra does not give a clear picture of various department of the state. However, goldsmith, storehouse, commerce, forest, wights and measues, tolls weaving, agriculture, pasturelands, cows, slaughter houses, ships, passport and liquor are the various departments.

Arthasastra is a detailed work on the administration of Hindu polity. It deals with ancient philosophy, set of laws(canon), economics and polity (dandaniti). Strict administration or 'danda' is the fundamental principle of the state. It deals with the practical issues of administration. In fact, it is a compendium of the existing Indian knowledge on the state craft. Chanakya put them into words in a systematic manner. According to Arthasastra, the King is the embodiment of all the virtues. He is the protector of Dharma. He derived his power from mainly three sources namely Prabhushakthi (power of treasury and the army), Mantrashakthi (advice of ministers), and Utsaahashakthi (Power of motivation). In the performance of his duties, the king is helped by the Council of Ministers or Mantri Parishad. Interestingly, the council of ministes had a cabinet consisting of the king, the Chief Minister, the Chief Priest and the Commander of Armed Forces. It included the Crown Prince also.

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Arthashastra contains many geo-political ideas regarding the territory of the state. According to Kautilya, the following are the qualities of a territory of janapada:- (1) It should have enough space for the construction of forts. (2) It should have enough provisions for those inside and those who come from outside. (3) It should have enough defense (4) It should hate the enemy (5) It should not have no hostile association of people (6) It should have agricultural lands, mines and forests (7) It should not depend upon rain for water supply (8) The people should be faithful and pure at heart. Kautilya proposed a very systematic scheme for town planning also. He said there are four different types of forts that could be built along the four sides of a city. In the midst of villages, there shall be a town. It will act as a centre of administration including tax collection. It will also act as a centre of economy. It must have all civil amenities like roads, bridges and sewages. The capital city is of utmost importance. It must be a planned city. The centre point of the city should be the palace of the king. There shall be separate areas for business, residences, trade administration, entertainment etc. The source of revenue of the country also is important. There shall be constant supply of finance to the king. He must be diligent and imaginative in his methods. He must reward rich contributors. He must take more from the wicked and spare the righteous. He must plant pseudo contributors among the people and make them contribute large sums so that those who contribute less will be ashamed. During the times of any financial emergency, the king should not hesitate to take the help of people and receive contributions. He can also resort to increase in the taxes from traders, merchants etc. Foreign policy is another important aspect of the state policy of Kautilya. According to him, the state system has mainly three aspects: classes of aliens and enemies, powers and successes. The powers are as follows: power of advice, power of his material resources, and power of his energy. The successes are achieved by means of his powers. The basis of foreign policy is the denial of his power and successes to his enemies. The fundamental of foreign policy is pure expediency. It should be purely based on practical aspects and not principles. If progress can be achieved by means of peace or by war, the king must resort to peaceful means. War

involves suffering in the hands of the enemy in the enemy land. If it is a question of choice between war and neutrality, the latter is the best choice. In case if the enemy is strong, it is vice to make peace. It is also good to make peace with an enemy who is equal to him to avoid destruction, calamities, and miseries. In case if the enemy is weak, war can be avoided in case of complete submission of the enemy.

As far as the policy on religion and ethics is concerned, Kautilya is a mix of theological and brahminical traditions. Kautilya placed high importance to the caste system and the duties of each caste in the state. He was for special provisions for Brahmins in the form of tax free lands and forest resorts for the brahmins for meditation and yagas. He accepted the disabilities of the sudras. According to Kautilya, religious faith of the people can be used for the protection of the state. Spies can take the form of hermits, sages and priests. The priests of temples can even make use of the superstition of the people to make them contribute to raise finance for the state in times of emergencies. Religious occasions can be used to move against the enemy, if necessary.

Kautilya supported varna system. He was of the opinion that there should be different sets of people who perform different types of duties. Each class of people have their own rights and duties. By ensuring this, the King ensures happiness in the country. The Brahmin must engage in intellectual pursuit and spiritual matters. The Kshatriya is involved in the protection of the land. The Vaishya is involved in trade. The job of the Sudra is the service of all the people. Kautilya also proposes certain stages for the life of a person. They are called Brahmacharya, Grahasthya, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa.

Kautilya's theory of Law and Justice is such that the legal issues should be settled according to the canon of the land. In the event of a conflict between canon and reason, it is the reason which must prevail. The King is not above law. The king is subject to the civil and criminal laws. According to the

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system of justice, there shall criminal courts as well as civil courts. Canon, contract custom and royal decrees were the four sources of law.

The King or Rajarshi is an autocrat⁶⁰. Such an autocratic King should have the following qualities:-

- Self-control
- Takes advice from elders.
- Keeps his eyes open through spies.
- Promotes the security & welfare of the people.
- Ensures that people follow their dharma in life.
- Continue his studies in all branches of knowledge.

According to Kautilya, there is a concept called Matsyanyaya. It means that, in the absence of a ruler, the strong person will destroy the weak; but under the protection of the ruler, the weak resist the strong. In 'Arthasastra, there is a concept called rájatva also. It means Sovereignty of a country. There shall be protection for the forests and wild life. The forests and wild life should be protected by guards. Protector of animals shall also protect citizens from animals. There shall be separate forests for timber⁷², and rearing lion and tiger for skins. Elephants are important for the army. Practically, King is the head of the Kautilya's state. He appoints the heads of administration. When the king is good, the country is benefitted. When the king is bad, the country suffers. According to Kautilya, a new king is better than a diseased king. Rule by a father and son or two brothers is not good. It is worse than the rule of a conqueror. Kautilya proposed many methods to deal with a situation arising out of the death of a king. The minister must ensure peaceful succession. He must be able to make use of all sorts of diplomacy. He can even go out of legal means to ensure peaceful taking over of power. The minister must also be able to predict any sort of untoward event in case of the death of a king. He must take all precautionary measures to prevent such an eventuality. Security and stability of the country is of utmost importance. Kautilya suggested many systematic methods to maintain peace and stability. According to Kautilya, the king should be educated. His education must continue after the age of 16 when he shaves

off his head. He must be good in all sciences. On reaching the proper age, the king must start his studies under able teachers. The king should be disciplined also. Atma Vrata or self-control is of utmost importance for the King. To acquire this, the king should abandon the six enemies in him namely kama (lust), Krodha (anger) Lobha (greed), maana (vanity), mada (haughtiness) and harsha (overjoy). Kautilya emphasized the 'Doctrine of Trivarga' (three goals). According to him " Every man was required to strive to satisfy his spiritual needs by fulfilling his religious and moral duties (Dharma); his material needs by acquiring the necessities of life, property, wealth and power (Artha); his instinctive desires by following the dictates of love (Kama). In later times, Moksha (deliverance from the cycle of death - rebirth) was added as a fourth and highest aim of life " A king shall never select an indisciplined prince as crown-prince. According to Kautilya, there are two types of disciplines. One is natural and the other one is acquired. The king must acquire the second kind of discipline. With the help of the knowledge of science, he must ensure self-control. All the six personal vices or 'enemies' should be under control. If he does not control his sense organs, it is not good for the state. Upon becoming the king, he must learn the meaning of arthashastra from his ministers through examples and lessons from history. However, the king must control revenue and army directly. Kautilya presented a list of the qualifications of the king. They are classified into four. They are: qualities of an inviting nature, qualities of intellect, qualities of the will, and the qualities of a real king. The officials (amatyas) is very important in the administration of government (rajatva). A rath or chariot cannot move with only a single wheel. Therefore, the king must appoint able ministers (sachiva). He must listen to the advice of the ministers. There is a long procedure for the selection and appointment of amatyas. The king must constantly observe the administrators. Virtue, wealth, desire and fear are the four factors for the selection of amatyas. All the administrative functions of the janapada is looked after by the amatya. It involves protection from the enemies, protecting from natural calamities, improvement of waste land for use, collection of taxes and fines etc. According to Kautilya, when the king is alert, his servants become alert.

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When the king is lazy, his servants become lazy. It will lead to his inefficiency and the enemies will overpower him. The king must act like a father to his people. The king must take care of destitute, children, women and the elderly. He must also ensure that the slaves will perform his duties with his masters. No one can go for the monastery life without providing for his wife and children. When the king is powerful, he is also like a servant of the state. It is the duty of the king to maintain the state. The king is like a constitutional slave of the state. If required, he is supposed to give up even his family for the sake of the state. This is the ideal of Ramayana. That means, the king cannot always follow his personal likes and dislikes. The people of the kingdom should be loyal to the king. It is the duty of the king to ensure that there is enough propaganda to ensure the loyalty of the people. The king must be able to control any dissent against the king. One important assumption of Kautilya is that masses are moved by passion and not reason. They are moved by slogans and popular words and phrases than reasoned convictions. The king must be able to make use of this situation. According to Kautilya, it is the duty of the king to maintain law and order. Danda is important in maintaining law and order. Danda maintains the canon. Danda maintains philosophy and knowledge. Danda maintains the economy also. In his administration of justice, the principle of 'matsyanyaya' works. It means that in the absence of rule, the strong will destroy the weak. In the event of theft, the stolen property should be restored to the owner. It should be made even from his treasury. If the king happens to punish an innocent man, the king must offer 30 times of the fine to God.

Kautilya proposes detailed methods of acquisition and preservation of a country. He proposed five methods towards acquisition. The first method is to create disaffection among the friends of the enemy. The second method is to get rid of the enemy through secret operations. The third method is to set up spies against the enemy kingdom. Another method is to seize the enemy territory. The final method is to attack the enemy territory straight. To create disaffection among the friends of the king, they must be secretly approached. They must be presented with all critical views on the

administration. They must be told about the virtues they might acquire if there is a change. To get rid of the enemy, all types of methods can be used. The assassins can even pose as horse traders and take the opportunity to kill the enemy. The kingdom must give refuge to dissatisfied officers so that the information from them can be freely used against the enemy. The enemy can also be destroyed by blocking the sources of supply of provision like food and water. The enemy can also be attacked and killed when he is in a position of disadvantage. Preservation of a dominion is as important as acquiring a dominion. If a dominion cannot be preserved, there is no point in acquiring the dominion. Therefore, Kautilya proposed many methods to preserve a dominion. Security of the king is the most important. There shall be personal security for the king. He must be guarded from his very birth. All his subordinates should be under constant watch. There shall be spies to collect information about any move against the king. Even minor issues should not be left unattended. There shall be spies to keep an eye over eighteen different classes of officials close to him. At the same time, the officials should be guarded against move from enemies also. The king must be aware of disaffection against the enemy. There may be four reasons for disaffection. Anger, fear, greed and pride can cause disaffection. With the help of spies, the king must be able to win over the enemies of the enemy. The king must be able to find out the reason for the discontentment. It will help him to win over them against the enemy. Kautilya presented a detailed time table for the daily chores of king in the Arthsastra. The day of a King starts at sunrise and ends at 1.30 in the night. His time is divided into eight equal parts. The first engagement of the king is to plan for the protection of his subjects. Secondly, he must look after the protection of the capital city. In the third part, he can look after his personal issues like bath and breakfast. In the fourth part, he will receive his officers. In the fifth part, he will see the intelligence department. Between 1.30 and 3 pm, he will have some recreation. In the seventh part, he will supervise the army. In the eighth part of the day between 4 pm and 6 pm, he will meet the commander in chief and plan for war and protection.

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Estimate of Kautilya: Kautilya was one who even defeated Alexander the Great. His statecraft was perfect and fool proof. It was based on philosophy as well as practical wisdom. When compared with the contemporary political thinkers elsewhere in the world, Kautilya was way ahead of all of them in almost all aspects of state craft. He was realistic, systematic and practical. He was able to convert idealism into practical realms with a touch of realism. For Kautilya, it was not just philosophy to create an utopian state. For him it was the question of running a great empire. That made him all the more different from contemporary political thinkers or those who were to follow him for centuries. Kautilya was also able to blend the ancient religious traditions also into the art of government while keeping the subtle difference from affecting the secular environment of state craft. On any account, it can be stated that a meaningful appreciation of Kautilya as a political thinker will definitely place him at the zenith of the art and science of political thinking. In spite of the superiority of Kautilya's philosophy and practice, his system of administration did not last for more than two centuries. May be because, the later kings could not practice the system properly. It could be also because of the fact that a system based on the concept of Dharma deteriorated because the later kings were not able to preserve dharma. There could have been quite a number of internal conflicts also like the transformation of varna system into caste system based on exploitation.

2.7 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, the study of the Indian political thought was neglected for a long time. Many were of the opinion that early India did not contribute anything to the development of political thought. However, Indian political thought has its own distinguishing features. It is closely linked to religion, social structure, ethics so much so that it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish the political from others spheres of thought. Though Indian political thought is often equated with Hindu political thought, there were other non-

Brahminical traditions which contributed to the evolution of political thought in India. Buddhists, Jains and later Muslims came out with their own notions of good government, its duties and obligations etc. It is true that early Indian thinkers did not develop political philosophy as an autonomous discipline. To answer the question as to why they did not develop a systematic tradition of philosophy requires a critical examination of the Indian social structure and a comparison with the social structure of classical Athens where the tradition of political philosophy made its first appearance.

2.8 KEY WORDS

Nationalist Historians : Indian Historians who wrote about Indian history with a presumption that India as a nation existed since the ancient period.

Varna : Society in ancient India was divided into four categories of Varnas. They were Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.

Ashrama : Four stages in the life of an individual, especially the members of the upper varna. They are: Brahmacharya (practice of celibacy) Grihastha (married life) Vanaprastha (withdrawing from married life) and Sanyasa (complete detachment from worldly life).

Varnasharmadharma : Duties prescribed for four varnas and the four ashramas.

Monarchy : Rule by a single king.

Ganasamgha : Assembly of people. Basically, Buddhist socioreligious organisations which have been described by many historians as a form of government equivalent to republics.

Vedic literature : It means the four Vedas Rig, Sama, Yazur and Atharva.

Dharmastras : Codes of conduct to be practiced by the people. Men of authority on the basis of Sruti, which means revelation, write them.

Arthashastra : Branch of knowledge, which deals with the acquisition and maintenance of earth. It is also the title of the work of Kautilya.

Matsyanyaya : Law of the fish in which big fish swallow the smaller ones.

Mahajanasammata :Literally means one who is accepted by all. The Buddhist king was called Mahajanasammata.

Jatakas : Texts on Buddhist philosophy written in the form of stories

2.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- 1) What are the various nomenclatures used for the term 'politics' in early India.
- 2) Describe briefly the concept of Matsyanyaya.
- 3) Explain the concepts of Dharma and Danda.
- 4) Mention briefly the important sources for the study of Indian political thought.
- 5) What are the drawbacks and limitations of the sources?
- 6) List the important characteristics of Indian political thought.
- 7) What according to Professor Bhikhu Parekh are the distinguishing features of Hindu political thought?
- 8) Why is the king in Buddhist literature called Mahajanasammata?
- 9) Give a brief account of the nature of the working of Buddhist sanghas.
- 10) Explain the concepts of righteousness.

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2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 2.2
- 2) See the sub-section 2.2.2
- 3) See the sub-section 2.2.3

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See the sub-section 2.3
- 2) See the sub-section 2.3.1

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See the sub-section 2.4
- 2) See the sub-section 2.4.8

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) See the sub-section 2.5
- 2) See the sub-section 2.5.1
- 3) See the sub-section 2.5.3

UNIT- 3:SALIENT FEATURES OF MODERN INDBAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

STRUCTURE

- 3.0 Objective
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Two Phases of Modern Indian Thought
- 3.3 Social Reform and the "Hindu Renaissance"
 - 3.3.1 Two Intellectual Moves of Reformers
 - 3.3.2 Modes of Reformist Thought
- 3.4 The Nationalism
 - 3.4.1 The 'Inner' and 'Outer' Domains
 - 3.4.2 Concerns of Nationalists
- 3.5 The Trajectory of Muslim Thought
 - 3.5.1 The Specificity of Muslim History and Thought
 - 3.5.2 The Reform Initiative
 - 3.5.3 The Anti-Imperialist Currents
- 3.6 The Revolt of the Lower Orders
- 3.7 Let us sum up
- 3.8 Key Words
- 3.9 Questions for Review
- 3.10 Suggested Readings and References
- 3.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the salient features of modern Indian thoughts.
- Explain the social Hindu Reform and Nationalism.
- Explain the Muslim thoughts.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit deals with the salient features of modern Indian political thought. This is not an easy exercise as there is no single body of thought that we call 'Indian'. Nor is there a continuity of concerns across time - say between the early nineteenth century and the late nineteenth century. Taking a synoptic view therefore necessarily reduces the complexities and does not do full justice to minority or subordinate voices, relegating them further to the margins. You will do well to bear in mind that most of the modern Indian political and social thought is marked by the experience of the colonial encounter. It was within this universe that most of our thinkers, hailing from different communities and social groups, embarked on their intellectual-political journey.

As mentioned in the previous unit the great intellectual question that most nineteenth century thinkers had posed before themselves was: how did a huge country like India become subjugated? If that was the question before the thinkers for the host of the nineteenth century, the question before those writing in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was the question of 'freedom': How can 'we' become free of colonial rule? This was a more complicated question that might appear to you today because, as we saw in the last unit, there was no pre-given entity whose freedom was being sought. So, for each set of thinkers, the 'we' in the question above differed, we could also call this a 'search for the Self' - for that Self was never as evident to these thinkers as it is to 'us' today.

3.2 TWO PHASES OF MODERN INDIAN THOUGHT

We call broadly divide modern Indian thought into two phases. The first phase was that of what has often been referred to as the phase of 'Social Reform'. Thinkers of this phase, as we shall see, were more concerned with the internal regeneration of indigenous society and because its first

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effervescence occurred in Bengal, it was often referred to as the 'Bengal renaissance'. Nationalist historians of course, even started referring to it as the Indian renaissance, but this will be an inaccurate description for reasons that we will see shortly. The second phase, more complex and textured in many ways, is the phase that we can designate as the nationalist phase. The concerns in this phase shift more decisively to questions of politics and power, and of freedom from colonial rule. It is important to remember that what we are calling the 'nationalist phase' is merely a shorthand expression, for there were precisely in this period, many more tendencies and currents that cannot simply be subsumed under the rubric of 'nationalism'. At the very least, there are important currents like the Muslim and Dalit that mark the intellectual and political 'search for the Self' in this period.

Before we go into the specific features of the thinkers of the two broad periods that we have outlined, it is necessary to make a few clarifications. Though most scholars have tended to see these as two distinct phases or periods, this way of looking at the history of modern Indian political thought can be quite problematic. These periodisations can only be very broad and tentative ones, made for the purpose of convenience of study; on no account should they be rendered into fixed and hermetically sealed periods. In fact, we can more productively see them as two broad currents which do not necessarily follow one after the other. As we shall see, there are many social reform concerns that take on a different form and continue into the nationalist phase. In fact, the nationalist phase itself reveals two very distinct tendencies in this respect. On the one hand, there is the dominant or hegemonic nationalism, represented in the main by the Indian National Congress, where the social reform agenda is abandoned in a significant way; on the other there are other contending narratives that insist on privileging the reform agenda much to the discomfort of the nationalists. We shall soon see why. We shall also have the occasion to note that, in this respect, Gandhi remains almost the one figure within this hegemonic nationalism, who keeps trying to bring in the reform agenda into the nationalist movement.

3.3 SOCIAL REFORM AND THE 'HINDU RENAISSANCE'

There was a veritable explosion of intellectual activity throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in Bengal and Western India. Bengal there was the Young Bengal movement, and publicists, thinkers and social reformers like Raja Rammohun Roy, IswarchandraVidyasagar, Keshub Chandra Sen, Michael MadhusudanDutta, Surendranath Banerjee, Swami Vivekananda and such other personalities who embodied this effervescence. In Western India there were reformers like BalShastriJambhekar, JotiraoGovindraoPhule, Ramakris~na' GopalBhandarkar, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar and Swami DayanandSaraswati (whose activity was mainly in North India), such other luminaries who directly addressed the question of internal regeneration of Indian society. They launched the most vigorous critique of their own society, with the aim of bringing it out of its backwardness. As Ratnmohun Roy put it, it was the "thick clouds of superstition" that "hung all over the land" (i.e. Bengal), that worried him most. As a consequence, he believed, polygamy and infanticide were rampant and the position of the Bengali woman was "a tissue of ceaseless oppressions and miseries". Idolatry and priest craft were often held responsible by thinkers like DayanandSaraswati, for the destruction of the yearning for knowledge. He believed that it was institutions such as these that had made Hindus fatalist and inert. The issues that dominated the concerns of the social reformers were primarily related to the status of women in Indian society. Sati, widow re- marriage and the education of women were central issues raised by the reformers. To this end, they re-interpreted tradition, often offered ruthless critiques of traditional practices and even lobbied support with the colonial government for enacting suitable legislations for banning some of the more obnoxious practices like Sati. Needless to say, while the position of women was a matter of central concern, there was another equally important question - that of caste divisions and untouchability that became the focus of critique of many of these reformers. However, you must bear in mind that their approach to

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caste was different from those of reformers like Jotiba Phule and later, Dr Ambedkar. Unlike the latter, they did not seek the emancipation of the lower castes, but their assimilation into the mainstream of Hindu society. Most of the reformers held not only that Hindu society had become degenerate, insulated and deeply divided into hundreds of different communities and castes, but also it had become thereby incapable of forging any kind of 'common will'. Hindu society therefore, had to be reconstituted and reorganized into a single community. Swami Vivekananda or Dayanand Saraswati therefore, sought to reorganize somewhat along the lines of the Christian Church, as Ashis Nandy suggests. If Vivekananda was candid that no other society "puts its foot on the neck of the wretched so mercilessly as does that of India", Dayanand Saraswati sought to redefine caste 'in such a way that it ceased to be determined solely by birth. He sought to include the criterion of individual accomplishment 'in the determination of the caste-status of an individual

3.3.1 Two Intellectual Moves of Reforms:

There are two distinct moves made by the reformers that we must bear in mind. First, their critiques drew very explicitly from the exposure to Western liberal ideas. Too many of them British power was the living proof of the validity and 'invincibility' of those ideas. They were therefore, open admirers of British rule. For instance, as Bal Shastri Jambhekar saw it, a near sixty or seventy years of British rule over Bengal had transformed it beyond recognition. He saw in the place of the "violence, oppression and misrule" of the past, a picture of "security and freedom" where people was able to acquire "a superior knowledge of the Arts and Sciences of Europe". Jambhekar's statement is in fact, fairly representative of the understanding of the early reformers with regard to British rule. It should be remembered that the first generation of reformist thinkers began their intellectual journey in the face of a dual challenge. On the one hand, there was the overwhelming presence of colonial rule that did not simply represent to them a foreign power but also a modern and 'advanced' society that had

made breathtaking advances in the field of ideas - of science and philosophy. To them, it embodied the exhilarating developments of science and modern ways of thinking that a country like India - which to most reformers was essentially Hindu - had to also adopt, if it was to emerge as a free and powerful country in the modern era. On the other hand, there was the continuous challenge thrown before the emerging indigenous intelligentsia by Christian missionaries who mounted a powerful critique of Hinduism and some of its most inhuman practices like Sati, female infanticide, and caste oppression - particularly the abominable practice of untouchability. Questions of widow re-marriage and the education of women therefore were major issues of debate and contention. These formidable challenges required two simultaneous intellectual moves: (a) an acknowledgement of the rot that had set in, in Hindu society and a thorough going critique of it. For this purpose, they welcomed modern liberal ideas and philosophy with open arms. (b) As we saw, in the last unit, they were equally anxious to retain a sense of their own Self. Complete self-negation could not make a people great. So, most of the reformers, drawing on contemporary Orientalist scholarship, claimed a great and ancient past. Even a convinced Anglophile like Rammohan Roy for instance had the occasion to reply to a missionary critic that "the world is indebted to our ancestors for the first dawn of knowledge which sprang up in the East" and that India had nothing to learn from the British "with respect to science, literature and religion." This awe of Western knowledge and achievements and a simultaneous valorization of a hoary Indian past were common features of the reformers of all shades - even though the specific emphasis on different aspects varied from thinker to thinker. For instance, Dayananda was not really influenced, as many others were, by Western thinkers and philosophers. Nevertheless, he too acknowledged the immense progress made by the West. He attributed this progress to the high sense of public duty, energetic temperament and adherence to their own religious principles, rather than to their scientific and philosophical achievements. He therefore drew very different conclusions from his reading of the modernity and progress of the West, which focused on the regeneration of Hindu society through religious reform.

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There are reasons to believe that the early responses to British rule and the so-called Renaissance were a distinctly Hindu phenomenon. For various reasons that we cannot go into in this unit, it was within Hindu society that the first critical engagement with colonial modernity began. Other responses from communities like the Muslims had their own distinct specificities and history and we shall discuss them separately. However, we can identify two immediate reasons for this relatively early effervescence within Hindu society. One immediate reason for the Hindu response was of course, the fact that it was precisely certain practices within Hindu society that colonial rule sought to address. A second reason was that, for specific historical reasons, it was the Hindu elite that had an access to English education and exposure to the radical ideas of the Enlightenment. It will be wrong, however, to present what was essentially a response from within Hindu society as an "Indian renaissance".

There was a time when most scholars would consider the Bengal Renaissance in particular, as an analogue of the European Renaissance. More specifically, the "role of Bengal in India's modern awakening" as historian SushobhanSarkar argued, was seen as analogous to the role played by Italy in the European Renaissance. Later historians like SumitSarltar and Ashok Sen however, reviewed the legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in the 1970s, and came to the conclusion that the portrayal of the intellectual awakening of this period was actually quite flawed. The tendency to see the division between the reformers and their opponents as one between 'progressives' and 'traditionalists' was an oversimplification of the story of the renaissance. They noted the "deeply contradictory" nature of the "break with the past"inaugurated, for instance by Rammohan Roy, which combined with it, strong elements of a Hindu elitist framework. SumitSarkar, in fact, presented a much more modest and complicated picture of the Renaissance thatI had been drawn by earlier historians and scholars. It makes more sense, therefore, to see these responses as Bhikhu Parekh does, as primarily Hindu responses to the colonial encounter. Parekh has suggested that for

these Hindu thinkers, their own self-definition and their attempt to understand what colonial rule was all about, were part of the same exercise: they could not define and make sense of themselves without making sense of colonial rule and vice versa.

In this context, an intense soul-searching marked the activities of the early intelligentsia. The encounter with colonialism and through it, with ideas of equality and liberty, made them aware of some of the inhuman practices still prevalent in Indian society. It was the section that was able to avail of Western education and steeped therefore in Western values that became the harbinger of reforms. Since you will read about the positions of the different thinkers in greater detail in the later units, here we will not go into; the positions of individual thinkers. From the point of view of political and social thought, however, we will identify below some of the broad strands.

3.3.2 Modes of Reformist Thoughts

Bhikhu Parekh has suggested that the arguments of these Hindu reformers relied on one or more of the following four modes of arguments derived from tradition but deployed with a distinct newness to meet the demands of changing times. First, they appealed to scriptures that seemed to them to be more hospitable to their concerns. Vidyasagar for instance relied on the Parasharasmriti, while Rammohun Roy invoked the Upanishads. Second, they invoked what they called *sadharandharma*, which they interpreted to mean the universal principles of morality. Third, they appealed to the idea of a *yugodharma*, or the principles that accord with the needs of the prevailing yuga or epoch. Fourthly, they invoked the idea of *loksangraha*, and "argued that the practice in question had such grave consequences that unless eradicated, it would destroy the cohesion and viability of the Hindu social order." As instances, he mentions that Vidyasagar argued that unmarried widows were turning to prostitution or corrupting their families; K.C.Sen contended that child marriages were endangering the survival of the Hindu

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jati; Dayananda Saraswati believed that image worship was leading to internal sectarian quarrels.

V.R. Mehta has suggested that there are at least two important theoretical issues involved in these intellectual initiatives of the reformers. First, they worked strenuously to change the attitude towards fate and other-worldliness and assert the importance of action in this world. While they continued to assert the importance of the soul and spirituality as a distinctive feature of Hindu Indian thought, they shifted the emphasis to underline the significance of "enterprise in the service of the community." In that sense, they asserted the significance of secular, this-worldly concerns, in the face of the challenges of the modern world. Secondly, the main focus of their enquiry however, remained not the individual but society, community and humanity as a whole. They do not see society as aggregate of individuals in pursuit of their self-interests but as an organic whole. It suggests that this was so for two reasons. Firstly, there was already a strong tradition in India that emphasized the wholeness or oneness of being. Secondly, the individualist idea society was already under attack in much of the nineteenth century thinking in Europe itself. There is a third feature that he also mentions in relation to later social reform thought - the concern with the welfare of the people and the attraction that ideas such as 'socialism' and 'equality' held for thinkers like Vivekananda and Bankimchandra.

Mehta also locates three broadly identifiable sources of the elements that went into the constitution of Renaissance thought. The first, the "culture and temper of European Renaissance and the Reformation", and more particularly the ideas of Bentham, Mill, Carlyle and Coleridge through which came a sense of democracy and rule of law and private enterprise. These ideas become available to the indigenous elite through the advent of English education. The second was the influence of the ideas of German philosophers like Schelling, Fichte, and Herder. This is a current however, that influenced the later-day nationalists more than the early reformers - with their sharp emphasis on the ideas of volk, community, duty and nation, that

were more immediately the concern of nationalists like Bankimchandra, Vivekananda, Bipin Chandra Pal and AurobindoGhosh. The third source identified by Mehta is Indian traditional thought. Here the work of great Orientalist scholars like William Jones and Max Mueller, who had brought ancient Indian culture and learning to light, became the basis for a renewed appeal to the greatness of that past. However, as you will see in subsequent units, it was the first and third of these sources that made up the framework of the reformist thinkers. The concern with 'nation' and a rejection of everything British and colonial was strikingly absent among them.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Discuss the phases of modern Indian Thought.

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2. Explain the relevance of Social Reform Movement in India.

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3.4 THE NATIONALISM

Nationalism' could be said to have made its appearance in the last part of the nineteenth century. In this phase, the concerns and approach of the thinkers change in a very significant way. Here there is a strong concern with the 'freedom of the nation' and an almost irreconcilable hostility towards colonial rule. Unlike the social reformers before them, they placed no trust on the institutions of the colonial state for affecting any reform. On the contrary, they displayed a positive opposition to what they now considered the 'interference' by the colonial state in the 'internal matters' of the nation. Alongside this, there is a parallel move towards privileging of the political struggle over social reforms.

3.4.1 The “Inner” and “Outer” Domains:

Partha Chatterjee observes that there is a disappearance of the 'women's question', so central to the concerns of the reformers, from the agenda of the nationalists towards the end of the nineteenth century. We may also mention here the fact that practically the first major nationalist mobilization took place around the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, where the nationalists argued that this was gross interference in the affairs of the nation and that Hindu society would be robbed of its distinctiveness if this were allowed to pass. As you would know, this Bill was meant to prohibit marital intercourse with girls below the age of twelve. You would also know that in the past, most reformers had in fact solicited colonial legal intervention in the prohibition of certain practices, even when these supposedly intervened within the so-called 'private' sphere. It should also be remembered that this was a controversy that spread far beyond the borders of Bengal and lay behind the final of ways between Gopal Agarkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak - the former supporting the cause of social reform and the latter staunchly opposing it. Chatterjee suggests that this disappearance of women's issues from the agenda of the nationalists had to do with a new framework that had been set in place by then. This framework was characteristic of what Chatterjee calls nationalism's 'moment of departure' and was a fairly elaborate one, where the overriding concern was that of the nation's sovereignty. Here, Chatterjee

argues that nationalism began by making a distinction between two spheres: the 'material' and the 'spiritual', or what is another name for it, the 'outer' and 'inner' sphere. As you saw above, this was a distinction already made by the reformers and even they would, on occasions, claim that they were spiritually superior to the British, even if the latter had made significant material progress. What the nationalists did then, was to carry over this distinction into the formulation of an entirely novel kind. It conceded that as a colonised nation it was subordinate to the colonisers in the material sphere. But there was one domain that the coloniser had no access to: this was the inner domain of culture and spirituality. Here the nation declared itself sovereign. What did this mean? This meant that henceforth, in this inner domain, it would not allow any intervention by the colonial state.' From now on, the questions of social reform would become an 'internal matter' that would be dealt with after the nation attained freedom in the material domain. This did not mean however, that all nationalists were against reforms per se. What it did mean was that these questions would now be dealt with after the power of the state passed into the hands of the nationalists.

There is another aspect of this distinction that Chatterjee does not deal with, but which we can easily see in relation to the question of caste reforms. Soon after the Age of Consent agitation, the nationalists led by Tilak threatened to bum down the pandal of the Indian Social Conference that used to be held simultaneously with the sessions of the Indian National Congress and used to be a forum for discussing questions of social reform. This was the period when the so-called 'moderates' were in the leadership of the Congress. The methods of the moderates like Gokhale and Ranade were in the framework of constitutional reform and very much in line with the position of the early reformers. With the arrival of nationalism, all this changed and soon power within the Indian National Congress passed into the hands of the so-called 'extremists', in particular the Lal-Bal-Pal combine (i.e. LalaLajpatRai, BalGangadharTilak and Bipin Chandra Pal). Unlike the women's question there was resolution here with regard to caste reforms; they were simply deferred "in the larger interests of anticolonial unity". All

issues of social reform were henceforth to be considered "divisive" of national unity. As it happens, there is one more thing that happened here: with the demarcation of the 'inner' sphere as a sphere of sovereignty, many socially conservative ideas could also now easily inhabit the nationalist movement. It is here that we must locate the strident critique of nationalism that was made not only by leaders and thinkers like Jotiba Phule and B.R. Ambedkar but also many Muslim leaders who began to see the emergent nationalism as a purely Hindu affair. As nationalism became a mass movement and since most nationalists saw the incipient nation as primarily Hindu, there was an increasing resort in this phase to a revival of Hindu symbols for mobilization.

However with the entry of Gandhi into the political scene, we can see a shift from this framework to some extent. Although Gandhi himself resorted to the use of Hindu symbols, he was acutely aware of the unfinished agenda of social reform. Here it is interesting however, that while he located himself squarely within the framework of nationalism as defined by his predecessors, and held on to the idea of sovereignty in the inner sphere, he nevertheless made an important departure in terms of his insistence on the question of social reform. Unlike other nationalists, he was not prepared to abandon it altogether and would repeatedly insist upon the need of Hindu society to redeem itself by exorcising untouchability from within itself through 'self-purification'. It is also interesting that while he, himself used the idea of 'Ram Rajya' as a utopia of nationhood; he made untiring efforts to draw the Muslims into the mainstream of the nationalist struggle.

3.4.2 Concerns of Nationalists:

At this stage, it is necessary to point out that it will be wrong to see the divisions between different strands as those between 'progressives' and 'conservatives' or 'modernists' and 'traditionalists'. For, as many scholars have pointed out, even the nationalist who rejected the standpoint of the reformers, were working for a thoroughly modernist agenda. Their

valorisation of Hindu tradition was not a valorisation of existing practices of Hindu religion. In fact, they all wanted, much like the reformers, a modern and reorganised Hindu society that would become the centre-piece of the emerging nation. Being 'Hindu' to them was the sign of national identity rather than a religious one. It is for this reason that, as Bhikhu Parekh notes, these thinkers (whom he calls 'critical traditionalists') were largely preoccupied with themes of statecraft, autonomy of political morality, political realism, will power, and courage - issues that were absent from the discourse of the reformers. And these were all entirely modern concerns. This concern with 'Hinduness' as a marker of national, rather than religious identity was very much there not only in the case of Congress nationalists but also of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the author of the ideology of Hindutva. It is not surprising that Savarkar, who stayed away from the Gandhi-dominated Congress movement, was a thorough modernist and atheist who was opposed to all kinds of superstitions and was greatly influenced by the scientific and philosophic achievements of the West. In fact, Savarkar greatly valued the work done by Ambedkar and unlike Gandhi who was suspicious of his motives; he associated him with his Hindu Mahasabha functions. What is even more interesting is that Savarkar's critique of Gandhi was precisely because of Gandhi's wholesale rejection of modern civilisation, science and technology. In a sense, like Nehru the secular-nationalist, Savarkar's complaint with Gandhi related to his 'irrationality' and 'backward-looking' ideas.

This is precisely the corundum of the nationalist phase that has eluded many scholars and historians. For, it is the proclaimed anti-modernist and sanatani Hindu Gandhi who stood steadfastly for Hindu-Muslim unity as the precondition of India's freedom, while the modernist and secular leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, Purushottamdas Tandon and Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi often seemed to be speaking a language of Hindu nationalism. It was Gandhi who made the Kailashat-Not1 Cooperation movement collaboration of Hindus and Muslims possible. It is true that Gandhi's insistence on a Hindu sanatani identity could not eventually convince either

the Muslims or the Dalit/lower caste leaders about his sincerity in safeguarding their interests. In the case of the Dalits, in fact, the problem was far more complex at one level, for what they wanted was an independent political voice within the new nation and that could not be achieved merely by Gandhian self-purification methods.

3.5 THE TRAJECTORY OF MUSLIM THOUGHT

We have traced the broad contours of nineteenth and twentieth century thought as it emerged from within Hindu society. The history of Muslim society in India is still steeped in a sea of ignorance and misconceptions and a lot more work needs to be done to unearth the different kinds of trends of thought that emerged from within it. We will sketch a broad outline of this below but let it be stated at the outset that the situation is no less complex and variegated and the common myth of a monolithic Muslim society is as ill-founded as that of any other community. There are a range of responses to the changing world that we encounter here too. A case in point for instance, is the role of the Ulama (i.e, religious scholars) of Farangi Mahal, brought out by the pioneering research of Francis Robinson in the mid-1970s. Robinson noted that this tendency, so active in the second decade of the twentieth century, had been consigned to silence, buried under the narratives of both the Indian and the Pakistani nationalisms. He pointed out the crucial role played by Maulana Abd-al Bari of Farangi " Mahal in the pan-Islamic protest, particularly the Khilafat movement and in the foundation of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-I- Hind, which worked, for the most part, in close cooperation with the Indian National Congress and remained opposed to the Muslim League demand for a separate homeland.

With regard to Muslim society in India, we might need to steer clear of two diametrically opposed viewpoints. One, represented by Hindu nationalists, which sees Muslims as an alien body continuously at odds with and insulated from local society and culture, and the other represented by the secular-

nationalists who see merely a syncretic culture that expressed the combined elements of Islamic and Hindu culture. We need to see the process by which what was once an elite Perso-Islamic culture of the ashrafs (the gentry or the nobility), gradually --enters into a dialogue with the local traditions of learning, of the arts and music etc. This is - a process that spans centuries and there are contradictory pulls and trends that are at work throughout. To take just one instance, as Robinson observes, most eighteenth century Sufis believed in the doctrine of *wahdat-al-wujud* (the Unity of Being), which saw all creation as the manifestation of a single Being and thus made it possible for them to search for a common ground with the Hindus. But this teaching of the 13th century Spanish mystic Ibn- al-Arabi, was also challenged by the Naqshbandi order which insisted on more sectarian doctrine of *wahdat-al-shuhud* (or the Unity of Experience) which insisted on the formal teachings of scriptures' as they encapsulated God's revelation. This tendency however, remained far less popular for a very long time. However, we cannot dwell on this prehistory of modern Muslim thought in this unit at any length but it should nevertheless be kept in mind as a background.

3.5.1 The Specificity of Muslim History and Thoughts:

The advent of British rule meant a more immediate loss of political power for the ruling Muslim elite, especially in North India and Bengal. And this contest with British power continued through the century from the Battle of Plassey (1757) to the Great Revolt - the so-called 'Mutiny' - of 1857, which saw a massive participation of Muslims as a whole and, not merely of the elite. As a consequence, in the immediate period following the institution of the power of the British, the relationship between the erstwhile ruling elite and the colonial rulers came to be marked by deep hostility and antagonism. One of the consequences of this hostility was a certain inwardness that came to define Muslim attitude towards the modern. By and large, they seemed to stay away from English education and ideas and institutions associated with

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British power. This, as you can see, is in sharp contrast with the attitude of the early Hindu intelligentsia which embraced the new ideas and institutions with considerably.

One instance of this complexity can be seen in the instance of Delhi College, established in 1825, which began to impart both Oriental and Western education together in the same institution. In 1827, it began the teaching of English. However, after the revolt of 1857, Western education was discontinued and could only be restarted in 1864. Nonetheless, the fact that such an institution was established indicates a certain openness towards Western knowledge, despite the overall experience of hostility vis-à-vis the British. Mujeeb Ashraf, in fact, claims that Delhi college became one of the models for institutions like Jamia Millia A Islamia in the later period. Delhi College produced important nineteenth century reformers and writers like Zakauallah, Muhammad Husain Azad and Nazir Ahmad Nazir

3.5.2 The Reform Initiative:

The crucial turning point in this respect, however, is the emergence of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-99) who is known to be the harbinger of liberalism and modernity in Muslim society. He opposed the Great Revolt as he believed that not only had British rule come to stay but also that there was much to be gained by imbibing modern ideas from its contact. It is well known that in order to propagate modern scientific knowledge, he established his Mahommedan Anglo-Oriental College, which in due course, became the Aligarh Muslim University. In 1870, after his return from a trip to England, he began publishing his Urdu journal, Tahzib-ul- Ikhlaq, which exhorted Muslims to reform their religious ideas. Sir Syed's basic intellectual move was to argue that Islam was not incompatible with modern ideas and values. For this reason, though he was not a religious scholar by training, his insistence on reform took recourse to a well established method of ijtehad that calls for the use of independent reasoning in order to keep up

with changing times. Theologically, therefore he took it upon himself to distinguish the essence of Islam from the inessential parts, which he described as 'social customs and practices' that had attached to it and which he argued, had lost relevance in the modern world. Among these, for instance was the Islamic prohibition on charging interest. In doing so, he began to insist on the Quran as the sole legitimate source of Islam. Alongside the Quran, he proclaimed the importance of Reason and Nature, in his attempt to combat the 'overgrowth' of superstition and 'unreasonableness' that was attached to the religion over the centuries. It was a move, you can see, that was clearly parallel to the kind of move made by the Hindu reformers discussed above in relation to their own society. There was undoubtedly a large body of support for his project among the educated Muslims as he managed to raise enough money by contributions for setting up the Aligarh College.

Among the other important figures associated with Syed Ahmad Khan's reform moves were those of Sayyid Mahdi Ali, better known as Muhsin-ul-Mulk and Maulana Shibli Numani. Muhsin-ul-Mulk differed from Syed Ahmad Khan insofar as he sought to win over the Muslim clergy to their side and therefore found it necessary to dialogue with them in terms of Islamic principles. Shibli Numani is considered, along with poets Altaf Husayn Hali and Mohammed Iqbal as one of the key literary figures of modern Muslim society in India. A founder of modern literary criticism in the vernacular language, he also had a reputation as a great poet and historian of Islam. While Shibli supported the efforts of the Aligarh school, he was almost entirely rooted in the vernacular world and the world of Islam. His ambition was to reform Islam from within. According to Ayesha Jalal, he is a more complex figure as he eludes classification either as a 'liberal moderniser' or as an 'anti-modern traditionalist. Despite his allegiance to the reformist programme he continued to work within the world of Islamic learning. In later years he took on a different project - that of trying to bridge the gulf between the Aligarh modernisers and the 'traditionalists' represented by the Ulama of Deoband and Farangi Mahal. In

his later years he also became a critic of Syed Ahmad Khan, whom he held responsible for stunting the growth of political consciousness among the Muslims. Shibli was among those important voices who remained a strong critic of the Muslim League, which he saw as a forum of upper class, landlord elements of North India, and believed that the interests of the Muslims would be better served by overcoming its 'minority complex' and making common cause with the Congress.

3.5.3 The Anti-Imperialist Currents:

The Aligarh school came under fierce attack from the more theologically inclined Muslims – the learned Ulama. The conflict between the Aligarh school and the Ulama has often been seen as the conflict between the 'modernisers' and the 'traditionalists' but this is in some sense an oversimplification. The Ulama's main problem with Syed Ahmad seems to have been with what they considered his legislation of the British - his Angreziyat or Englishness. There was here something parallel to what we witnessed in the case of the nationalists departure from the social reformers, insofar as the Ulama saw his Angreziyat as being too collaborationist. It is interesting therefore that his most strident critics were also those who were more clearly anti-imperialist and sought to ally with the nationalist movement for liberation from the British rule. Among the most scathing of his critics was the Persian scholar Jamaluddin-al-Afghani who was also an advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity against the British. Afghani's strident anticolonialism combined with a deeply religious Islamic universalism, says Ayesha Jalal, found a receptive audience among many Muslims put off by Syed Ahmad Khan's loyalism vis-a-vis the British.

Into the twentieth century, other important figures like the poet-philosopher Mohammed Iqbal, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi came to the fore. By the time nationalism emerged as a strong mass force and it was becoming clear that it was increasingly being dominated by Hindu ethos, Muslim politics and thought

went through interesting transformations. Mohammed Iqbal was, at one level, one of the great modernisers of Islam, who infused a sense of action and celebration of individual freedom in this world, into the religion, He was supremely concerned with combating the fatalism, contemplation and resignation that is normally associated with pre-modern religions and strove hard to articulate a notion of the Self (khudi) that would take its destiny into its own hands. As W.C. Smith put it, to that end he even transformed the notion of a transcendent God into an immanent one - into a God that lives here, in this world, arguing that the will of God is not something that comes from without but surges within the Self, to be absorbed and acted upon, In doing this, he was actually making a sharp critique of Islam as it was practiced by the mullahs. While Iqbal imbibed much from European philosophy - especially Nietzsche and Bergson - he was equally contentious of those who thought they could become modern by simply aping the West. Here again, much like the Hindu thought we discussed earlier, we can see a clear critique in his thought, of the "materialistic" and "irreligious" nature of Western thought. It is interesting too, that like much of modern Hindu thought, he too sought to extricate science from his overall attack on the West, arguing that, while repudiating the latter, the East should adopt the former. It is also interesting that like all reformers from Syed Allmad Khan to Ameer Ali, he also took recourse to ijtehad. However, he also qualified the recourse to ijtehad, by arguing that in times of crisis of Islam, such as was his time, this should be resorted to with circumspection.

It is also important to remember that while being a votary of Islamic universalism and a trenchant critic of the western idea of territorial nationalism. Here we will not go into the complex political process by which Iqbal, inveterate enemy of territorial nationalism finally through his lot with the movement for Pakistan.

The figure of MaulanaAbulKalamAzad represents the more supposedly 'traditionalist' Muslims, who like other believers in Islamic universalism, are often seen as a paradox by most scholars. For, like the other traditionalists

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like the Ulama of Deoband, he was a strong believer in Islamic universalism, that is, the idea of a worldwide Islamic ummah, even while remaining as one of the most steadfast supporters of a composite Indian nationalism. This is a paradox that awaits greater research, which alone will explain why the so-called traditionalist and theologically inclined Muslims found it easier to make common cause with the Hindu-dominated Congress. This stands in sharp contrast to the position of someone like Jinnah who was a liberal and secular politician but eventually became the driving force for the struggle for Pakistan. We shall not deal any further here with the thought of individual thinkers whom you will read about in greater detail in the later unit.

Check Your Progress

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Explain the different concerns of Nationalism in India.

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2. Discuss various aspects of Muslim in India.

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3.6 THE REVOLT OF THE LOWER ORDERS

The important point that needs to be registered here in relation to the work and thought of lower caste leaders like Jotirao Phule, EVR Ramaswarny Naicker - also known as Periyar - and B.R. Ambedkar is that it differed from

the trends identified in the case of both Hindu and Muslim thought in two crucial ways. Firstly, at no point did these thinkers give up the social reform agenda and in fact their consistent critique of nationalism remained linked to this question. Secondly, they did not suffer from the deep ambivalence with regard to the West that marked the thought of reformers and nationalists alike in the case of the Hindu thinkers or of Shibli Numani, Muhsin-ul-Mulk and Iqbal in the case of the Muslims. You will read about the respective thoughts of these figures later but for now we will briefly outline some of the reasons for this stark difference.

It is important to note in this context, that to most leaders of the lower castes, particularly the Dalits, the notion of a putative Hindu community simply did not carry any positive significance. To them, the memories of past and continuing humiliation and degradation through practices like untouchability and violent exclusion from society as such, constituted their over-riding experience that framed all their responses. In their perception, therefore, there was something insincere in the efforts of even the reformers who merely wanted the assimilation of lower castes into mainstream Hindu society without disturbing the power structure in anyway.

Phule's main concern therefore, is with an all-out attack on Hinduism and caste - where he sees caste as central to the existence of the former. In fact to most of the radical lower caste 'thinkers, Hinduism is merely another name for Brahmanism and they prefer to it by that name. Therefore Phule's main concern therefore, is with an all-out attack on Hinduism and caste - where he sees caste as central to the existence of the former. In fact to most of the radical lower caste thinkers, Hinduism is merely another name for Brahmanism and they prefer to refer to it by that name. Therefore Phule, like Periyar after him, seeks to unite all the non- Brahmins or *shudra-atishuhns* against the power of the Brahmins. It is also necessary to note that in this struggle almost all the radical lower caste leaders give special importance to the question of women's education and emancipation. Phule therefore established the first school for shudra-atishudra girls in 1848, at great risk;

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for he knew that it would invite the wrath of the upper castes. Later he also established a school for girls of all castes.

In a way, education was the key to Dalit or in the case of Periyar, Non-Brahman liberation, for it was their exclusion from the arena of knowledge that was seen as the main mechanism of their oppression. In the new, modern world, the possibilities half opened out for the lower castes to take their destiny into their own hands. For the first time, their exclusion was significantly broken down, with the arrival of colonialism, which not only opened the doors of education to them, but also opened up secular public spaces where they could move about without fear of upper caste retribution. This being the case, the Dalit and Shudra leaders were less concerned with marking their difference from the 'irreligious' and 'materialistic' West and more directly concerned with breaking down the chains of bondage that had shackled them for centuries. To them colonial rule & if anything, appeared as their biggest benefactor. It is precisely for this reason that they saw the continuation of the social reform agenda as being of critical significance for the emancipation of the Dalits/Shudras. It is not as if they had great faith in the social reform of the upper caste, bhadra-dokre-formiers of the nineteenth century but the abandoning of even that limited agenda by nationalism was something that Ambedkar had occasion to recall bitterly in his writings and speeches. He especially recalled the role of Tilak and his followers in stopping the sessions of the Social Conference in the late 1890s.

It is significant that even when the focus of Dalit and lower caste thinkers shifted to the explicitly political terrain - witnessed for instance in the work of Periyar and Ambedkar, their! Central preoccupations remained with the structure of the power within the emergent nation: who would wield power within an independent India? What would be the position of the Dalits in the new dispensation? And central to this structure of power was the question of 'social reform' - not in the vague sense of 'uplift' of the untouchables that Gandhi was seeking to do, without of course disturbing the power of the upper caste elite - but in the more radical sense given to it by Phule. These

thinkers and leaders also realized that if the British were to leave without the question of power being settled, they would be yoked into slavery once again. It is from this fear that the main plank of Ambedkar's and Periyar's political life emerged: the vexed question of 'safeguards' or 'communal'proportional representation' as it was also called. The radical lower caste leaders realized that independence would come, sooner or later; thus it was necessary to stake a claim for power by bargaining hard on the question of safeguards, while the British were still here. It is this battle that Ambedkar was forced to partially lose thanks to Gandhi's emotional blackmail - his notorious fast-unto-death and the eventual Poona Pact.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Explain the role of the Political Leadership to reform Indian Society led by lower order.

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3.7 LET US SUM UP

We have seen that there are extremely complex layers to what we refer as "modern Indian political thought"; that in fact there is no single body of thought nor a single set of themes that define them. All of them have different histories and arise from different sets of experiences. Nevertheless, we can identify, at least among the Hindu and Muslim thinkers, a deep engagement with colonial modernity, leading to two distinct trends: (a) a sharp critique ' of the existing state of Hindu or Muslim society and an effort to rejuvenate it by offering a different reading of tradition and canonical

religious texts in most cases. (b) an effort to emulate the West in its scientific and philosophical advances, while at the same time offering a critique of what is seen to be crass materialism and ir-religiosity of its civilization. We see a deep ambivalence that marks the efforts of reformers and nationalists alike, in this respect. We can also see, how with the coming of nationalism on the political stage, the reform agenda gives way to the political struggle for sovereignty among the Hindus. We have also seen that responses among the Muslims in this phase are much more layered and complex. Finally, we saw the entirely different attitude of the radical leaders of the lower castes - both with regard to colonialism and the West on the one hand and community, nation and religion on the other.

3.8 KEY WORDS

Hindu Renaissance: Hindu renaissance is a kind of cultural nationalism that may once again pitch fork India to its pristine glory of the past.

Rammohun Roy: Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a prominent Indian social reformer and the founder of the Brahma Samaj.

Sadharandharma: Sadharan dharma refers to common duties not attached to one stage of life or professional role in Hindu society.

Sanatani: Sanatani is a term used within Hinduism to describe denominations that adhere to what is sometimes known as orthodox Hinduism.

Jamiat-ul-Ulema-I- Hind: This is one of the leading organizations of Islamic scholars belonging to the Deobandi school of thought in India

3.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the phases of modern Indian Thought.
2. Explain the relevance of Social Reform Movement in India

3. Explain the different concerns of Nationalism in India.
4. Discuss various aspects of Muslim in India.
5. Explain the role of the Political Leadership to reform Indian Society led by lower order.

3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Appadorai, A., 1992: Indian Political Thinking Through the Ages, Khanna Pub.: New Delhi.

B. A. Dar, A Study of Iqbal's Philosophy.

3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 3.2
- 2) See the sub-section 3.3

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See the sub-section 3.4
- 2) See the sub-section 3.5

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See the sub-section 3.6

UNIT-4: EARLY NATIONALIST RESPONCE

STRUCTURE

- 4.0 Objective
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Nationalism
- 4.3 Early, Nationalist Response
 - 4.3.1 Thoughts of Rammohan Roy
 - 4.3.2 Bankim's Ideas in Shaping Nationalism
 - 4.3.3 Religion - Political Ideas of Dayanand Saraswati
 - 4.3.4 JyotibaPhule: A Social Revolutionary
- 4.4 Nationalist Response : A Critical Appraise
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Questions for Review
- 4.8 Suggested Readings and References
- 4.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain to early Indian nationalist response.
- Explain to religion political thoughts and ideas.
- Explain to Rammohan and others ideas and thoughts.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

There are two different phases of Indian nationalism. The first one continues till the formation of the Indian NationalCongress in 1885 whereas nationalism, in its second phase, was articulated through popular mobilizations around various kindsof anti-imperial ideologies. Of all the

competing ideologies, Gandhian non-violence' was perhaps the most popular ideology in organizing anti-imperial movements in India. Unlike the second phase when the national intervention was primarily political, the capture of state power, the first phase was largely dominated by the zeal of reform that appeared to have brought together various individuals with more or less same ideological agenda. In these kinds of activities, individuals played decisive roles in sustaining the zeal of those who clustered around them. What inspired them was perhaps the idea of European Enlightenment that traveled to India simultaneously with colonialism. Drawn on the philosophy of Enlightenment, neither was the British colonialism condemned nor were there attempts to expose its devastating impact on India's socio-political map in the long run. In other words, colonialism was hailed for its assumed role in radically altering the archaic socio-political networks sustaining the feudal order. It is possible to argue that colonialism in this phase did not become as ruthless as it was later. And, in contrast with the past rulers, the British administration under the aegis of the East India Company seemed to have appreciated social reforms either as a matter of faith in the philosophy of Enlightenment or as a strategy to infuse the Indian social reality with the values on which it drew its sustenance. With this background in view, this unit will focus on the early nationalist response 'to the British rule that was largely appreciated in comparison with the socio-political nature of the past rules. Not only will there be an argument seeking to explain the uncritical endorsement of the British rule by the socially radical thinkers, but there will also be an attempt to focus on the changing nature of colonialism that also had a noticeable impact on their conceptualization of the British rule in India that, became coterminous with exploitation very soon.

4.2 NATIONALISM

The study of nationalism is important to analyse world politics today, but to understand the notion of nationalism, one must look into the idea of a nation. The concept of a nation can be traced back to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. One must remember that even prior to the treaty; political boundaries

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were being redefined throughout the European Continent. After the treaty, the concept of sovereignty was introduced when Protestantism was officially recognised as a different religion from Catholicism [4]. Thus, in most contexts, a “nation is a community of people that can be organised around the idea of selfdetermination” [5]. Keeping this particular idea of nation in mind, nationalism can be defined as either devotion (political or emotional) to one’s nation or as a policy of national independence [6]. Therefore, a nation, or the idea of nation must exist in order for a national identity to be founded. To better ality, one can also use Anderson’s ideas of a nation which is an ‘imagined political community’ [7]. Thus is if a nation is considered as something imaginative, the very elements that are required for it to exist can be a myth. Even if a community does not share a common language, religion or ethnicity, a nation is formed on the basis of a strong formed identity. Anderson used the term ‘imagined’ because members of even the smallest nations will not know everyone and yet they will be aware of their image of the entire communion. From an anthropological perspective, Max Weber speaks about ethnic groups that are formed on the belief of common descent. He discusses that there is a sense of affinity to a particular nation which relies on community living [8]. To connect the idea of community living to the notions of state formation and nationalism, it is necessary to discuss Michael Hechter’s theory of nationalism. According to him, nationalism constitutes of several political activities whose aim is to create political boundaries of the nation that are culturally ‘distinctive collectivity aspiring towards self-governance’ [9]. While studying Nationalism, it is equally important to distinguish between civic and ethnic ties of nations. According to Stephan Shulman, the most primary difference between the Western and the Eastern European Countries, the former developed as civic nations while the latter as ethnic nations [10]. While ethnic nations can be characterised by extending kinship principle to the imagined community of the nation, the former can be defined by common political values and loyalties shared by the population of a sovereign territory [11]. To elaborate, the famous Czech Scholar Hans Kohn in his book, argued that nationalism in the West, primarily in countries like France

and England were primarily political. He discussed that these ideas of nation and nationalism were inspired by enlightenment ideas of liberty and equality. Nationalism in the western context struggled against dynastic rule and equated citizenship with membership in the nation. Hence, in this model, the state usually precedes the creation and development of the nation [12]. On the other hand, in the Eastern European and in the colonial context, where these regions were comparatively backward, the notion of nationalism arose with little or no cultural and ethnic boundaries. (The vast Ottoman empire for example) Here, Kohn argues that nationalism had to struggle to “redraw political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands” [12]. Considering this statement, one could say that nations in the East were created on the basis of volk (people).

than the idea of a citizenship. In the Indian context, this idea can be consolidated with the idea of creating an “Akhand Bharat” that can literally translated to undivided India. This notion revolved around reuniting the ancient Indian civilisation by fighting the British. In the modern scenario, many right wing organisations including several factions of the ruling Party, Bhartiya Janata Party (Indian People’s Party) has staunch advocates of this idea which propagates the unison of present day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Having briefly examined the ideas of nation and nationalism, one must remember that there are several ways in which nationalism can manifest itself. This essay will explore cultural nationalism in India with the help of two case studies. Before proceeding further, it is important to study the idea of sub-nationalism which will be discussed in the next section.

4.3 EARLY NATIONALIST RESPONSE

Before at Bankim on a detailed analysis of the individual thinkers, it would be appropriate to identify the sources from which they seemed to have derived their ideas in the context of an incipient colonial rule. As mentioned earlier, the firstformidable influence was definitely the Enlightenment

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philosophy that significantly influenced the famous 1832 Macaulay's minutes.

Seeking to organize Indian society in a typical Western mould, Macaulay argued for an introduction of English education and British jurisprudence for their role in radically altering the feudal basis of Indian society. What was in his views was the assumption that the liberal values of the British variety would definitely contribute to the required social transformation in India. So, the arrival of the British in India was a boon in disguise. Not only did colonialism introduce Indians to Western liberalism but it also exposed them to the socially and politically progressive ideas of Bentham, Mill, Carlyle and Coleridge, which drew attention to a qualitatively different mode of thinking on issues of contemporary relevance. The second equally important influence was the ideas of German philosophers, Schelling, Fichte, Kant and Herder. These ideas gained ground as the intellectual challenge against the British rule acquired momentum. In fact, there are clear traces of German ideas in Bankim's writings. Unlike Ram Mohan Roy whose historical mission was to combat the social evils in the form of inhuman customs, including the caste, Bankim sought to champion the goal of freedom by drawing upon the German philosophy and Hindu past. Conceptually, the notions of *volk*, community and nation seemed to have inspired the early nationalists, including Bankim presumably because they contributed to homogeneity despite differences in the context of foreign rule. So, the primary concern of the early nationalists was not uniform: for some, the introduction of the ideas of European Enlightenment was unwarranted simply because that would destroy the very basis of civilization of India 'that drew, in a considerable way, on the Hindu past; while there are others who adopted a very favorable stance vis-a-vis the English rule and its obvious social consequences. The third significant influence in the early phase of Indian nationalism was the French revolution and its message for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Ram Mohan was swayed by the ideas that inspired the French revolution. His writings and deeds, Roy launched a vigorous attack on the archaic social mores dividing India along caste and religious cleavages. For him, the priority was to create a society free from

decadent feudal values that simply stood in the way of attaining the goal of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The final source is of course the traditional Indian thought that was interpreted in the context of colonial rule. Not only were there writings of William Jones and Max Muller on India's rich cultural traditions, there were contributions from the renaissance thinkers, including Vivekananda, that provided the basis for redefining India's past glossing largely the phase of Muslim rule in India. Inspired by the message of Bhagavad Gita, the renaissance thinkers supported the philosophy of action in the service of the motherland. What they tried to argue was the idea that successes or failures were not as important as the performance of one's duty with 'the purest of motives'. Their attack on fatalism in Hinduism and Buddhist religion clearly shows how realistic they were in conceptualizing the outcome of human action. For then, life could be transformed in this world by individuals: believing in the philosophy of action. So, it was not surprising that both Vivekananda and Dayananda insisted on karma, or service to the humanity, as the best possible way of justifying one's existence as human beings.

The above discussion of sources is very useful in underlining the importance of intellectual threads in shaping the nationalist ideas of the early nationalist thinkers like Rammohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Dayananda Saraswati and Jotirao Phule. It should also be mentioned here that while seeking to articulate an alternative nationalist vision, the early nationalists were influenced by the processes of socio-economic and political churning of a particular phase of British colonialism when political articulation of freedom of the Gandhian era was a distant goal.

Check Your Progress

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

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1. What was the basic argument in the early nationalist response for rejuvenating the moribund Hindu society?

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4.3.1 Thoughts Of Rammohan Roy

Rammohan Roy was a social thinker par excellence. His role in doing away with state among the orthodox Brahmins was historical. By founding BrahmanSamaj, Roy sought to articulate his belief in the Islamic notion of 'one god'. In his conceptualization, social reform should precede political reform for the former laid the foundation for liberty in the political sense. Given his priority, Roy did not appear to have paid adequate attention to his political ideas. Although he despised colonialism, he appeared to have endorsed the British rule presumably because of its historical role in combating the prevalent feudal forces. Not only was the British rule superior, at least, culturally than the erstwhile feudal rulers, it would also contribute to a different India by injecting the values it represented. His admiration for the British rule was based on his faith in its role in radically altering traditional mental make-up of the Hindus. The continued British rule, he further added, would eventually lead to the establishment of democratic institutions as in Great Britain. Like any other liberals, Roy also felt that the uncritical acceptance of British liberal values was probably the best possible means of creating democratic institutions in India. In other words, he appreciated the British rule as 'a boon in disguise' because it would eventually transplant democratic governance in India. The other area for which the role of Rammohan was decisive was the articulation of demand for the freedom of press. Along with his colleague, Dwarkanath Tagore, he submitted a petition to the Privy Council for the freedom of press, which he justified as essential for democratic functioning of the government. Not only would the freedom of press provide a device for

ventilation of grievances it would also enable the government to adopt steps for their redressal before they caused damage to the administration. Viewed in the liberal mold, this was a remarkable step in that context for two reasons: (a) the demand for freedom of press was a significant development in the growing, though limited, democratization among the indigenous elite in India; and (b) the idea of press freedom, if sanctioned, would act as 'a safety valve' for the colonial ruler because of the exposition of grievances in the public domain.

Rammohan Roy had played a progressive role in a particular historical context. While conceptualising his historical role, Roy appeared to have privileged his experience of British colonialism over its immediate feudal past. By undermining the obvious devastating impact of foreign rule on Indian society, politics and economy, he also clearly supported one system of administration over the other rather consciously simply because of his uncritical faith in British Enlightenment in significantly transforming the prevalent Indian mindsets. One may find it difficult to digest his invitation to the British. Planters in India despite their brutalities

and ruthlessness vis-A-vis the Indian peasants if discussed in isolation. But this was perfectly rationalised if one is drawn to his argument justifying the continuity of the empire on the basis of its economic strength. The more the planters acquire 'wealth', argued Roy; the better would be their defense for continuity in India. Given his historical role, it would not be wrong to argue that Ram Mohan Roy discharged his responsibility in tune with the historical requirement of his role in the particular context of India's growth as a distinct socio-political unit. It would therefore be historically inaccurate to identify him as pro-imperial thinker simply because nationalism did not acquire the characteristic of the later period. His ideas -whether supporting the British or criticizing the past rulers - were both historically conditioned and textured; he authored his historical role in the best possible way reflecting the dilemma of the period and the aspiration of those groping for an alternative in the social and political doldrums of incipient colonialism.

ROLE OF RAJA RAMMOHAN ROY: Raja Ram Mohan Roy was one of the first Indian leaders to start an agitation for political reforms. He fought for the freedom of the press, trial by jury, the separation of the executive and the judiciary, appointment of Indians to higher offices, protection of the ryots from Zamindari oppression, and development of trade and industries. He based his entire public activity on the hope that a period of British rule would be followed by the emergence of a free India. He took keen interest in international affairs and everywhere he supported the cause of liberty, democracy and nationalism. Rammohan's tradition was carried on after his death by the radical Bengali youth known as the Derozians, so named after their famous Anglo-Indian teacher Henry Vivian Derozio. Derozio inspired his pupils with a fierce love of the liberty and patriotism based on the ideas of the French Revolution, Tom Paine, and Jeremy Bentham. The Derozians started numerous public associations to discuss modern ideas and their application to India and a large number of newspapers and journals to propagate the ideas. Thus the germs of modern political consciousness were sown in the 1820s and 1903s by Ram Mohan Roy and Derozians.

4.3.2 Bankim's Ideas in Shaping Nationalism

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838-94) was probably the first systematic expounder in India of the idea of nationalizing. His unique contribution lay in conceptualizing nationalism in indigenous terms. In opposition to the Muslim rule, Bankim elaborated the idea by drawing upon the Bhagavad Gita that was widely translated in Bengali in the nineteenth century. In his translated version of Gita, what Bankim provided was a reinterpretation in the light of Western knowledge to make the Gita more suitable reading for the Western-educated intelligentsia in the newly emerged context of the nationalist opposition to the British rule. An entirely new Gita emerged reflecting the concerns of those seeking to provide a national alternative to foreign rule.

What was primary in Bankim's thought was his concern for national solidarity for on it depended the growth of the Hindu society. National solidarity is conceivable, as Bankim argued, only when there is a change in one's attitude in the following two ways: first, the conviction that what is good for every Hindu is good for me and my views, beliefs and actions must be consistent with those of other members of the Hindu society. And, secondly, one should inculcate a single-minded devotion to the nation and its interests. This was an idea that Bankim nurtured in all his novels and other writings because he believed that without care and love for the nation (and implicitly for the country) one simply failed to justify one's existence as a unit in a cohesive whole, called nation. Here lies an important theoretical point. Unlike typical liberals, Bankim was in favour of community and the role of the individual was explained in terms of what was good for the former. He admitted that the contact with the British enabled the Hindu society to learn its weaknesses not in terms of physical strength but in terms of what he defined as 'culture'. Hindus lack the culture simply because they are so diverse, separated by language, race, and religion and so on, and it would not be possible for them to create conditions for national solidarity unless this divisive content of Hindus completely disappeared.

From the notion of national solidarity, Bankim now delved into *anushilan* or his concept of practice. Elaborating this notion in his 1888 essay entitled 'The Theory of Religion', Bankim defined it as 'a system of culture', more complete and more perfect than the Western concept of culture, articulated by the Western thinkers like Comte and Mathew Arnold. Critical of the agnostic Western view of practice, *anushilan* was based on 'bhakti' (devotion) that implied a combination of 'knowledge and duty'. In practical terms, *anushilan* means that it simultaneously imparts knowledge of what is good for the community and what the community is supposed to do under specific circumstances. *Anushilan* implies duty that is the performance of an act for which one should not expect reward. In other words, the community is duty-bound to perform certain acts not out of choice but out of devotion

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to a cause or a goal. From this, he derived the idea of duty towards the nation. There was no choice and the community had to work for 'the defence of the nation' that was completely crippled due to specific historical circumstances. For Bankim, this selfless and non-possessive notion of devotion lay at the foundation of dharma or religion.

By underlining the importance of dharma in national solidarity, Bankim sought to create conditions for a separate identity for the Hindu community. Not only was it necessary for a subject nation, it was also most appropriate for building a strong community on the basis of its inherent cultural strength and not merely by imitating the West. Superior in the domain of sciences and industry, the West represented a culture that succeeded in conquering the East, Hence he argued for emulating the West in the domain of material culture. But in the domain of spiritual culture, the East was certainly superior and hence should not be bypassed. Combining these two ideas, Bankim thus suggested that the West could be emulated in the domain in which it was superior while internalizing the spiritual distinctiveness of the East. So, in the construction of a national identity, Bankim does not appear to be entirely xenophobic but a creative ideologue of the early nationalist movement appreciating the strength and weakness of both east and west simultaneously. In other words, the difference-seeking project of Bankim constitutes what ParthaChatterjee defines as 'the moment of departure' in our national thought.

4.3.3 Religion - Political Ideas of Dayanand Saraswat

While Bankim had a clear political message for the nation that lacked solidarity, Dayananda (1825-83) who founded the AryaSamaj had concerns similar to those of Rammohan. Primarily a social reformer, the latter believed that the success of the British in subjugating the Hindu society was largely due to its divisive nature and also the failure in realizing its strength. If Rammohan drew upon Upanishads, Bankim upon the Gita, Dayanand

while articulating his nationalist response, was inspired by Vedas. The other contrasting point that marked Dayananda off from the rest lies in the utter absence of the influence of European culture and thought on him. Rammohan was fascinated by European enlightenment and his response was articulated accordingly. The influence of the positivist and utilitarian philosophy was evident in Banlrcimsconceptualisation of national solidarity. Unlike them, Dayananda found the Vedic messages as most appropriate for inspiring the moribund nation, plagued by several 'ills' that could easily be cured. Seeking to construct a strong Hindu society, Dayananda was strikingly different from other early nationalists in two specific ways: \$rst, his response :was essentially based on a conceptualization that is absolutely indigenous in nature presumably 'because he was not exposed to the Western ideas. Unique in his approach, Dayananda ' therefore interrogated the processes of history in a language that added a new dimension to the early nationalist response. Secondly, his response was also an offshoot of a creative dialogue with the traditional scriptures, especially the Vedas - which appeared to have influenced the later Extremist leadership for its appeal to distinct civilizational characteristics of India. Unlike those who were drawn to Western liberal ideas, Dayananda was probably the only thinker of his generation to have begun a debate on the relative importance of the ancient scriptures in inspiring a nation that was divided on innumerable counts.

Two ideas stand out in Dayailanda's The SatyarthPrakush (Light of Truth) that was "published in 1875. First, the idea of God as an active agent of creation appeared to have appealed him most. He asserted that the empirical world was no illusion but had an independent and objective existence. His refutation of *advaita* and *nirgunabrahman* separated him from Rammohan and Vivekananda as his denial of sakara and avatara distinguished him from Bankim and Ramakrishna. On this basis, he further argued that human action was an index of punishment and reward by God. Here a theoretical effort was made by Dayananda to assess individual acts in terms of certain well-defined norms of behavior in the name of God. This was what inspired

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Aurobindo who found in this contention a clearly-argued theoretical statement not only for analyzing Thurnau behavior at a critical juncture of history but also for mobilising a vanquished nation for a goal that was to be rewarded by God. In other words, by redefining God in a creative manner, Dayananda actually articulated the Old Testament God of justice and not New Testament God of love. Underling the importance of Divine in shaping human action, the AryaSamaj founder was perhaps trying to play on the religious sentiments for meaningful social activities. This was, in his views, the basic requirement for a nation to grow and prosper.

The second important idea that stems from The SatyarthPrakush is actually a comment on the divisive nature of Hindu society. According to him, the British victory in India was largely due to 'our own failings'. As he mentioned, 'it is only when brothers fight among themselves that an outsider poses as an arbiter'. Furthermore, the Hindu society was inherently crippled due to practices like child marriage, carnal gratification that clearly defied the Vedas and the principles it stood for. In his words, what caused an irreparable damage to our society was untruthfulness and neglect of Vedas'. Hence the first task was to grasp the substance of Vedas where lay the distinctiveness of the Hindus as a race. No attack on the British' would succeed till this was accomplished to our satisfaction. This was probably the reason why the AryaSamaj was not allowed to involve in direct political campaign against the British.

These ideas were unique given their roots in Hindu scriptures. Here lies the historical role of Dayananda who explored the Vedas primarily to inculcate a sense of identity among the Hindus who, so far, remained highly fractured and were unable to resist the foreign rule. In other words, he turned to the Vedas to discover a 'pure' Hinduism with which to confront the corruption of Hinduism in the present. He felt that the Vedas contained Hindu beliefs in their most ancient and pure form showing God to be just and infinite creator. He called for the purging of the degenerate practices of Hindus in the present. He was critical of the present divisive caste system that had

distorted the Vedic practices since social hierarchies of Vedic society was based on merit, ability and temperament of the individual, rather than on his birth.

Similarly, while conceptualising God as a creative agency and not solely a spiritual being, he purposely redefined the Vedic notion of God to rejuvenate a moribund nation that appeared to have lost its vigour and zeal. By defending reward and punishment as inevitable for good ' and bad 'deeds' respectively, Dayananda probably sought to eradicate 'the evils', impeding the growth of the Hindu society.

4.3.4 Jyotiba Phule: A Social Revolutionary

Jotirao Phule, like Dayananda, had the desire for a form of social organization that would reflect the merits and aptitudes of the individual, rather than enforcing birth as the basis both for occupation and for religious status. The play, *Tritya Ratna* (The Third Eye), which he published in 1855 is a powerful exposition of his ideology. The play is about the exploitation of an ignorant and superstitious peasant couple by a cunning Brahmin priest and their subsequent enlightenment by a Christian missionary.

What historical role did Phule Play? Similar to the early nationalists, the principal message that he conveyed was concerned with his model of a society free from Brahminic exploitation. For him, the British rule was a boon in disguise for having struck at the foundation of the caste hegemony of the Brahmins. Presumably because of this dimension of the foreign rule, Phule appeared to have underplayed the exploitative nature of colonialism. It was also possible that Phule accorded top priority to his mission of securing a respectful place of the *shudra* (untouchable) in the society in which the Brahmins held the hegemony. Phule was not so much against the Hindu scriptures, as he was against the values and ideas sustaining the prevalent Hindu system. In other words, by deliberately articulating his , opposition to

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Brahminical discourse and not Hinduism as such, Phule was perhaps trying to distance from the bandwagon against Hinduism. In his view, Hinduism is rooted in Shrutis (Vedas) and the Smritis and Brahmins distorted them to rationalise their hegemony. Similarly, the interpretation that the Varna system (the division of society into four different clusters) was god-given and hence unassailable was derived from 'the selfish desire' of the Brahmins. To perpetuate their domination on the rest of the society. So, not only did he reject the Hindu system and its theoretical literature altogether but also argued, rather persuasively, against the dichotomous nature of the Hindu society nurturing Brahminic hegemony over the shudras. This was an arrangement in which, he argued further, members of the privileged segment of the society, viz., the Brahmins, tended to justify their hegemony by reference to the religious tracts and distorted practices. On the basis of his criticism of Hindu theology, he challenged the notion of avatara as an agency of change when the society was completely demoralised. In the Hindu conceptualisation of avatara, Phule found another design, quoted in a religiously-justified distorted version of 'good' and 'bad' to avoid friction in Hindu society. Drawn on his mission to create an equitable order striking at the roots of the dichotomous Hindu society, he never reconciled himself to the Brahminical gods and beliefs sustaining them. In other words, by challenging the Brahminical exposition of Hinduism from the shudras perspective, Phule successfully articulated an alternative discourse of history and its unfolding.

For Phule, literacy and especially English education, was most useful in substantially eradicating the Brahminic hegemony. Not only was literacy a powerful device in radically altering the existent social order it would also bring about gender equality. Phule was perhaps the first nationalist to have seriously pursued the women literacy and an exclusively girls school was established in 1842 at his behest. In this respect, he, like Rammohan, appeared to have appreciated the British rule for having laid the material and institutional foundation of a modern-equalitarian society. Though persuaded by liberalism of the Western variety, Phule was not particularly Gappy with

the British response to people's needs and demands. Like the other early nationalists, there was no doubt that what prompted Phule to endorse foreign rule was its role in creating a completely new socio-political system undermining the prevalent hegemony of the Brahmins over the shudras.

The other distinctive dimension in Phule's response is that he stands out among the early nationalists for having implemented his ideas, as far as possible, into practice. The SatyashodhakSamaj (the Society of the Seekers of Truth) that came into being in 1873 was founded with this objective in mind. Not only was the Sanzaj involved in girls' formal education, widow remarriage and campaign against prohibition, it also led to vigorous debates on the nature of Hindu society and the scriptures, especially Vedas on which it was based. So, Phule was a forerunner of Gandhi in the sense that most of the major socio-political issues that the Mahatma raised were broached by him in a context when the British rule did not appear to be as oppressive as it later became. By consistently arguing against the orthodox Hinduism, denying a majority of their legitimate dues, he provided a powerful social critique of the prevalent Brahminical practices and values, justified in the name of religion and religious texts.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. How do you account for the difference between Ramtnohan, Bankim and Phule on the one hand and Dayananda on the other?

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2. "A difference-seeking agenda seems to have governed the early nationalists while conceptualising a nation". Elucidate the statement with reference to the writings of Rammohan, Bankim, Dayananda and Phule.

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4.4 NATIONALIST RESPONSE :A CRITICAL APPRAISA

Another major characteristic of the early nationalist response is the way the nation was conceptualized. By avoiding reference to Muslims, these nationalist thinkers seemed to have clearly identified the constituents of the proposed nation. By drawing on exclusively Hindu traditional tracts like Upanishads or Vedas, the early nationalists identified the sources of inspiration for the nation at its formative phase that clearly set the ideological tone in opposition to Islam and its supportive texts. Their idea of nation had therefore a narrow basis since Muslims hardly figured in the conceptualization. The explanation probably lies in the historical context characterized by the declining decadent feudal culture, supported by the Muslim rulers on the one hand and the growing acceptance of the values of European modernity on the other. Apart from Bankim who had strong views on the Muslim rule, none of the early nationalist thinkers articulated their opinion on this issue in clear terms. What drove them to embark on a nationalist project was the mission to revamp and revitalize the Hindus who failed to emerge as a solid block due largely to the inherent divisive nature. Whether it was Dayananda or Bankim, the idea of consolidating the 'Hindus as a race seemed to have acted in a decisive manner while articulating their response. Given his interest in Persian literature and Islamic culture, Rammohan held different views from Bankim. Since Phule was critical of the dichotomous Hindu society, He argued in a reformist language and reference to Muslims did not appear to be relevant. In his perception, the British rule was providential simply because it provided him with intellectual resources to combat the archaic practices in Hinduism.

What is evident now is that in articulating a nation, these thinkers discharged a role that was historically conditioned. It would therefore be wrong to simply label them as partisan due to their indifference or critical comments on the Muslims and their rule. By critically endorsing the British rule as most appropriate for the nation they were persuaded in two ways: first, the Enlightenment philosophy provided an alternative system of thought to critically assess Hinduism and traditional scriptures on which it was based. Secondly, by drawing upon the civilisational resources of the nation, these thinkers had also articulated an intellectual search for a model that was socio-culturally meaningful for the constituencies it was conceptualised. In this sense, the idea of nation, though narrowly constituted, seems to be a product of historical circumstances in which they were placed.

There is a final point. Their response was hardly political. While Dayananda eschewed politics altogether for the AryaSamaj? Rammohan was concerned more with eradicating the evil practices in Hindu society. Bankim's historical novel, Anandanath had a political message in his support for the sannyasi rebel against the ruler. Although his ideas of state and state power are not so well-developed, his argument for the spiritual superiority of the East seems to have given him an intellectual edge over other early nationalists. Phule was also reluctant to essay the role of the SatyasadhokSamaj in political terms. What was central to him was to challenge the Brahminical hegemony over the shudras who constituted a majority. Given this well-defined priority, Phule scripted the role of the Samaj accordingly. Furthermore, the avoidance of a clear political role was perhaps strategically conditioned in a context when an anti-British stance was likely to draw government attention. In other words, apprehending damage to the mission they undertook, these thinkers were persuaded to adopt an agenda allowing them to pursue their ideological mission without governmental intervention.

Despite all these, the ideas they floated galvanised the masses into action when the nationalists confronted the British government for a final show-

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down. Not only did they inspire the Extremists, they also provided intellectual resources to Gandhi and his followers. So, the early nationalist response forms an integral part of the nationalist thought that was differently textured in different historical circumstances depending on what was central in the nationalist vision.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. How was nation conceptualised in the early nationalist response? What are the basic ingredients of a nation according to these thinkers?

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4.5 LET US SUM UP

What runs through the early nationalist response - whether Rammohan, Bankim, Dayananda or Phule - was the concern for massive reform in Hindu society that lost its vitality. Given the fractured nature of Hindu society, it would be difficult, if not impossible, they argued, for the nation to sterile roots, let alone prosper. Drawn on his liberal values of the British variety, Rammohan welcomed the foreign rule as a significant step towards radically transforming the Hindu society by injecting the basic ideas of Enlightenment. With an uncritical faith in Gita, Bankim found in anushilandharma an appropriate device to galvanize a moribund nation. While Dayananda distinguished himself from the rest by depending exclusively on the Vedas, Phule appeared to have been influenced by Western Enlightenment in articulating his views on reform. There is an implicit assumption in what they wrote attributing the triumph of the British to the divisive nature of Hindu society. While Bankim endorsed Western

superiority in the material domain and hence their success, he however drew on the spiritual resources of the Hindus in instilling a sense of identity. Interestingly, this was the running thread in the writings of Rammohan, Dayananda and Phule. By privileging conceptualisation, a difference-seeking agenda figured prominently and the distinction between 'us' and 'them' was pursued consistently to develop an alternative nationalist discourse.

4.6 KEY WORDS

Dayananda: Dayanand Saraswati was an Indian social leader and founder of the Arya Samaj, a reform movement of the Vedic dharma. He was the first to give the call for Swaraj as "India for Indians" in 1876.

Sattee: Sati or suttee is a largely historical practice found chiefly among Hindus in the northern, chiefly Indo-Aryan-speaking, pre-modern regions of South Asia, in which a widow sacrifices herself by sitting atop her deceased husband's funeral pyre.

Arya Samaj: Arya Samaj is a monotheistic Indian Hindu reform movement that promotes values and practices based on the belief in the infallible authority of the Vedas. The samaj was founded by the sannyasi Dayanand Saraswati.

Satyarth Prakash: Satyarth Prakash is a 1875 book written originally in Hindi by Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati, a renowned religious and social reformer and the founder of Arya Samaj. It is considered one of his major scholarly works.

4.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What was the basic argument in the early nationalist response for rejuvenating the moribund Hindu society?
2. How do you account for the difference between Ramtnohan, Bankim and Phule on the one hand and Dayananda on the other?
3. "A difference-seeking agenda seems to have governed the early nationalists while conceptualising a nation". Elucidate the statement with reference to the writings of Rammohan, Bankim, Dayananda and Phule.
4. How was nation conceptualised in the early nationalist response? What are the basic ingredients of a nation according to these thinkers?

4.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

Appadorai, A., 1992: Indian Political Thinking Through the Ages, Khanna Pub.: New Delhi.

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Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India.

4.9 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 4.2

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See the sub-section 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4
- 2) See the sub-section 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 4.3

UNIT-5: MODERATES AND EXTREMISTS: DADABHAI NAOROJI, RANADE AND TILAK

STRUCTURE

- 5.0 Objective
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Defining Moderates and Extremists
 - 5.2.1 Moderate Ideology
 - 5.2.2 Extremist Ideology
 - 5.2.3 Moderate - Extremist Comparison
- 5.3 The Importance of Lal-Bal-Pal
- 5.4 The 1907 Surat Split
- 5.5 An Evaluation
- 5.4 Let us Sum Up
- 5.5 Key Words
- 5.6 Questions for Review
- 5.7 Suggested Readings and References
- 5.8 Answer to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVE

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain to ideology of Indian political thoughts
- Explain to modern and extremist ideology
- Know the importance of Lal –Bal – Pal

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The nationalist movement was articulated differently in different phases of India's freedom struggle. Apart from ideological shifts, there were noticeable differences in the social background of those who participated in

the struggle against the British. For instance, the Gandhian phase of Indian nationalism, also known as the phase of mass nationalism, radically altered the nature of the constituencies of nationalism by incorporating the hitherto neglected sections of Indian society. It would not be an exaggeration to mention that Indian masses regardless of religion, class and caste plunged into action in response to Gandhi's anti-British campaign. That Gandhi had inaugurated a completely new phase in Indian freedom struggle can easily be shown by contrasting it with its earlier phases, namely, the moderate and extremist phases. In contemporary historiography, 'the Moderate' phase begins with the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and continued till the 1907 Surat Congress when 'the Extremists' appeared on the political scene. The basic differences between these two groups lay in their perception of anti-British struggle and its articulation in concrete programs. While the Moderates opposed the British in a strictly constitutional way the Extremists favored 'a strategy of direct action' to harm the British economic and political interests in India. By dwelling on what caused the dissension among those who sincerely believed in the well-being of the country, the aim of this unit is also to focus on the major personalities who sought to articulate as coherently as possible the respective ideological points of view.

5.2 DEFINING MODERATES AND EXTREMISTS

While Moderates and Extremists constitute contrasting viewpoints, their contribution to the freedom struggle in its early phase is nonetheless significant. Moderates like Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhla, M. G. Ranade, were uncritical admirers of Western political values. They held the concept of equality before, law, of freedom of speech and press and the principle of representative government as : inherently superior to their traditional Hindu polity which they defined as 'Asiatic despotism'. So emphatic was their faith in the British rule that they hailed its introduction in India as 'a - providential

mission' capable of eradicating the 'mis-rule' of the past. Given the reluctance of the Crown to introduce representative institutions in India, Dadabhai Naoroji lamented that the British government in India was 'more Raj and less British'. What he meant was that though the British rule fulfilled the basic functions of Hindu kingship in preserving law and order in India, its reluctance to introduce the principle of representative government was most disappointing. So, despite their appreciation of British liberalism their admiration hardly influenced the Raj in changing the basic nature of its rule in India.

5.2.1 Moderate Ideology

The moderate philosophy was most eloquently articulated by Surendranath Banerji (1848 - 1925) in his 1895 presidential address to the Congress. In appreciation of the British rule, Banerji thus argued: 'we appeal to England gradually to change character of her rule in India, liberalize it, to adapt it to the newly developed environments of the country and the people, so that in the fullness of time India may find itself in the great confederacy of free state, English in their origin, English in their character, English in their institutions, rejoicing in their permanent and indissoluble union with England'. It seems that the Moderates were swayed by British liberalism and were persuaded to believe that in the long run the crown would fulfill its providential mission. Banerji appears to have echoed the idea of Dadabhai Naoroji, (1825-1917) who in his 1893 Poona address, underlined the importance of 'loyalty to the British' in protecting India's future. As he stated, 'until we are able to satisfy the British people that what we ask is reasonable and that we ask it in earnest, we cannot hope to get what we ask for, for the British are a justice-loving people . . . [and] at their hands we shall get everything that is calculated to make us British citizens'. Despite his 'loyalist' attitude, Naoroji was perhaps the first Congressman who argued strongly for a political role for the Congress that so far was identified as a non-political platform. While conceptualising the role of the Congress in 'the

British-ruled' India, Naoroji had no hesitation in announcing that the Congress 'as a political body [was] to represent to our rulers our political aspirations'.

There are two points that need to be highlighted here. First, as evident, the Moderates identified specific roles for the Congress that sought to mobilize people in accordance with what was construed as the most appropriate goal in that context. The guiding principle was to avoid friction with the ruler. In fact, this is how G. K. Gokhale explained the birth of the Indian National Congress. According to him 'no Indian could have started the Indian national Congress. If an Indian had come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials in India would not have allowed the movement to come into existence'. Secondly, the philosophy stemmed from an uncritical faith of the early nationalists in the providential mission of the British and hence the British conquest of India was not 'a calamity' to be lamented but 'an opportunity' to be seized to 'our advantage'. So it was not surprising for Ranade to uncritically appreciate the British nation that came into existence 'by ages of struggle and self-discipline which illustrates better than any other contemporary power the supremacy of the reign of law'. This is what differentiated the British government from other colonial powers which endorsed different systems of law for the colonies. The British nation, therefore 'inspires hope and confidence in colonies and dependencies of Great Britain that whatever temporary perturbation may cloud the judgment, the reign of law will assert itself in the end'. Thirdly, the Moderates believed that the continuity of the British rule was sine-qua-non of India's progress as 'a civilized nation'. In other words, the introduction of the British rule was a boon in disguise simply because Hindus and Muslims in India argued Ranade, 'lacked the virtues represented by the love of order and regulated authority'. Hailing the British rule as divine dispensation', he further appreciated the British government for having introduced Indians to 'the example and teaching of the most gifted and free nation in the world'. Finally, Ranade defended a strong British state in India to ensure equality of wealth and opportunity for all. By justifying state intervention in India's

socio-economic life, he differed substantially from the basic tenets of liberalism that clearly restricts the role of the state to well-defined domain. Here the Moderates performed a historical role by underlining the relative superiority of a state, drawn on the philosophy of enlightenment, in comparison with the decadent feudal rule of the past. To them, the imperial state that gradually unfolded with its devastating impact on India's economy, society and polity, was a distant object and hence the idea never gained ground in their perception and its articulation.

Underlying the Moderate arguments defending the British rule in India lay its 'disciplining' function in comparison with the division and disorder of the eighteenth century. And also, the exploitative nature of imperialism and its devastating role in colonies did not appear to be as relevant as it later became. So, the moderate assessment of British rule, if contextualized, seems to be appropriate and drawn on a new reality that was clearly a break with the past. Finally it would be wrong to dismiss the role of the Moderates in India's freedom struggle. given their loyalist attitude to the rule for two reasons: (a) there is no denying that the Moderates never launched mass agitations against the alien state in India; but by providing an ideological critique of the British rule in India keeping in view the grand ideals on which the British civilisations stood, they actually initiated a political dialogue that loomed large in course of time; and (b) the Moderate constitutional and peaceful method of political mobilisation, if contextualised, seems to be a milestone in India's freedom struggle for it paved the ground for other kinds of anti-imperial protests once it ceased to be effective.

5.2.2 Extremist Ideology

In contrast with the Moderates who pursued a policy of reconciliation and compromise with imperialism, the Extremists demanded time-bound programmes and policies harming the British interests in India. This new school of thought represented an alternative voice challenging the 'Moderates' compromising policies of conciliation with imperialism.

Disillusioned with the Moderates, the Extremists believed in 'self-reliance' and sought to achieve Swaraj through direct action. So, there were two levels at which the Extremist critique had operated. At one level, they questioned the Moderate method of 'mendicancy' that, for obvious reasons, appeared 'hollow' when the imperial logic of the state prevailed over other considerations. In other words, the failure of Moderates in obtaining concessions for the Indians indicated, the changing nature of the colonial state that had shown its true colour as soon as its political control in India was complete. So it was a level in which the Extremists articulated their opposition both to the Moderates and the British government. At another level, the Extremists also felt the need of being self-reliant economically to fight the British state that gained in strength by exploiting India's economic resources. Swadeshi was not merely an economic design but also a political slogan on which India was sought to be made strong by being self-reliant. This was an area where serious intellectual contributions were made by the exponents of Extremism - BG Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo among others. Unlike the Moderates who insisted on constitutional means to reform the British state, not only did the Extremists dismiss this plea as 'most unfortunate' but also ruled out the possibility of negotiations with the ruler for 'verbal' concession.

There were several factors that had contributed to the disillusionment of the Extremists with the Moderates. First, the growing government atrocities, especially in the wake of the 1905 Bengal partition agitation, clearly revealed the inadequacies of the constitutional and peaceful means. In fact, the Congress strategy of persuasion was usually interpreted as a sign of weakness by the British government and its supporters. Hence, there was a growing pressure for a change of strategy to force the authority to succumb to the demands of the Indians. Articulating the feeling of the extremist section of the Congress, Tilak thus exhorted: 'political rights will have to be fought for. The Moderates think that these can be won by persuasion. We think that they can only be obtained by strong pressure'. As evident, the friction between the two sections of the Congress reached a pinnacle and a

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formal division was imminent. Secondly, the uncritical acceptance of Western enlightenment of the Moderates was also rejected as a sign of emotional bankruptcy, especially, given the rich heritage of Indian civilisation. What contributed to the sense of pride among these youths in Indian values and ethos was certainly the socio-religious movements of the late nineteenth century seeking to articulate an alternative theoretical design for nationalist intervention. The ideal of Bhagavad Gita inspired them to pursue a line of action against the alien rule for its effort to denigrate Indian and its cultural distinctiveness. Vivekananda was a central figure in this nationalist conceptualization and his teachings remained a significant source of inspiration for those who were critical of blind adherence to the western ideals. Thirdly, the recurrence of famine and the lackadaisical attitude of the British government brought out the exploitative nature of colonial power in clear terms. Even in the context of massive human sufferings, the government did not adopt measures to ameliorate the conditions of the victims. In fact, there were indications that the government deliberately withdrew relief in areas that suffered the most. The true nature of colonialism came to the surface and it was alleged that the indifferent alien authority left no stone unturned to gain maximum at the cost of human miseries. What caused maximum damage to the already crippled Indian economy was an economic policy of the British government that had stopped the supply of food grains to the affected areas on the plea that it would avoid famine in places where there was apparently no crisis of food. Nobody was persuaded by this logic. Even the Moderate Leaders like Naoroji and Ranade were critical of this governmental stance in the context of severe human agony that could have been avoided had the government followed 'a humane policy' even after the outbreak of famine in certain parts of India. The atmosphere was surcharged with anti-British feelings and the failure of the Moderate Congress to persuade the British for relatively pro-people welfare policies catapulted the Extremists to the centre stage. Finally, the anti-Indian repressive measures during the tenure of Curzon as the Viceroy (1899-1905) revealed the extent to which the Moderate methods of conciliation failed.- Persuaded by his belief that Indians lacked the capacity

to rule, the Viceroy adopted several legislations - the 1904 Indian Universities Act, the 1899 Calcutta Corporation Act, to name a few - in which the representation of Indians was both drastically reduced and bypassed conveniently to fulfill his design. What was most distinctive in his reign was the decision to partition Bengal in 1905 that galvanized the masses into action against this imperial device of creating a religious division among the Indians. Although Curzon ostensibly undertook this administrative step for efficiency in administration, what prompted him was the principle of divide and rule. Since Curzon attributed the success of political movements in Bengal to the Hindu-Muslim unity, he deliberately adopted this measure to permanently separate the Hindus from the Muslims. This design caught the attention of the nationalist irrespective of religion and ideology and even a typical Moderate leader Surendranath Banerji while criticizing Curzon for Bengal partition hailed 'this most reactionary of Indian viceroys' as someone who 'will go down to the posterity as the architect of Indian national life'. By releasing those forces in the wake of the partition agitation 'which contributed to the up building of nations', argued Banerji, 'Curzon had made us a nation'

As evident, by the early part of the twentieth century and especially in the context of the 1905 Bengal partition agitation, the Moderates lost credibility since their anti-imperial strategies failed to gain what they aspired for. Moreover, their faith in the British liberalism did not work to their advantage and it dawned on the later nationalists, particularly the Extremists, that the colonial power in India drew more on exploitation and less on the basic tenets of liberalism. So, the rise and consolidation of Extremism as a political ideal in contrast with the Moderate philosophy is a clear break with the past since the principles that inspired the late nineteenth century nationalists appeared to have completely lost their significance.

5.2.3 Moderate - Extremist Comparison

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The distinction between the Moderates and Extremists is based on serious differences among themselves in their respective approaches to the British Empire. Based on their perception, the Moderates hailed the British rule as most beneficial in contrast with what India had confronted before the arrival of the British. Until the 1905 Bengal partition, the Moderate philosophy was based on loyalty to 'the Empire that had shown signs of cracks in the aftermath of atrocities, meted out to those opposing Curzon's canonical design of causing a fissure among the Indians by highlighting their religious schism. For an extremist like Bipin Pal, it was most surprising because 'how can loyalty exist in the face of injustice and misgovernment which we confront everyday'. Opposed to the Moderate stance, the Extremists always considered the British rule as a curse that could never render justice to the governed in India. Not only did they challenge the British government for its 'evil' design against the Indians, they also criticised the Moderates for having misled the nationalist aspirations in a way that was clearly defeating. Instead, the new nationalist outlook, articulated by the Extremists drew largely on an uncompromising anti-imperial stance that also fed the revolutionary terrorist movement in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century. Secondly, the difference between the Moderates and Extremists was based on their respective approaches to the outcome of the nationalist intervention. While the Moderates stood for the attainment of 'self government' through gradual reforms, the Extremists insisted on complete Swaraj. In other words, the model of self-government, as evident in the dominion of Canada and Australia, appeared to be an ideal form of government for India. The Extremist arguments were qualitatively different. By demanding complete swaraj, Tilak, the most prominent of the Extremists, exhorted that 'swaraj is my birthright' and 'without swaraj there could be no.

social reform, no industrial progress, no useful education, no fulfillment of national life. That is what we seek and that is why God has sent us into the world to fulfill Him'. In appreciation of this attitude, Bipin Pal, a member of the Lal-Bal-Pal group, was categorical in stating that the principal goal of

the extremist struggle was 'the abdication of the right of England to determine the policy of the Indian Government, the relinquishment of the right of the present despotism to enact whatever law they please to govern the people of this country'. Secondly, the Extremists were not hesitant in championing 'violence', if necessary, to advance the cause of the nation while the Moderates favoured constitutional and peaceful methods as most appropriate to avoid direct friction with the ruler. In contrast with these means, the Extremists resorted to boycott and swadeshi that never evoked support from the Moderates. While defending boycott, Tilak argued that 'it is possible to make administration deplorably difficult and to create conditions impossible for the British bureaucracy by fighting for our rights with determination and tenacity and by boycott and strike'. Urging those associated with the British bureaucracy, Tilak further argued that with the withdrawal of the Indians from the administration, 'the entire machinery will collapse'. Simultaneously with boycott of government offices, the Extremists also propagated for boycott of foreign goods and promotion of swadeshi or home-spun. This strategy, first 'adopted in the context of the 1905 Bengal partition agitation, was further extended to the nationalist campaign as a whole, presumably because of its effectiveness in creating and sustaining the nationalist zeal. The economic boycott, as it was characterized in contemporary parlance, caused consternation among the British industrialists more than the other types of boycott. Thirdly, the Moderates appeared to be happy under the British presumably because of their belief that Indians were not I capable of self-rule. This was what prompted them to support the British rule uncritically. The views of the Extremists were, for obvious reasons, diametrically opposite. While articulating his opposition to this idea, Tilak argued that 'we recognize no teacher in the art of self-government except self-government itself. It values freedom for its own sake and desires autonomy, immediate and unconditional regardless of any considerations of fitness or unfitness of the people for it'. Here too, the Moderate-Extremist distinction is based on serious ideological differences. While the former supported a loyalist discourse, the latter simply rejected the stance in its articulation of anti-imperialism. Fourthly, in the Extremist

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conceptualisation of struggle against imperialism, the ideal of self-sacrifice, including the, supreme sacrifice figured prominently while in the Moderate scheme of political struggle, this idea appeared to have received no attention. This probably indicates two different faces of Extremism: on the one hand, there was the public appearance where the strategies of boycott, swadeshi and strike were pursued to articulate the nationalist protest; the sudden violent attack was, on the other, also encouraged to terrorise the British administration that was rattled following the incessant violent interventions by those who preferred underground militant operation. One of the preferred modes of action was assassination of 'brutal' British officials. Such acts would strike terror into the hearts of the rulers, arouse the patriotic instincts of the people, inspire them and remove the fear of authority from their minds. And it had propaganda value because during the trial of those involved in conducting violent attacks on the British officials, the revolutionaries, and their cause received adequate publicity not only in the pro-government but also in the nationalist media. Finally, while the Moderates drew upon the British variety of liberalism, the Extremists were inspired by the warnings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and the teachings of Vivekananda. In view of their faith in constitutional means of opposition to the British rule, Moderates preferred the path of conciliation rather than confrontation whereas the Extremists, espousing the demand for Swaraj, plunged into direct action against the government by resorting to boycott and strike. Unlike the Moderates who drew upon the ideas of Gladstone, Disraeli and Burke to refine their political strategy, the Extremists found Bankim's *Anandamath*, a historical novel that narrated the story of the rise of the Hindu Sannyasis vis-à-vis the vanquished Muslim rulers and Vivekananda's interpretation of Vedanta philosophy. The poem "Bande Mataram" in *Anandamath* clearly set the tone of the Extremist philosophy in which the notion of 'Mother' seemed to be prominent. Mother representing simultaneously the divine motherland and the mother-goddess, Durga, conveyed both patriotic and religious devotion. This was an articulation that generated mass emotional appeal which the Moderate form of constitutional agitation failed to arouse. Bankim and Vivekananda were

probably the most effective ideologue who evoked Hindu imageries, well-tuned to the contemporary scene. By overlooking the non-Hindu tradition completely and accepting the Hindu tradition as Indian tradition, they however, nurtured a narrow view of history which is misleading given the cross fertilisation of multiple traditions in Indian civilisation.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. What are the factors that contributed to the growth of Extremists in Indian nationalism?

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5.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF LAL-BAL-PAL

The Extremist ideology created a leadership trio of Lal-Bal-Pal (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal), who, while critiquing the Moderates, altered the nationalist vocabulary by incorporating swadeshi, boycott and national education. So popular were Lal- Bal-Pal in Punjab, Maharashtra and Bengal respectively, that Moderates seemed to have lost their credibility in these areas. Of the trio, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, rooted in Maharashtra, was perhaps the most articulate militant leader of this phase of freedom struggle. Long before his active involvement in the Congress, Tilak articulated his nationalist ideas in both Kesari (in Marathi) and Mahratta (in English). In 1893, he transformed the traditional religious Ganapati festival into a campaign for nationalist ideas through patriotic songs and speeches. Similarly, in 1896, he introduced the Shivaji festival to inspire the youth by drawing upon the patriotism of Shivaji in opposition to the Moghul ruler,

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Aurangzeb. It would be wrong however to blame as a 'revivalist' since he supported, most enthusiastically, the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals. In fact, Tilak himself responded to this charge by saying that these festivals were intended to give to the people 'a sense of belonging and to evoke in them a pride in their past'. He also dismissed the idea that he was in favour of bringing back 'the reign of Shivaji or of Peshwas' while arguing strongly for 'popular and representative government' in opposition to the 'oriental ideal of revivalism'. He rose to prominence by organising a successful campaign for boycott of foreign clothes in Maharashtra in 1896 in protest against the imposition of taxes on cotton. His involvement in the no-tax campaign in areas, adversely affected by the 1896-7 famine in Maharashtra, had clearly articulated his mission of expanding the Congress base by incorporating the peasants, a constituency that was simply beyond the Moderates purview. By deciding to serve the plague victims in Poona during the 1897, Tilak became a leader of the people who automatically were drawn to him for humanism. Apart from his role in serving the victims, he wrote several pieces in Kesari condemning the arrangement and the steps, the government undertook in combating this deadly disease, In fact, the killing of Rand, the chairman of the Plague Commission in Poona in 1898 was attributed to the popular resentment against official measures even in the government document. Tilak was arrested following the assassination but was released soon because of lack of proof of his involvement.

Two important features in Tilak's political philosophy separated him from the Moderate thinkers. First, unlike the Moderates who argued for gradual introduction of democratic institutions in India, Tilak insisted on immediate swaraj or self-rule. His concept of swaraj was not complete independence but a government constituted by the Indians themselves that 'rules according to the wishes of the people or their representatives. Similar to the British executive that 'decides on policies, impose and remove taxes and determine the allocation of public expenditure', Indians should have the right 'to run their own government, to make laws, to appoint the administrators as well as to spend the tax revenue'. This is one dimension of his thought; the second

dimension relates to the notion of prajadroha or the right of the people to resist an authority that loses legitimacy. In Tilak's conceptualisation, if the government fails to fulfill their obligation to the ruled and becomes tyrannical, it lacks legitimacy to rule. What is interesting to note that Tilak's prajadroha also justifies the enactment of laws to prevent unlawful activities of the people? If contextualised, this idea makes sense because he was aware that a total rejection of the government would invite atrocities on the nationalists who had neither the organisational backing nor a strong support base among the people. So, his support for governmental preventive mechanisms was strategically conditioned and textured

Tilak was a nationalist par excellence. In view of his uncritical acceptance of Vedanta philosophy and orthodox Hindu rituals and practices, Tilak was accused of being sectarian in multi-religious India. That he upheld the most reactionary form of Hindu orthodoxy was evident in his opposition to the 1890 Age of Consent Bill that sought to raise the age of consummation of marriage of girls from ten to twelve years. While the Moderate spokesman, Ranade hailed the bill for its progressive social role, Tilak found in this legislation an unwarranted intervention in Hindu social life. Similarly, his involvement in the cow - protection Society alienated the Muslims to a large extent from the Extremist campaign; Tilak's argument in favour of cow protection drew upon the sacredness of cow in Hindu belief disregarding completely the importance of beef in Muslim diet. Furthermore, the organisation of national festivals in honour of Shivaji, the Hindu hero of the Marathas and also redefining of an essentially Hindu religious festival - the Ganapatiutsav - in nationalist terms, set the ideological tenor of Tilak's political philosophy where Muslims seemed to be peripheral if not entirely bypassed.

It is necessary to pause here for a moment and reassess Tilak's worldview critically with reference to the context in which it was articulated. There is no denying that underlying all these religious forms lay the national patriotic purpose. Under the cover of religious festivals, Tilak sought to create a

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nationalist platform for an effective mobilisation against the British that would not allow, for obvious reasons, a political campaign adversely affecting the imperial interests. Under conditions of severe governmental repression of all political agitation and organisation, before the nationalist movement had struck roots among the masses, the use of such apparently religious and orthodox forms of nationalist outpouring seems to be strategically conditioned and Tilak emerged as a master planner in refining these in the pre-Gandhian phase of India's freedom struggle. So, not only did he articulate the voice of protest in a unique vocabulary, but also he expanded the constituency of the nationalist politics by proclaiming the supposed spiritual superiority of the ancient Hindu civilisation to its Western counterpart. In other words, Tilak played a historical role in the construction of a new language of politics by being critical of 'the denationalised and westernised' Moderate leaders who blindly clung to typical western liberal values disregarding their indigenous counterparts. I while articulating their opposition to the British rule. It is possible to argue that Tilak had a wider appeal for his campaign was couched in a language that drew upon values, rooted in Indian culture and civilisation in contrast with what the Moderates upheld, which were completely alien. So, Tilak was not merely a nationalist leader with tremendous political acumen; he himself represented a new wave of nationalist movement that created an automatic space for it by (a) providing the most powerful and persuasive critique of moderate philosophy and (b) articulating his nationalist ideology in a language that was meaningful to those it was addressed. This is how Tilak is transcendental and his ideas of swadeshi, boycott and strike had a significant sway on Gandhi who refined and well-tuned some of the typical Extremist methods in a completely changed socio-economic and political context when the nationalist struggle had its tentacles not only in the district towns but also in the villages that unfortunately remained peripheral in the pre-Gandhian days of freedom struggle.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. The importance of Lal-Bal-Pal

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5.4 THE 1907 SURAT SPLIT

From 1905 to 1907, the struggle between various trends within the nationalist articulation of freedom struggle was fought out also at the annual sessions of the Congress, culminating in the Surat split of December, 1907. The flashpoint was the 1905 Bengal partition that appeared to have enabled the Extremists to provide a sharp critique of the Moderate strategies that miserably failed. The Moderate method of constitutional agitation, articulated in three Ps - petition, prayer and protest - remained largely an academic exercise that seemed to have exhausted potentials with the consolidation of various groups championing direct action against the British. Condemning the Bengal partition and the repressive measures, Gokhale in his 1905 Benaras presidential address referred to economic boycott in a very lukewarm manner .to avoid further repression by the' government. The 1906 Calcutta Congress fulfilled the Extremists goal partly in the sense that the Congress president, DadabhaiNaoroji officially endorsed the resolutions on boycott, swadeshi, national education and self-government. The Extremists effort to extend the boycott resolution to cover provinces other than Bengal as well was defeated along with the resolution on boycott of honorary offices and of foreign goods. Enthusiastic over the victory of the Liberal par& in England, the Moderate leadership was hopeful of a series of reform measures including the annulment of the Bengalt partition. The appointment of John Morley as the secretary of state in early 1907 was hailed for his liberal views and was expected to inaugurate a new face of British colonialism in contrast with the bitter legacy of the Curzon

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era. Despite changes in the British political climate, the friction between the Moderates and Extremists had shown no abatement and they were preparing themselves for a head-on collision in the 1907 Surat Congress presided over by Rash Behari Ghosh who was vehemently opposed by Tilak and his colleagues from Maharashtra and Bengal. This was perhaps the only annual meeting of the Congress that was dissolved without deliberations.

On the surface, one may find that the Surat Congress ended in a fiasco because it failed to amicably settle the Extremist-Moderate dichotomy. In other words, what came out of this failed meeting of the Congress was largely attributed to the irreconcilable contradiction between 'the Extremists and Moderates over the anti-imperial political agenda. There is, however, another dimension if one goes below the surface. The antagonism that split the Congress in Surat was the product of a fierce struggle between 'the Tilakites of Poona' and Moderates of Bombay, led by Pherozeshah Mehta. In fact, the Bengal Extremists, including Aurobindo wanted to avoid the split within the Congress so as not to weaken the Swadeshi movement in Bengal. This was expressed clearly at the Bengal Provincial Conference at Patna, presided over by Rabindranath Tagore in which a resolution for an immediate session of the Congress was accepted unanimously. Even Tilak's effort did not yield results. The Bombay Moderates remained adamant and at its 1908 Allahabad convention, the split was formalised by debarring those, opposed to 'the strictly constitutional methods' from participating in the Congress meetings and deliberations. The most obvious victim of this division was the nationalist movement itself that appeared to have taken a backseat during internecine feud among the Moderates and Extremists. Interestingly, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to demarcate the Extremists and Moderates in terms of their class background. Supporting largely the Hindu vested interests, both of them, though separated ideologically, were a product of an era when the nationalist politics was primarily confined to the urban areas. While the extremists, by encouraging 'individual heroism' and 'revolutionary terrorism', inaugurated a new phase in nationalist agitation, Tilak's 1896-7 no tax campaign for the famine-

stricken peasants in Maharashtra was a concrete step in expanding the constituency of nationalist politics by addressing the issues that hitherto remained neglected in the Congress agenda.

5.5 AN EVALUATION

Of the different phases of Indian nationalism, the Moderate and Extremist phases represented the voice of an incipient nationalist movement that was neither properly crystallized nor had a support base among the masses. Based on their faith in British liberalism, Moderates were perfectly justified in pursuing the policy of reconciliation. The 1909 Morley-Minto Reform was probably the upper limit of what the Moderates could have gained under the circumstances. Even the revocation of Bengal partition was largely attributed to the reform zeal of the Liberal government in Britain. So, Moderate efforts did not, at least on paper, go waste. What was however most remarkable was the fact that Moderate campaign let loose a process, of which Extremism was also offshoot, whereby new ideas were set in motion. The nationalist zeal, which so far was articulated in the annual sessions of the Congress in a strictly constitutional and peaceful way, was translated into a variety of actions, including boycott, swadeshi and strike. This resulted in an immediate expansion of the constituencies of nationalist politics that, under the Moderates, represented largely the upper crest of Indian society. Despite sharing more or less the common social background with the Moderates, the Extremists however addressed the issues of the peasantry and workers, of course in their terms, to underline the ideological differences with the former.

What lay at the root of the acrimonious exchange between the Moderate and Extremist leaders during the short-lived 1907 Surat Congress was perhaps the irreconcilable differences between the two. Articulating the ideological schism in probably the most sordid manner, both these groups seemed to have allowed them to be swayed by considerations other than anti-

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imperialism. That is why Rabindranath Tagore lamented that by determining to capture the Congress by hook or crook, the Moderate and Extremists failed to conceptualise, let alone realise, the basic nationalist goal of serving the people and thereby made a mockery of themselves and also what they stood for. Despite Tagore's own effort in bringing these two forces together in the aftermath of the Surat fiasco, the adoption of resolutions in the 1908 Allahabad convention by the Moderates for permanently disqualifying the Extremist section of the Congress underlined the declining importance of nationalism as a cementing ideology vis-a-vis the British imperialism. Also, the Extremist alternative was not qualitatively different although the Extremists were more militant and their critique of British rule was articulated in stronger terms. They neither created a viable organisation to lead the anti-British movement nor could they define the movement in a way that differed from that of the Moderates.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. In what ways, Dadabhai Naoroji was an epitome of Moderate politics?

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2. In what ways, the 1907 Surat split was a watershed in Indian struggle for independence?

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5.6 LET US SUM UP

It would be however historically inaccurate to dismiss the Moderate and Extremist efforts as futile simply because of the historical role they discharged in conceptualizing nationalist struggle in an organized manner. With a well-defined political agenda, the early Congress leadership of both varieties identified the true nature of the principal political contradiction in a colony between the ruler and the ruled. There were various counts where the efforts were neither well-tuned to the requirement nor well-directed involving the people regardless of religion, caste and clan. In fact, the failure of the Congress in its formative years to address the social contradiction between the Hindus and Muslims led to the growth of the Muslim League in 1906 as the sole champion of the Muslims socio-political interests in British India. From now on, a significant section of Indian Muslims asserted a separate identity vis-it-vis Congress and the government. Given the class bias of the Hindus, the chasm between these two principal communities had grown bigger in course of time. If this was one side of the coin, the other side provided the foundation for a qualitatively different experiment in organised politics, conducted by Gandhiji through nonviolence in the post-war period. Redefining the Extremist method of Swadeshi, boycott and strike in the changed environment when the imperial power became more brutal than before, Gandhi easily mobilized the masses in the anti-British campaign. The Congress in the Gandhian phase of nationalist struggle was completely transformed into a movement that had its tentacles even in remote villages. So, Gandhi's success as a leader of a gigantic mass movement against perhaps the most organised imperial power was largely due to the organisational backing of the Congress that remained a mere platform for annually ventilating grievances against the British as well as settling scores against the fellow congressmen.

5.7 KEY WORDS

Lal-Bal-Pal: (Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Bipin Chandra Pal) were a triumvirate of assertive nationalists in British-ruled India in the early 20th century, from 1906 to 1918.

Shivaji: Carved out an enclave from the declining Adilshahi sultanate of Bijapur that formed the genesis of the Maratha Empire. In 1674.

Gopal Krishna Gokhale: Was an Indian liberal political leader and a social reformer during the Indian Independence Movement.

Dadabhai Naoroji: Sir Dadabhai Naoroji Dordi (4 September 1825 – 30 June 1917) also known as the "Grand Old Man of India" and "Unofficial Ambassador of India" was a British Parshi scholar,

Sine- Qua-Non: An essential condition; a thing that is absolutely necessary.

5.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. What are the factors that contributed to the growth of Extremists in Indian nationalism?
2. The importance of Lal-Bal-Pal
3. How do you account for the split between the Moderates and Extremists?
4. In what ways, Dadabhai Naoroji was an epitome of Moderate politics?
5. In what ways, the 1907 Surat split was a watershed in Indian struggle for independence?

5.9 SUGGESTED READING AND REFFERNCES

Appadorai, A., 1992: Indian Political Thinking Through the Ages, Khanna Pub.: New Delhi.

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5.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 5.2
- 2)

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See the sub-section 5.3

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See the sub-section 5.4
- 2) See the sub-section 5.4

UNIT-6 HINDUISM : SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI AUROBINDO GHOSH

STRUCTURE

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Renaissance of Hinduism and the Role of Sri Raniakrishna Mission
- 6.3 Swami Vivekananda 's Philoshapy of Neo – Vedanta
- 6.4 Swami Vivckanalida on Nationalism
 - 6.4.1 Swami Vivcknnnnda on Dernocracy
 - 6.4.2 Swami Vivcknnnnd on Social Change
- 6.5 Transition of Hinduism: Frolii Vivekananda to Sri Aurobindo
 - 6.5.1 Sri Aurobindo on Renaissance of Hinduism
 - 6.5.2 Sri Aurobindo on Evil Effects of British Rule
- 6.6 Sri Aurobindo's Critique of Political Moderates in India
 - 6.6.1 Sri Aurobilido on the Essence of Politics
 - 6.6.2 SriAurobindo on Nationalism
 - 6.6.3 Sri Aurobindo on Passive Resistance
 - 6.6.4 Theory of Passive Resistance
 - 6.6.5 Methods of Passive Resistance
- 6.7 Sri Aurobindo the Indian Theory of State
- 6.8 Political Ideas of Sri Aurobindo - A Critical Study
- 6.9 Let Us Some Up
- 6.10 Key Words
- 6.11 Questions for Review
- 6.12 Suggested Readings and References
- 6.13 Answer to Check Your Progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain to thoughts of Hinduism in Indian Politics
- Role of Sri Raniakrishna Mission in Hinduism.
- Know about Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo
- Explain to Hindu Political Idea

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In 19th century, India came under the British rule. Due to the spread of modern education and growing public activities, there developed social awakening in India. The religion of Hindus was very harshly criticized by the Christian missionaries and the British historians but at the same time, researches carried out by the Orientalist scholars revealed to the world, The religion 'tradition of the Hindu religion. The Hindus responded to this by initiating reforms in their religion and by establishing new public associations to spread their ideas of reform and social development among the people. They wanted to give new birth to Hinduism.

The process of renaissance of Hinduism started with Raja Rani Mollan Roy and it was further developed by the AryaSamaj of Swami Dayanand, the PrarthanaSamaj and the satyasadhakSamaj of JotibaPhule. Sri Raniakrislina Mission, founded by Swami Vivekananda, played a key role in renaissance and reformation of Hindu society. There was a new interpretation of Vedanta philosophy and Swami Vivekananda and Sri AmobindoGhosh were two major interpreters of Neo-Vedanta philosophy. They were of the opinion that Neo- Vedanta philosophy would increase cultural strength of Hinduism and pave the way for the growth of nationalism in modern India. They interpreted Indian nationalism in the context of reformation and rejuvenation of Hinduism

6.2 RENAISSANCE OF HINDUISM AND THE ROLE OF SRI RANIAKRISHNA MISSION

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RamaKrishna Mission played a key role in the renaissance of Hinduism. It was established by Swami Vivekananda. It was named after his teacher Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa. Ramakrishna (1836-86) was a son of soil and never lost his rustic simplicity, He was a mystic who preached self-less devotion of God and ultimate absorption in him. He personified the rebirth of ancient tradition in the midst of growing westernisation. He preached the people to follow the path of self-less devotion and claimed that service of man was service of God. He asked his disciples to live pure life, free of passions, desires, hatred and pride. He condemned no one and saw well in all. It was his firm belief that the religions of the world were not contradictory but were various phases of one eternal religion.

His disciple Swami Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission to serve the people. He wanted to find a new path of progress for Hinduism because he was not happy with the reform movements as they were imitations of the western methods. He had three alternatives before him. First, to follow the path shown by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and join BrahmoSamaj, Secondly, to follow the path of total renunciation and go to Himalayas to attain the goal of liberation. Thirdly, to follow the path of service to the society and to create social awakening in the minds of the people about resuscitation of the Indian society. Vivekananda chose the third path and told the Indians to see Narayana in the form of a poor beggar dying of starvation. Thus, for Vivekananda the Ramakrishna Mission should stand for selfless service of the people, ceaseless efforts to find truth and thereby for reawakening of the spirit of India. During Vivekananda's life time and after his death, Sri Ramakrishna Mission played a key role in the renaissance of Hinduism.

6.3 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY OF NEO- VEDANTA

Vedanta philosophy was one of the most important ancient philosophies of India which believed that God alone was real and the visible world was

unreal the absorption of individual soul in the one supreme soul was the goal of every human being. That was called liberation and it could be achieved with the help of true knowledge. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a supporter of non-dualistic monism. He expounded the concept of fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. But Vivekananda followed the Vedanta preached by his teacher which was rooted in the traditional Indian wisdom of Bhakti tradition; He did not believe in the path of renunciation and asked people to perform their duties in the spirit of selflessness. There were three important principles of Neo-Vedanta philosophy of Vivekananda. They were as follows:

- Vedanta believed in the oneness between God and man and the solidarity of Universe.
- It did not stand for a life of renunciation but stood for self-less action in the services & humanity. Hence, service of man should be considered as service of God.
- It propagated the principle of universal tolerance and believed that different religious faiths were different paths to reach the goal of liberation.

Thus; for Swami Vivekananda, Neo-Vedanta philosophy stood 'for service, sacrifice and freedom. He did not want the Neo-Vedantists to remain inactive but to work for the awakening of the masses. He wanted young Indians to dedicate themselves in the cause of resurgence of India.

6.4 SWAMI VIVEKAMANDA ON NATIONALISM

Swami Vivekananda is considered as one of the prophets of the Indian nationalism because he tried to awaken Indian people who were lying in deep slumber. He wanted to see the emergence of a strong and self-confident India which would give the message of the Vedanta to the world.

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He maintained that the Indians should be proud of their history, culture and religion and should try their level best to reform them - in the light of the demands of time. The awakening of the spirit of India was the goal for young people. Hence, he asked them to "arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached."

Vivekananda was highly critical of the British rule in India because he held that due to their rule, Indians lost confidence, famines engulfed the land, farmers and artisans were reduced to poverty and penury. The British were exploiting Indians in all the spheres of economic activity. They had let loose the reign of terror and struck fear in the minds of the people. Due to exploitative economic policies of the British government, Indians could not develop their natural resources and their productive potential was sapped. It was imperative that Indians should know the evil effects of the British rule in India.

Vivekananda was of the opinion that the national regeneration of India would begin when people became fearless and started demanding their rights. Also, he asked the Indians to develop solidarity and oneness of the spirit by the eradication of social evils, superstitions and caste-arrogance. He was of the opinion that caste system divided the Indian society into classes and created the feeling of inferiority and superiority among them.

He held that though there was a variety of races, languages, religions and cultures in India, there existed a common ground between Indian people. There was a common religious tradition which could be depended upon to build national spirit. According to Europe, the basis of national unity was political ideas but in Asia, religion formed the basis of it. It was not necessarily a particular religion as such, but all religions would help us develop the national integration. For the Indians, religion was a unifying force as the spirituality was blood in the life of India. All differences melted in it. Indians preserved their faith in the most difficult conditions.

It was the duty of the educated Indians to make its knowledge available to the people in their oneness and solidarity. He exhorted Indians not to get involved in the divisive issues of race and language and imbibe the spirit of unity. He said that Hindus should not blame Muslims for their numerous invasions because the Muslim conquest came as a salvation to the downtrodden masses in India. One fifth of India did not become Muslim because of sword but because of their egalitarian message. Therefore, national unity could not be fostered by caste conflict but it would be secured by raising the lower to the level of higher classes and not by bringing the upper to the lower level. The privileges of classes should cease and it was the duty of every aristocracy to dig its own grave and the sooner it did so the better. The more it delayed, the more it would fester and died worse death. India should be of one mind and of one resolve. Hence, we must revive the whole of India. India must conquer the world not with the help of gun, but with the help of spirituality.

For the growth of national spirit in India, independence of mind was necessary. India should expose herself to the outside world but she should not get scared of any one because her freedom would come through heroism and bravery. Indians should be proud of their country and declare that all Indians, despite their different castes and religions, are brothers. Thus in Vivekananda's theory of nationalism, there were four important components which were as follows:

- There was unity and oneness of the Indian people despite their outward diversity.
- It was necessary to remove caste differences to inculcate the spirit of social solidarity.
- There was similarity in the teachings of a different religions and India consisted of all religious, communities.
- National spirit in India could be developed by young people by devoting their life to social service and national awakening.

6.4.1 Swami Vivekananda on Democracy

Vivekananda was a great advocate of democracy and he wanted to awaken the young people to establish free and democratic government in India. For him, the principle of liberty was important because he held that there could not be growth in society as well as that of an individual without liberty. He said that everyone should have liberty of thought, discussion, food, marriage and dress. He wanted to democratize the Indian society by abolishing caste privileges, by opposing cunning of priest craft and social tyranny.

Vivekananda was a supporter of equality of all men and pleaded for the abolition of caste and class privileges. He thought that the spirit of equality in India could be inculcated through the spread of knowledge and education. Caste system was a hindrance to the development of India into a strong nation. He held that in democracy, power rested with the people. He was of the view that for the democratization of the country, the western thinkers tried to perfect the political and social order but the Eastern thinkers laid more stress on perfection of individual. For, sound social and political institutions were ultimately rooted in the goodness of individuals. For him, religious tolerance was crucial for the growth of democracy because that alone could promote the cause of liberty, equality and fraternity.

6.4.2 Swami Vivekananda on Social Change

Vivekananda wanted an overall development of India and the eradication of poverty and degeneration of the people. He was an opponent of aristocracy and feudalism. He pleaded for bridging the gap between the rich and the poor. For that purpose, he wanted to awaken the toiling masses of the country. He was of the view that in future, the Shudras or those who were toiling hard would become the rulers of the country. The socialist and

anarchist movements in the Western countries indicated this. Vivekananda developed his own theory of social change to explain this.

Vivekananda's theory of social change was based on the Indian concept of history. It was a theory of political cycle that visualised periodic and circular change in the regimes on the basis of law of change, with the help of historical evidences from the history of Greece, Rome and India. He held that in every individual, there prevailed three qualities of Sattva (Knowledge) Rajas (Valour) and Tamas (ignorance) and in every society and in every civilisation, there existed four classes of the people. All societies which had developed division of labour had four classes of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. According to Swami Vivekananda, on the basis of historical examples and law of nature, each of this class in every society governed the country, one after another in succession.

Vivekananda was of the opinion that in the first stage of human development, in almost all ancient civilisations of the world, the power was in the hands of the Brahmin or a priest. He ruled with the help of magic. His power was overthrown by the Kshatriyas or warriors who formed monarchical or oligarchic governments. But the power of this class was overthrown by the Vaishyas or traders. In most of the modern nations, such as England, the power of controlling society was in the hands of Vaishyas, who amassed wealth by carrying out commerce and trade. They became powerful only in the 18th and 19th centuries. Many a kingly crown had to kiss the ground due to the growing power of commercial classes. Now the Vaishyas had enormous power in their hands. Therefore, the conquest of India was not the conquest by Christianity but it was a conquest by the commercial classes, whose flag it was a factory chimney, whose warriors were merchant men and whose battlefields were the market places of the world. It was the opinion of Vivekananda that the power of the Vaishyas would be overthrown by the Shudras.

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According to Vivekananda, as per the law of nature, wherever there was an awakening of new and stronger life, there it tried to conquer and take the place of the old and the decaying. Nature favoured the dying of the unfit and the survival of the fittest. The power of the , Kshatriyas was brought down because of its dictatorship. He maintained that the real power of the society rested with the Shudras who produced wealth with the help of their labour I power. But they were treated harshly by the ruling classes. But they would gather strength and overthrow the rule of commercial classes. The ~hudras would become great not by acquiring the qualities of Brahmins, Kshatriyas or Vaishyas, but by retaining their own qualities as producers of wealth. In the Western world, we had seen that the ranks of the Shudras were growing and with the increase in their awakening, they would capture power. The last phase of social change was the victory of Shudras and the capture of political power by them. The rise of Socialist and anarchist movements in Europe substantiated this.

Thus, in the political theory of Vivekananda, the awakening and freedom of India was synchronised with the rise of Shudras and workers and peasants to political power. He was a supporter of nationalism and provided the basis of Neo-Vedanta to it. He used religion and culture in the cause of nationalism.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Write a short note on the Neo-Vedanta philosophy of Swami Vivekananda.

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2. Discuss briefly Swami Vivekananda's views on nationalism.

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6.5 TRANSITION OF HINDUISM: VIVEKANANDA TO SRI AUROBINDO

In the social and political ideas of Swami Vivekananda, we had seen the rise of Hinduism and Indian nationalism. New Hinduism became the tool of national consciousness in India. But this consciousness was broad enough to include Muslim, Parsee, Christian and other minorities in India. In the political ideas of Vivekananda, we could see the rudimentary elements of nationalism. But with the growth of national consciousness, Bengal produced another great nationalist thinker in whose political ideas we could see the development and growth of Indian nationalism. In the beginning of the 20th century, nationalism became more aggressive and anti-colonial. Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was instrumental in giving radical content to nationalism in India.

The Political career of Aurobindo Ghosh began in the last decade of 19th century as he spent 13 years of his life in England to get the best English education. He returned to India and studied history and philosophy. In the process, he became one of the authentic exponents of Hinduism and Hindu philosophy. He joined the extremist group in the Congress and took a leading role in the anti-partition movement in Bengal. During this period, he mobilised people through speeches and writings. He was a leading member of the radical group in the Congress party. The British government tried to suppress the Swadeshi movement. Tilak and Aurobindo were arrested, Lala Lajpat Rai was deported and many were put behind the bars, Along with

Aurobindo, his revolutionary brother Barinder was arrested on the charges of sedition. In the trial, Aurobindo was acquitted but Barinder was sent to gallows. In the jail, he had certain spiritual and mystical experiences and as a result, he decided to leave politics and concentrate on the life of philosophy and Yoga. In a brief political career, Aurobindo carried forward the process of the renaissance of Hinduism on the basis of Vedanta and deepened the concept of spiritual nationalism.

Sri Aurobindo's political ideas could be divided into two phases. In the first phase, he expounded the concept of Indian nationalism and developed the theory of passive resistance. In the second phase, as a great sage of India, he wrote extensively on the ideal of human unity and the essential characteristics of Indian model of state building. Thus, in the first phase, he was a militant nationalist eager to liberate his motherland from the bondage. In the second phase, he was a great sage who sought to give message to the world in the ideals of the human unity and nationalism to achieve the goal.

6.5.1 Sri Aurobindo on Renaissance of Hinduism

As we have seen, Sri Aurobindo was a prominent figure in the renaissance of Hinduism and he wanted to complete the task left incomplete by Swami Vivekananda and Elankimchandra - Chatterjee. Aurobindo carried forward the development of Neo-Vedanta and declared that the true message of Vedanta was selfless action or Karma Yoga. In the theory of Karma Yoga, a person was enjoined to perform his duties without aspiring for the fruits thereof, The Geeta taught us to fight against injustice because life is a series of struggles.

Aurobindo was of the opinion that there was a need of the renaissance of Hinduism which called for the awakening of the Indian soul which was in deep slumber. It could achieve its glory through the philosophy of Vedanta which gave more importance to spirituality than to science. The West glorified science but science is a light within a limited room and not the sun

that which illumines the world. The spirit of every human heart had to be awakened to revive the glory of Hinduism. Hinduism should change the rags of the past so that its beauty might be restored. It must alter its bodily appearance so that her soul might be newly expressed. According to Sri Aurobindo, the goal of new Hinduism was to pave the way for emergence of Indian nationalism and to harmonise the world and the spirit. He held that the genius of the Hindu was not for pure action but for thought and aspiration realised in action

6.5.2 Sri Aurobindo on Evil Effects of British Rule

Aurobindo was a harsh critic of the British rule in India. He did not agree with the opinion of the moderates that it was a divine dispensation. He said that it was a curse for the majority of the Indian people because the foreign rule in India sapped moral and mental energies of the Indian people. The British rule ruined the economy of India and did not allow the latter to develop as an independent nation. It disorganised the Indians into a crowd, with no centre of strength or means of resistance. Her industries and trade were ruined and agriculture devastated. The British government in India was the worst type of bureaucratic despotism motivated by plunder and domination. India was held in subjection for the benefit of the British ruling classes. The British claim of a good government was false and a good and efficient government was no substitute for self-government and freedom.

It was the contention of Aurobindo that the spirit of India could be freed only by securing complete independence of the country. Freedom from foreign rule was an inalienable right of the people. The evil effects of the British rule could be eradicated only by overthrowing it. Its continuance would further worsen the situation in India.

6.6 SRI AUROBINDO'S CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL MODERATES IN INDIA

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When Aurobindo Ghosh entered Indian politics, it was dominated by the moderate leaders who were of the view that British rule in India was a divine dispensation. Aurobindo was highly critical of their approach to politics. Hence, he wrote a series of articles in the 'InduPrakash' of Pune under the title 'New Lamps for Old' and severely criticised the politics of petitions and prayers of the moderate leaders. He said that the Congress leaders had very narrow and limited ideals. The Congress was selfishly frigid of social development and awakening of the masses and organically infirm. It was unaware of deeper facts; therefore, it did not articulate the popular opinion of the entire Indian people. It lacked the spirit of sincerity, whole heartedness; right type of methods right type of leaders because when the blind led the blind both were bound to fall in a ditch.

Aurobindo argued that during Ram Mohan Roy's period, politics of prayers and petition was the only possible policy, but it was wrong to continue it even in the later years. He pleaded for the adoption of new and strong methods. He wrote that the ideas that governed the country were purely western; hence, they could not seize the attention of the people. The Indians should realize that both the liberals and the conservatives were supporters of the continuance of the British rule in India; therefore, the Congress should not expect much from John Morley - the liberal leader - because he was an ardent supporter of imperialism.

He called for a complete change in the policy of the Congress party because under the moderate leadership, the Congress confused sufferance with freedom and favour of foreign despotism with the right of citizenship. If the Congress did not understand it, it would remain unfit for freedom and the standing hindrance to the country's freedom. He pleaded for the adoption of new policies and programmes to replace the politics of supplication carried out by the moderates.

6.6.1 Sri Aurobindo on the Essence of Politics

After the partition of Bengal, there was a tremendous upheaval in the country and a large number of the people joined the Swadeshi movement led by the radical group of the Congress party. Aurobindo joined Tilak, Bipinchandra Pal and LalaLajpatRai to popularise the programme of the party. He was a philosopher of new party. He wanted the Congress to be with people, speak in their language, identify itself with the wishes and aspirations of the - people and Indianise the movement in the true sense of the term.

Aurobindoaid that Swaraj, Swadeshi, national education and boycott were four methods of the new party. For him, 'Swaraj' meant complete independence because he argued that a political agitation was not launched to secure a few seats in bureaucracy and in assembly but to secure right of self-government to the people. Swadeshi meant using the products that were manufactured in our country only and national education stood for imparting education to Indians that suited to their temperament, needs and culture. Boycott meant not using the products manufactured in England. All these four methods were necessary to train the people in national spirit and to be architects of liberty. Thus, for Aurobindo, new politics stood for self-development and self-help. He hoped that it would inculcate the spirit of nationalism in people.

6.6.2 Sri Aurobindo on Nationalism

Sri AurobindoGhosh was considered as a prophet of the Indian nationalism. Along with Bankimchandra, Tilak and Dayanand, he developed the theory of nationalism in India. Through their self-less work, the forces of nationalism were released.

Sri Aurobindo's theory of nationalism was based on Vedanta philosophy which saw unity and oneness in man and God. There was an essential unity in India despite the existence of the outward differences because the spirit of unity and oneness pervaded it. For her rejuvenation, India needed "Shakti' or

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the power that was physical, moral, material and spiritual. The power or strength of a nation depended on the unity of her nation. Taking a clue from Bankimchandra, he declared that India was infact Mother India which represented united power and Shakti of millions of her children. Mother India represented infinite energy of her people: He identified Mother India with God and maintained that it was God's divine mission to set India free. Also, it was divine work to serve 300 million Indian people. There was a deep divine purpose in India's freedom because India's freedom movement represented time spirit that would liberate resurgent Asia and all the subject people in the world.

Aurobindo was critical of those people who claimed that due to cultural, racial and linguistic diversity and divisions in the Indian society, India could never become a nation. He pointed out that if we carefully studied the history of Europe and England of the last two centuries, we would realise that their condition was no way different from India. But now England and many other countries of Europe had emerged as nations. India would also succeed to form as a nation because it was a law of history. He held that without political freedom, true advancement of the country was not possible. He was of the opinion that education played a key role in the development of national consciousness in the country.

Aurobindo pointed out that there were certain essential elements in the formation of nationality. These essential elements were geographical unity, common past, a powerful common interest impelling towards unity and certain favourable political conditions which enabled the impulse to realise itself in an organised government. Its goal was to establish a single and united existence. According to Sri Aurobindo, a common enthusiasm coalescing with a common interest was the most powerful promoter of nationality. He pointed out that there existed the necessary conditions for the growth of nationalism in India because Indians had been slowly realising the importance of national unity and offering united resistance to foreign rule.

Aurobindo recognised the importance of villages in the Indian life and pointed out that unlike in the West, where the city was the Centre of all political action, in India village was the backbone of national persistence. Indian villages were democratic, autonomous and self-governing. Therefore, regeneration of the village was important for the regeneration of India. He said that village should retain its autonomy and self-government but at the same time, 'should seek to promote national cohesion. Hence, he held that the days of independent village had gone and must not be revived. National unity could only be achieved when the rural population was developed into a mighty, single and compact democratic nationality. The ideal of national Swaraj must be modelled on the old village community which was self-sufficient, autonomous and self-governing.

Aurobindo's concept of nationalism was based on the philosophy of Vedanta which stood for unity between God and man. He used Hindu religious ideas and symbols. He realised that the ideal of Indian nationalism was largely Hindu in character but he pointed out that this nationalism was wide enough to include the Muslim, his culture and traditions. He said that the Hindu should win Swaraj for himself as well as for the Muslim. A large part of his theory of nationalism was based on awakening the dormant spirit of nationalism that was latent in the soul of India. The struggle against the foreign rule would enable it to achieve self-realization.

6.6.3 Sri Aurobindo on Passive Resistance

The new party of the radicals wanted to use new methods against the government to secure political rights for the Indian people. Aurobindo thought that the method of passive resistance, which was used by the Irish nationalists, would be ideal for India. Hence, he developed theory of passive resistance in a series of articles published in the weekly called 'BandeMataram'.

6.6.4 Theory of Passive Resistance

According to Sri Aurobindo, for a subject country, the attainment of political independence was its highest goal. But there were different means to attain that goal. In India, for Indian patriots, three alternative means were available to win Swaraj and they were as follows:

- 1) the method of prayers and petitions.
- 2) the method of armed revolt.
- 3) the method of self-development and passive resistance.

In the Indian context, Sri Aurobindo pointed out that the adoption of method of prayers and petitions was out of question because its futility was proved. Again, in the Indian context, the method of armed revolt or resistance was not possible or desirable. Hence, Indians had no alternative but to take recourse to self-development which was expressed in the methods of Swadeshi and boycott. Pursuit of both the methods strengthened the cause of self-help. The programme of self-help and self-development would be opposed by bureaucracy and government because it challenged their authority. In such a situation, the people should adopt passive resistance to the government. Passive resistance meant the resistance to authority of the government in an organised manner and through peaceful means. The use of arms was not allowed in passive resistance.

According to Sri Aurobindo, in India, attainment of political freedom was the goal of passive resistance. Freedom in India was necessary to stop the drain of wealth and to carry out social reforms. The programme of Swadeshi, national education, boycott and establishment of arbitration courts was the programme of self-development. But this programme, on its own, would not be in a position to secure political freedom for India. Political freedom could only be secured by organised passive resistance carried out on a large scale. This policy was followed by Parnell in Ireland. Its main

object was to paralyse the functioning of the government by withdrawing support and co-operation to the government.

6.6.5 Methods of Passive Resistance

The essence of passive resistance was to challenge the authority of the state by following non-violent means because under the present circumstances armed conflict or a violent aggressive resistance in the form of sabotage, assassinations and terrorism was not possible and desirable, He said that "ultimately our methods depended upon the type of opposition we met and the type of response they gave to our agitation." Those who were agitating for noble cause should be ready for sufferings and sacrifices because passive resistance required more universal endurance. One of the major benefits of passive resistance was that through this method, we would be in a position to involve people and let them learn methods of struggle and sufferings. It would train the Indians in heroic actions and boost their morale. It would bring pressure on the government to keep the promises it had made to people.

According to Aurobindo, passive resistance worked on two levels. At the first level, it encouraged the people to pursue the methods of self-development such as Swadeshi, and national education and at the second level, it sought to exert pressure on the government to concede the demands of the people. According to him, in the passive resistance, the following, insures would be undertaken to achieve success:

- Refusal to assist the government.
- Refusal to pay taxes to the government.
- Boycotting the products manufactured in the foreign countries.
- Boycotting the government schools, colleges and law courts.
- Starting our own schools, colleges and arbitration courts to train people in the method of self-help and national independence.

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Sri Aurobindo was of the opinion that to pursue the policy of passive resistance effectively, - we should develop a well-known political organisation, linking province to province and district to district. This organisation would represent the national will of the people.

Though the method of passive resistance was as legal as the method of prayers and petitions, keeping the struggle within the bounds of law was not its pre-condition. Occasionally, the passive resistance had to break the unjust and oppressive laws which required a high degree of truthfulness and courage. Because, if the movement succeeded in getting the support of the people, the repression by the government would increase. The main purpose of passive resistance was to make law unworkable by a general and organised disobedience. It was his opinion that conflict was the heart of passive resistance and it brooked no meek submission to authority. Passive resistance method could be changed if the situation so demanded. He held that the norms of general ethics should not be applied to him because he was a Kshatriya and a fighter and not a saint. Aurobindo pointed out that if the government did not consider the legitimate demands of the people, the people would go underground and take recourse to sabotage and terrorism. Terrorism might perish of insatiation; coercion was its food.

Sri Aurobindo's theory of passive resistance was influenced by the Irish home rule movement against the British rule. It is to be noted that Aurobindo's ideas on resistance could be considered as precursor to the Gandhian theory of Satyagraha. He was of the opinion that with the development of passive resistance movement, the aspirations of the people would grow and they would acquire the capacity to actualize national self-consciousness and national will in their day to day activities.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. What were the evil effects of the British rule, according to Aurobindo.

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2. Discuss Sri Aurobindo's theory of Nationalism.

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3. Describe in brief the methods of passive resistance advocated by Aurobindo.

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6.7 SRI AUROBINDO -THE INDIAN THEORY OF STATE

Sri Aurobindo renounced active politics in 1910 and left for Pondicherry to pursue his spiritual goals. All attempts to bring him back to national politics did not succeed. In the second phase of his life, Aurobindo emerged as a great sage and philosopher and received worldwide respect. He became the authentic representative of Indian wisdom. He wrote in 1947, a book explaining the spirit and form of the Indian polity.

According to Aurobiado, ancient Indian thinkers developed an Indian model of state building which was democratic in character in the sense that it allowed communal freedomland self- government and autonomy to the village and the community. It was a synthesis of communal autonomies of village, town, caste, guild and family. The state was a means of holding together and synthesised free and living organic systems and autonomies into fret: slid living organisms. Indians successfully struck the right balance

between stability and change. It was an organic totality of social existence. Ancient Indian system had a capacity to renew itself. According to Aurobindo, the Indians did not want to establish a mechanical state that laid exaggerated dependence on legislation, administration and force. The Western idea of state was artificial and the state in the West was imposed upon the people. The Indian system was flexible and was built up from within. The Western state was based on a rigid uniformity but in the Indian system, new elements were harmonized without destroying the original elements and existing institutions. It was a creation of practical reason and the common experience of communal self-government.

Aurobindo was of the opinion that a rich and creative thought was necessary to create a transmitting medium between the spirit and the external world. The Indians did not develop creative thought; hence, they had lost independence. He said that Indians should not imitate the West and reproduce the ideals and forms of west because it was not creative. Instead of blindly following the West, they should recover their ancient creative power and in the light of principle of Dharma, retrieve the spirit and form of Indian polity.

6.7.1 Political Ideas of Sri Aurobindo - A Critical Study

Sri Aurobindo can be considered as one of the greatest political thinkers in modern India. He added almost a religious fervor to nationalism by identifying mother India with 'Shakti' or power of the Indian people. He defined the essence of religious nationalism in a manner which, for its sheer passion, had never been surpassed. He came to idealise his native land and faith and identified one with other. The fervor of his faith in 'India' helped his countrymen to transcend the differences of caste, language, custom which had hindered the development among them. Secondly, his ideas on passive resistance broke new grounds in the sense that in his theory, he had visualised most of Gandhian ideas and programs though he had differed with him on the issue of primacy of truth and non-violence. Thirdly, in his theory of state, he sought to represent the authentic Indian tradition to the world and

claimed that the Indian theory of state building was superior to the Western theory of state building.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Discuss the salient features of Aurobindo's theory of state.

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6.8 LET US SOME UP

In this unit, we have studied the political ideas of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, who were considered as the two great figures in the renaissance of Hinduism in modern- times. Both the thinkers identified renaissance of Hinduism with the emergence of nationalism in India and held that rejuvenation of Hinduism in the spirit of Vedanta philosophy was a precondition for it. Hence, they gave new interpretation of the Vedanta which declared that the service of man was service of God. Vivekananda's concern for the plight of the downtrodden sections was complimentary to it. Both Aurobindo and Vivekananda were of the opinion that religion and culture played a key role in the making of nationalism as they added rare fervour and passion to it. One of the notable features of their nationalism was that it was not based on the exclusion of any community and included all religious communities. Thus, their nationalism was all inclusive. They inspired thousands of young men in undertaking the patriotic causes. Swami Vivekananda's concept of social change and Sri Aurobindo's theory of passive resistance can be considered as significant contributions to the modern Indian political thought.

6.9 KEY WORDS

Raniakrishna Mission: Ramakrishna Mission is a Hindu religious and spiritual organisation which forms the core of a worldwide spiritual movement known as the Ramakrishna Movement or the Vedanta Movement.

Arya Samaj: Arya Samaj is a monotheistic Indian Hindu reform movement that promotes values and practices based on the belief in the infallible authority of the Vedas. The samaj was founded by the sannyasi Dayanand Saraswati on 10 April 1875.

Satyashodhak Samaj: Satyashodhak Samaj was a social reform society founded by Jyotirao Phule in Pune, Maharashtra, on 24 September 1873. espoused a mission of education and increased social rights and political access for underprivileged groups.

Brahmo Samaj: Brahmo Samaj is the societal component of Brahmoism, which began as a monotheistic reformist movement of the Hindu religion that appeared during the Bengal Renaissance. It is practised today mainly as the Adi Dharm after its eclipse in Bengal consequent to the exit of the Tattwabodini Sabha from its ranks in 1839.

Neo-Vedanta: Neo-Vedanta, also called Hindu modernism, neo-Hinduism, Global Hinduism and Hindu Universalism, are terms to characterize interpretations of Hinduism that developed in the 19th century.

6.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- 1) Write a short note on the Neo-Vedanta philosophy of Swami Vivekananda.
- 2) Discuss briefly Swami Vivekananda's views on nationalism.
- 3) Describe in brief the methods of passive resistance advocated by Aurobinda.

- 4) Discuss Sri Aurobindo's theory of Nationalism.
- 5) What were the evil effects of the British rule, according to Aurobindo.
- 6) Discuss the salient features of Aurobindo's theory of state.

6.11 SUGGEST READING AND REFERENCES

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6.12 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 6.3
- 2) See the sub-section 6.4

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See the sub-section 6.5.2
- 2) See the sub-section 6.6.2
- 3) See the sub-section 6.6.5

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) See the sub-section 6.7

UNIT - 7: HINDUTVA: V. D. SAVARKAR AND M. S. GOLWALKAR

STRUCTURE

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Background of the Rise of Hindu Nationalist Ideology

7.2.1 Political Career of V D Savarkar

7.2.2 Savarkar's Views on Social Change

7.3 V D Savarkar on Social Reforms

7.4 Hindu Nationalism of V D Savarkar

7.4.1 Hindutva as Cultural Nationalism

7.4.2 Hindu Nation and Indian State.

7.4.3 Hindu Nationalism of V D Savarkar - A Critical Study

7.4.4 Growth of Hindutva and the Rashtriya Swayam-Seva kSangh
(RSS)

7.5 Hindu Nationalism of M S Golwalkar

7.5.1 Nation as Motherland

7.5.2 Territorial Nationalism Rejected

7.5.3 Hindu Nationalism and Minorities

7.6 Golwalkar on Social Organisation

7.7 Political Ideas of M S Golwalkar

7.7.1 Three World Views of Change

7.7.2 Negative and Positive Hindutva

7.7.3 Hindu Nationalism of M S Golwalkar A Critical Study

7.8 Let Us Sum Up

7.9 Key Words

7.10 Questions for Review

7.11 Suggested Readings and References

7.12 Answer to Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the Background of the Hindu Nationalist Ideology
- Know about V D Savarkar Ideology
- Hindu Nationalism and motherland
- Political Ideas of M S Golwalkar

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The ideology of 'Hindutva' was essentially the ideology of Hindu nationalism. The first prominent exponent of Hindu nationalist ideology was Mr. V. D. Savarkar. He wrote a book called 'Hindutva' in 1924 to explain the basic principles of Hindu nationalism. In 1925, the R.S.S. or the RashtriyaSwayamSevakSangh was formed to protect the Hindus from the Muslim 'aggression'. The R.S.S. was established by Dr. KeshqBaliramHedgewar. In the subsequent period, Savarkar and the R.S.S. propagated the Hindu nationalist ideology against the ideology of the composite Indian nationalism expounded by Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. Mr. M. S. Golwalkar, who succeeded Hedgewar expounded the Hindu nationalist ideology of the R.S.S. The basic difference between Hinduism and Hindutva is that Hinduism stands for Hindu religion, but Hindutva is a political ideology that wants to establish Hindu nation in India. Hinduism does not have any political agenda, but Hindutva has a specific political agenda.

7.2 BACKGROUND OF THE RISE OF HINDU NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY

After the failure of Non-cooperation movement, there was growth of communal and separatist ideas both among Hindus and Muslims. Both of them claimed that their ideology was not a communal ideology but it was a true nationalist ideology which took into consideration the culture and religion of the people. After 1922-23, the followers of LokmanyaTilak

started supporting the Hindutva movement. Along with them the newly educated Hindu middle class also supported it. The Mopala revolt in Kerala created a lot of unrest in the Hindu Community.

The main arguments of the Hindutva supporters were as follows:

- a) In the past, the Hindus suffered many a defeat and lost their independence to the foreign invaders because of lack of unity. They had numbers, valour and resources at their command but they faced defeat due to lack of unity.
- b) The Hindus had been losing their numbers due to the aggressive proselitisation by the Christian missionaries and the Muslims. As a result, in a long time they would be reduced to a minority in their land of birth. Hence, in order to maintain the level of Hindu population, the Shuddhi and Samghatana movements should be launched. Shuddhi stands for reconversion of Hindus.
- c) There was a need to protect the political interests of Hindus because the British government was hostile to them; the Muslims aggressively pursued their separatist agenda and the congress under the false notion of secularism was betraying the cause of Hindus.

In India, we could see the emergence of two traditions of Hindutva, the first tradition was led by V. D. Savarkar and the second tradition was led by M. S. Golwalkar. Though both the traditions professed their allegiance to the ideology of Hindutva, their emphasis and methods differed.

7.2.1 Political Career of V D. Savarkar

V. D. Savarkar (1883-1966) was a charismatic leader, who played a significant role in the freedom struggle of India. For his revolutionary activities he was sent to Andamans in 1911 and was brought back to India in 1922. Subsequently, he was kept confined to Ratnagiri town from 1923-1937. During this period, he suffered great hardships and made countless

sacrifices in the cause of freedom of the country. There were two phases in the ideological development of Savarkar. In the first phase of his life, he was influenced by the philosophy of the Italian nationalist Joseph Mazzini and supported the concept of the composite Indian nationalism, which was not different from the nationalism of Aurobindo and Tilak. During this period, religion played an important role in his concept of nationalism, but it did not exclude any religious community from it. But in the second phase of his career after 1922-23, Savarkar became the supporter of Hindu nationalism. After his release from the confinement in 1937, he joined the Hindu Mahasabha and became its President from 1938 to 1945.

7.2.2 Savarkar's Views on Social Change

V. D. Savarkar was a product of renaissance in the Western India and in his early days he was influenced by the philosophy of Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, a rationalist philosopher. Agarkar was deeply influenced by the ideas of Herbert Spencer, J. Bentham and J.S.Mill. Savarkar was not a religious man and throughout his life, he eschewed all religious practices. From the European philosophical tradition, he borrowed three important ideas:

- 1) In nature and in all human societies, the principle of life struggle determined the course of action because in this life struggle, the fittest survived and those who could not stand the struggle got eliminated.
- 2) Violence was in-built in the creation of nature and the nature abhorred absolute non-violence. But due to gradual development of human beings, both violence and non-violence got intertwined. Hence, in this difficult life, man should acquire strength and power to overcome the problems he faced.
- 3) There was no absolute morality in the world. Morality or immorality of a particular action was ultimately determined by the factors such as time, space and object. The use of all weapons was desirable provided it was directed against slavery and imperialism. Thus it was relativistic ethics.

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Savarkar was a supporter of positivist epistemology and accepted the direct evidence of the senses as the only valid source of knowledge. He rejected the sanctity of religious scriptures and maintained that all religious scriptures were man-made and their teaching could not be applied to all societies in all times. He rejected otherworldly philosophy of Shankara and Ramanuja and discounted otherworldly pursuits of man. He held that to secure the progress of the country, to acquire more power and strength and to live good and prosperous life, we must pursue these worldly goals. For that purpose, we must use science and technology. He favored the pursuit of science and reason and criticized 'irrational and superstitious practices of Hindus.

Thus, in Savarkar's theory of social change, the principle of life struggle played an important role. For him, reason, science and technology were important to bring about the change in the society.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Describe briefly causes of emergence of politics of Hindutva in India.

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7.3 V D SAVARKAR ON SOCIAL REFORMS

Savarkar was a great supporter of social reforms and he exhorted the Hindus to accept modern practices based on science and reason and reject the religious superstitions and customs which were standing hindrance to the social progress. All the religious scriptures - were man-made and they were subject to scrutiny of reason. Due to blind faith in the scriptural authority,

the Hindus became superstitious, fatalist and credulous. This weakened their desire to know more. They neglected science and technology.

Savarkar was a critic of caste system. He held that both 'Chaturvarna' and caste systems proved very disastrous for the unity of Hindu society. The 'Chatruvarna' was based not on any scientific criterion, but was a creation of scriptures and age old beliefs. It gave birth to inhuman practice of untouchability. The caste encouraged and institutionalized inequality divided Hindu society into numerous compartments and sowed the seeds of hostility and hatred among the Hindus. Historically, Hindus constantly faced defeats at the hands of invaders because of the caste system. The untouchability was a distortion and it was wrong to consider any human being as untouchable. It militated against the spirit of human brotherhood. Hindus had developed several shackles that had been keeping them in chains which were based on the principles of purity and impurity. Hindus enslaved women due to these wrong customs.

Savarkar wanted the Hindus to reject blind faith in the Vedas and customs and tried to acquire material strength. They should accept the supremacy of machines and technology and break all bonds of blind faith and customs. It was incumbent upon Hindus to weed out all the defects in their society so that they could emerge as a strong nation in the world.

For Savarkar, social reforms, rationalism and science were needed for the development of a Hindu society which would enable it to acquire the necessary strength. He said that in modern times, nation was accepted as a viable unit for human beings. In the international politics, conflict and competition was raging between different nations of the world. In the international politics, language of strength was understood. Hence, Hindus should acquire strength through the pursuit of science and technology, so that they could protect their national interest as well as self-interest.

7.4 HINDU NATIONALISM OF V D SAVARKAR

Savarkar was the first systematic exponent of the Hindu nationalism. He elaborately described his theory of Hindutva in his book 'Hindutva' published in 1924. By that time, he had abandoned his concept of Indian nationalism that he borrowed from Joseph Mazzini in favour of Hindu nationalism. In the process of developing his concept of Hindu nationalism, he rejected some of the arguments of territorial nationalism. He held that the existence of a mere territory did not make nation but nation was made by the people who constituted themselves as a political community, bound together by cultural affinities and traditions.

7.4.1 Hindutva as Cultural Nationalism

Savarkar was a supporter of cultural nationalism. He was of the opinion that identity formation was the essence of nationalism. India had received such identity from the Hindu religion. This identity was evolved over a long period of time. Despite having outward differences, the Hindus were internally bound together by cultural, religious, social, linguistic and historical affinities. These affinities were developed through the process of assimilation and association of countless centuries. It moulded the Hindus into a homogeneous and organic nation and above all induced a will to a common national life. This homogeneity was important because other sections in the society had divergent cultural traditions.

Savarkar argued that it was cultural, racial and religious unity that counted more in the formation of the nation. While defining nation, Savarkar wrote that nation meant a political community which had occupied a contiguous and adequate territory and developed independent national identity. This community was internally organised and was bound together by cultural and racial affinities. He held that the Hindus had become nation because they possessed all these characteristics.

Savarkar was of the opinion that Hindus constituted nation because they had developed close affinities with the land bound by I-Iimalayas to the Indian Ocean and the Indus River. Hindus considered India as their fatherland and

holy land. Savarkar tried to show that those people constituted nation who considered India as fatherland and holy land. In this definition, Savarkar effectively excluded those people who did not consider India as their holy land - because their sacred religious places were not situated in India. For him, Hindu nationalism stood for the unity of all Hindus. For him, Hindu society and not Hindu religion came first; Hindus were a nation because they were a self-enclosed community which was internally organised on the basis of racial, religious and linguistic affinities. The Hindus shared a common historical past. Savarkar knew that ultimately, nationalism was a psychological feeling and it was necessary to cultivate national consciousness among the Hindus. The common affinities should be used to strengthen the national consciousness. He wanted Hindus to cultivate the affinities that encouraged national consciousness and undermine the tendencies that divided the Hindu society.

7.4.2 Hindu Nation and Indian State.

Savarkar wanted the Hindu nation to be strong and powerful so that India could survive as an independent strong nation in the ferocious life struggle that was going on between different countries of the world. He held that in the modern times, nation had been recognised as the only viable political entity and all the societies of the world had been organised on the basis of nation. Hence, everybody had to think about his national policies in the context of nation only. There was nothing parochial or sectarian about it.

For Savarkar, Hindus as a community, formed nation. Hence, he laid stress on the principle of exclusion. He excluded Muslims and Christians from the Indian nation because they did not consider India as a holy land because their sacred religious places were situated outside India. Hence, he laid emphasis on the difference between Hindus and Muslims. Therefore, He wrote that everything that was common among us went out. Resolve to oppose them; Hindus were constantly fighting against Non-Hindus to save their community. Hence, he launched the Shuddhi movement to reconvert the converted Hindus to Hinduism and to purge Marathi language of Arabic

and Persian words. The Muslims were not assimilated in India, in fact, they tried to absorb Hinduism but they failed in their efforts. The prolonged resistance of the Hindus to Muslim invasions moulded them into a strong and resolute nation.

What were the rights and positions of minorities in such a Hindu nation? Savarkar held that nation was a cultural category but state was a political category. All Hindus were the members of the nation. Non-Hindus might not become member of the nation but they were members of the Indian state. He maintained that Hindus did not advance any claims, privileges and rights over and above non-Hindu sections. He wrote, "Let Indian state be purely Indian, and let there be no distinction as far as franchise, public services, offices and taxation on the ground of regional was concerned. Let all citizens of the Indian state be treated equally according to their individual worth irrespective of their racial and religious percentage in the general population." He was ready to concede all rights to the minorities but did not think it necessary to concede the demands of special interests advanced by Muslims.

Thus, Savarkar made a distinction between the Indian state and Hindu nation and considered the Hindu nation as a part of the Indian state.

7.4.3 Hindu Nationalism of V D Savarkar - A Critical Study

Savarkar was the first Indian thinker who declared that Hindus formed separate nation in, India. He stood for a strong Hindu nation which would withstand and survive ferocious life struggle among the nations. He sought to popularize the Hindu nationalism throughout his life with the help of the Hindu Mahasabha.

There are obvious tensions and logical inconsistencies in the Hindu nationalism of V. D. Savarkar. He could not properly define the concept of nationalism because Hindus, Muslims and Christians shared common traditions and affinities in India even in the religious field. His advocacy of

reason, science and technology was instrumental in the sense that for him they were useful because they helped him forge strong Hindu nation. Reason and science in the West were the culmination of the development of social philosophy which fought against religious prejudices and superstitions. The same could not be used to strengthen the cause of religious nationalism. From that point of view, the use of the word 'reason' was deplorable because rationally speaking the whole of communities could not be excluded from the definition , of the nation on the grounds of loyalty and patriotism because the betrayers of the national interest could come from any community. Also, his distinction between the nation and the state was not convincing because both of them (nation and state) could not be separated and they came together as nation state. He conceded all the citizenship rights to non-Hindus except the membership of the nation. This would definitely create distinctions among the people and destroy national unity. A large section of the society would feel that they were excluded from the national mainstream for no fault of theirs. Savarkar's advocacy of the relativist ethics did not resolve these tensions because reason, science and relativist ethics did not recognize scripture loyalties. They had to be applied to all human beings across the board.

7.4.4 Growth of Hindutva and the Rashtriya Swayam-Sevak Sangh (RSS)

The second school of Hindutva or Hindu nationalism was expounded by the leaders of the RSS. The RSS was established by Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar in 1925 to protect the interests of the Hindus. Dr. Hedgewar was a follower of Lokmanya Tilak and in his young days, he had contacts with some armed revolutionaries of Calcutta. Hedgewar was close to Dr. B. S. Munje. In 1920-21, Dr. Hedgewar took part in the non-cooperation movement. After the suspension of the movement, the relations between the Hindus and the Muslims got deteriorated. Hedgewar thought that due to the disorganized nature of Hindu society, the Hindus were suffering losses in the

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communal riots. Hence, he decided to establish a strong organisation of the Hindus to protect their interests.

In 1925, he established the RSS. It was a cultural organisation in the sense that it did not directly participate in politics. Dr. Hedgewar set three objectives before the RSS and that were as follows:

- 1) Mobilisation of the Hindus to protect their interests and to bring about unity and coherence in all their activities.
- 2) Opposition to British militant and communal Muslim politics and the Congress which had been following the policy of appeasement of Muslims.
- 3) Increasing the influence of the R.S.S. in all walks of life by patiently undertaking organisational work and by inculcating the spirit of patriotism. According to Dr. Hedgewar, the basic purpose of the RSS was not to capture political power but to increase the influence of Hindus in the public life of the country.

During Dr. Hedgewar's time, the R.S.S. became popular among the white collar middle classes. It did not take part in the civil disobedience movement of 1930 and did not directly get involved in the political activities of the Hindu Mahasabha. In 1940, Dr. Hedgewar nominated a young university Professor Mr. Madhav Golwalkar as the chief of the R.S.S. The RSS did not join the tumultuous Quit India Movement of 1942. Golwalkar continued to occupy the position of the chief of the RSS upto 1973. It was M. S. Golwalkar who expounded the RSS' concept of Hindu nationalism. He was an impressive personality. He had studied ancient Indian philosophical texts. Throughout his life - Guruji-as he was called was a great teacher and commanded unique respect and following. His enunciation of the Hindu nationalism became popular among the youth.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. 1. What according to Savarkar, is the role of social reforms in strengthening the Hindu nation?

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2. Discuss the main features of Hindu nationalism of V. D. Savarkar.

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7.5 HINDU NATIONALISM OF M S GOLWALKAR

The Hindu nationalism of M. S. Golwalkar was different from that of V. D. Savarkar in the sense that Golwalkar's theory of nationalism was based on Indian spiritualism. Savarkar was a modernist and he did not oppose westernization. But Golwalkar was a supporter of Hindu culture and opposed the Western way of life. He held that the Indian spiritualism was superior to the Western materialism. He believed that India was a holy land and it was the divine will that India should lead the world.

7.5.1 Nation as Motherland

Golwalkar was an exponent of cultural nationalism and he identified nationalism with love for our motherland. He held that the Hindus considered India as their motherland because, since thousands of years they had been identified with this holy land. In this holy land only, Hindus registered all their great achievements. Hindus were children of this ancient land as they were nurtured by water flowing from her rivers and food produced by her rich soil. It was wrong to believe that India became a nation in the recent past. In fact, she had been existing as a nation since thousands of years. There might be some outward differences, but there existed basic

unity in India. All Hindus were bound together by same religion, same language and same culture. The Great Sage Sanltararealized this principle and established the religious centers at four different corners of India. He held that all Hindus were permeated by the spirit of unity and solidarity.

While discussing different elements of Hindu nationality, Golwalkar pointed out that existence of contiguous territory was the first element of nationality. The second element of nationality was the characteristics of the people who inhabited that territory. The people should consider this land as a holy land and motherland. They should be united by common culture, common traditions, and common historical past and common ideals. This commonality brought them together and helped them evolve their own way of life. Third element of nationality was common economic interests of the people living in that particular territory. All these elements contributed in making the national character of our country. Thus, in Hindu nationalism of M. S. Golwalkar cultural factors played a very important role. Thus he laid emphasis on developing the right type of attitude in the minds of the people by giving them proper training and education. He was of the opinion that the Hindu method of imparting right type of values and practices to the people was useful. It is only through this that the Hindu nation could evolve into national organism pulsating with the spirit of unity and oneness.

7.5.2 Territorial Nationalism Rejected

We have seen in our previous discussion that M. S. Golwalkar was a supporter of the cultural nationalism and he defined his nationalism in the light of cultural traditions of the Hindus. He rejected the concept of territorial nationalism as humbug. He held that an assortment of people having different cultures and languages could not become nation simply because they resided in a particular territory. This group of divergent people could not be called nation because it could not function as a coherent whole. It was not permeated by the living spirit of unity and oneness. It lacked the life, blood and the living spring of culture. According Golwalkar, it was the

cultural affinity and common historical traditions that bound the people together and made them of one mind and one body.

Golwalkar was of the opinion that territorial nationalism was lifeless, unscientific and unnatural. If we accepted the principle of territorial nationalism, then the country would get converted into 'Dharmashala'. Anybody could become a member of one nation. But this theory of nationalism was wrong because a nation was normally formed of the people who had developed common cultural affinities and who considered India as their motherland. He was of the opinion that the concept of territorial nationalism was responsible for the partition of the country and disunity in the country. It had sapped our national energy and destroyed the life spring of nationalism that nourished the national spirit of the Indian people. Territorial nationalism was unnatural and unscientific because Muslims did not consider themselves as a part of the nation. He maintained that it was this divisive and anti-national agenda that resulted in the partition of the country. The Partition of India was a standing example of the failure of the concept of territorial nationalism. As against this, Golwalkar's cultural nationalism was based on five principles: common religion, common race, common language, common culture and count&. These five principles generated the national consciousness in the minds of the people and made them of one mind and of one resolve.

7.5.3 Hindu Nationalism and Minorities

Golwalkar rejected the concept of the Indian or territorial nationalism as reality. He claimed that due to certain historical and cultural factors, Hindus in India constituted a nation and they considered India as their motherland. But as far as other religious communities in India were concerned, they did not consider India as their motherland or holy land. They took pride in the fact that they were heirs of the invaders of India. They were invaders who waged wars against Hindus to keep them in subjection. They had developed extra territorial loyalties. Though most of the converted Muslims and Christians were originally Hindus, because of their conversion, they lost their

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devotion and affection for motherland. They started claiming the foreign racial genealogies as their own. Therefore, Golwalkar was of the opinion that these minorities could not be considered as a part of the Hindu nation.

Golwalkar was of the opinion that the non-Hindu minorities could also become a part of the Indian nation, if they abandoned their separatist tendencies and accepted all the traditions as their own. He exhorted the Muslims and the Christians to join the mainstream and be a part of the Hindu national tradition. He held that these communities should Indians themselves by accepting and imbibing the Hindu cultural and historical traditions. They should consider themselves as inheritors of the great Hindu heroes described in the epics and take part in the celebration of Hindu festivals. They should imbibe the Hindu way of life. He pointed out that it was not necessary for them to leave their religion. They should practice their religion as they wanted because they had freedom of religion and worship. Also, by accepting the Hindu way of life, they could remain Muslims and Christians. It was high time that they should return back to home and be a part of the great national tradition. Golwalkar said that he did not want to do this with the help of coercion or force, but through love and persuasion. He held that the minorities would enjoy all social and political rights but they would not be given any privileges.

Arguing further, Golwalkar pointed out that since long, Hindus had developed unique method of assimilation and absorption which enabled the foreign elements that entered into society to get integrated into Indian society without losing their identity. The best example of this assimilation was that of Parsis who came to India from Iran to escape the religious persecution and became a part of the great Indian tradition without losing their religion and identity.

Golwalkar was highly critical of the so called progressive and secular Hindus for encouraging the process of identity formation among the minorities and backward castes. They justified these divisive tendencies on the grounds of secularism and democracy. Instead of promoting the process of integration in different parts of Hindu community, they were encouraging

the divisive tendencies to grow. He was of the opinion that these westernized and denationalized Hindus would not be able to forge unity of the Indian nation on the grounds of pluralism and secularism. These processes were developed as a reaction and thus they would not be in a position to develop a positive content in their activities.

7.6 GOLWALKAR ON SOCIAL ORGANISATION

M. S. Golwalkar was a supporter of Hindu way of life and looking from that perspective, he found that most of the criticisms leveled against the ancient Indian Varna system were baseless. It was his contention that the present caste system was a degenerated form of the Varna system? and the practice of untouchability was inhuman and wrong. It was wrong to blame India's caste system for the defeats the Indians suffered at the hands of foreign invaders.

It was his contention that originally, the Varna system was based on the functional specialisation. Chaturvarna was considered to be the form of God as the four Varnas constituted his limbs. All Varna were considered equal and the system was based on mutual help and mutual assistance. All the Varna contributed equally to the growth and prosperity of the society.

Varna and caste system were not responsible for the defeat of the Hindus. Historically speaking, Hindus were the only people in the world who fought bravely and incessantly against the Muslims and saved their religion in the most trying circumstances. The only areas which succumbed to Islam were parts of Punjab and Bengal and North West province. One of the major reasons for that collapse was the existence of a weak caste system in these areas.

Golwalkar was of the opinion that in the Varna system, due to functional specialization, the people could perfect their skills as a family tradition, avoided competition between the people which was a bane of present

capitalist system and ensured sources of livelihood for each and every member of the family. Hence, it was a scheme of employment insurance without the state intervention. Satisfaction of the individual self-discipline and elasticity were the characteristics of the Varna system. Though occasionally, Golwalkar attributed the lack of - unity among the Hindus to caste distinctions, he did not undertake any programme to reform caste system. His justification of the Varna system was a part of the ideological tradition that was developed in modern India in the 19th Century.

7.7 POLITICAL IDEAS OF M S GOLWALKAR

Golwalkar was of the view that the Indian perspective of nationalism and politics was essentially spiritual, hence, Indians stood for peace and nonviolence. But in the changed conditions, Hindus should acquire strength of arms including atom bombs to safeguard their national interests. Hindus faced defeats in the past because they did not acquire latest 'weapons and militarily they did not prepare themselves well. He agreed with Savarkar that there was a struggle for dominance among different countries of the world; therefore, India should try to become a strong nation. He argued that non-violence was the method of cowards and the strength was necessary to protect the good and to eradicate the evil in the world. Therefore, the Vedas say that 'Veer bhogya Vasundhara' -the 'earth is enjoyed by the brave.

7.7.1 Three World Views of Change

Golwalkar maintained that capitalism, communism and Hindu spiritualism were three world views of change. He was of the opinion that the Hindu perspective of change was superior to the other two perspectives.

While criticising capitalism, Golwalkar pointed out that capitalism was based on greed and exploitation. In the name of equality of opportunity and individual freedom, the more powerful and intelligent among the people had

exploited the weaker and poorer sections of society and established their own monopoly over people. The rights of individuals became useless and right to vote was exploited by the capitalist classes to win political power. The capitalist system caused untold miseries to the working classes and it reduced millions of people to poverty and penury.

The second system of change was that of Communist system which emerged as a reaction to the capitalist system. It offered materialist interpretation of history. But the materialist interpretation of Marx proved wrong because his prediction of inevitability of revolution didnot materialise. The Communists captured political power in the name of working classes and promised them that they would be given freedom, peace and prosperity. But instead of fulfilling these promises, they imposed a worst type of dictatorship on the people. They had not been in a position to solve the basic problems of bread and shelter both in Russia and China. Both the systems failed to solve the basic problems of the people because they were the fruits of the same seed and shared many things in common. Their attitude was materialistic because they tried to measure pleasure in satisfying basic physical needs and wants of the body.

According to Golwalkar, the Hindu spiritualism was the third perspective of change which was superior to both capitalism and communism. Hindus did not approve of the materialistic perspective of life and thought that the satisfaction of material needs and physical wants was not the goal of life. Hindus believed that human life was homogeneous which was permeated by the supreme spirit. A man lived not to maximise his pleasures and powers but to help and assist others. Hindus did not see duality of relations between man and man but saw harmony, mutual help and accord in their relations. Every human being was a part of society and their mutual interests were not contradictory. The ultimate goal of life, according to the Hindu perspective was the establishment of a society where there would not be any punishment, or any punisher, and people would protect each other by the principles of Dharma, which is the highest stage of society.

According to Golwalkar, the Western models of social organisation and change failed because they laid more stress on the system than on the individual. Infact, Individual was the basis, of the society and hence, development of the individual was the goal of Hindu social life.

7.7.2 Negative and Positive Hindutva

According to Golwalkar, there prevailed two types of Hindutva in India. The first type of Hindutva was called negative Hindutva and the second type of Hindutvawas called positive Hindutva. The negative Hindutva was developed as a reaction to the Muslim communalism or the Congress secularism. The negative Hindutvawas based on hatred. It constantly thought negatively about others and vice versa. Therefore, we should not develop our social system in contrast to the Muslims and the British, because there would not be any positive content in it. Those leaders who followed negative Hindutva remained firm supporters of Hindutva, but because of their fierce opposition to Muslims in their minds culturally they became Muslims. The work of organisation and development of Hindus had nothing to do with Muslims because it was not undertaken to oppose Muslims as such. He said that negative Hindutva was a means to capture political power.

Golwalkar was of the opinion that his Hindutva was positive Hindutva the sense that it was not developed as a reaction to any adversary. It was his contention that the essence of positive Hindutva was the organisation of Hindus as a social force in the society, which would continue to remain steadfast and resolute in the most trying circumstances. The seizure of political power was not the objective of positive Hindutva because it believed that all our problems could not be solved with the help of political power. There were many historical evidences in the past that showed that great empires established with the help of political power were destroyed by the savage invaders. For example, the Roman Empire was reduced to dust by the Huns. They were destroyed because they were raised on the weakfoundation of political power. But the Hindus never thought that the acquisition of political power was the ultimate goal of life. The secret of

resilience of Hindu community could be found in their attitude towards life. They built their social and political organisations not on the basis of force but on the basis of Dharma. The King was not as respected as the great sages who were the experts in Dharma. The national regeneration of Hindus was not brought about by great Kings but by great sages, like Sankaracharya, Chaitanya and Nanak. In modern times, the same role was played by Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Dayanand and Ramteertha. Golwalkar maintained that the great goals in life were not achieved with the help of political power; history had shown that great religions such as Islam and Christianity got corrupted because of political power. The lust for political power destroyed great religious movements; the Communist experiment of establishing the socialist society in Russia with the help of political power had failed. If the state decided to undertake the task of rejuvenation of cultural values and social organisations, it had not achieved success but in the process, it corrupted other cultures and societies as well.

Golwalkar argued that it was the goal of positive Hindutva to remain outside the seat of political power but control it from outside so that it would work in the interest of the society. The greatness of a nation lies not in political power but outside it. Therefore, he pleaded for developing a strong and well organised society which could work as bedrock. He had compared the society to the sun which gave light, energy and strength to the different organs of society. The goal of the RSS was to develop individual as well as society so that it could become strong, united and powerful. The vision of Golwalkar was a political vision and it was based on the programme of an organised and conscious effort to change the social, cultural and political life of the society. Though he rejected political power, the state power as sovereignty and national strength were crucial to his vision of a Hindu nation.

7.7.3 Hindu Nationalism of M S Golwalkar A Critical Study

Along with Savarkar, Golwalkar can be considered as a philosopher of Hindutva. Golwalkar sought to develop his Hindutva on the basis of the Indian spiritualism or non-dualistic monism of Sankaracharya. But there were some tensions in his position because in the "Vedanta", there was unity between the individual soul and the supreme soul. This unity pervaded all human beings including the Hindus and Muslims. The Indian spiritualism did not make distinction between Hindu and non-Hindu souls. Secondly, he tried to reject the concept of territorial nationalism but his own concept of cultural nationalism was based on territoriality of motherland! His concept of cultural nationalism also faced some problems because his exclusion of Muslims and Christian communities from nation on the grounds of extra-territorial loyalties was questionable. We can give several examples to prove that both Hindu and Muslim communities had produced traitors to nation. The entire community cannot be blamed for the betrayal of a few. Golwalkar's concept of positive Hindutva, which did not pursue political power was not convincing because he was a supporter of strong natives and strong nation state. The RSS was not disinterested in political power; perhaps he wanted the RSS to remain outside political power while organisations of the SanghaParivar could pursue it. The RSS would stand above political power but control it from without. Therefore, Golwalkar's critique of political power was interesting but difficult to fit into his overall orientation of the militant nationalism.

There were basic differences in the political ideas of Savarkar and Golwalkar. Savarkar's agenda was a modernist agenda and he wanted to establish modern Hindu society in India. He was opposed to both Varna and caste system. He was worshipper of political power and for him state power was crucial in the protection of the country. Golwalkar was opposed to the process of Westernisation and he was of the opinion that negative Hindutva would not be in a position to solve our basic problems. He did not want to abandon the basic principles of the Hindu civilisation; therefore, he supported Varna and caste system. The basic contradiction in Golwalkar's

political ideas was that he wanted to develop a very strong nation state in India, but at the same time, he wanted to stay away from political power! Both the ideas could not go together.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Examine briefly Golwalkar's ideas on Hindu nationalism.

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7.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, the Hindu nationalist ideas of V. D. Savarkar and M. S. Golwalkar have been studied. Both of them gave new political interpretation of the renaissance Hinduism. In the Hindu nationalism of V. D. Savarkar, it was argued that those people who considered India as their fatherland and holy land were members of the Hindu nation and those people whose holy land was outside of India were excluded from Hindu nation. In order to strengthen the Hindu nation, Savarkar advocated total social reforms and abolition of the caste system. He supported a modernist agenda of social change which relied on the use of science, rationalism and technology. He made distinction between the nation and the state.

M. S. Golwalkar's Hindu nationalism was based on the spiritualism and he was of the opinion that the Hindu community in India constituted nation because it considered India as its motherland. Common religion, race, language, culture and history were instrumental in creating a nationality and due to their consolidation into a national community on these lines, Hindus had become nation. In order to be a part of this national community, the minorities should Indians themselves, accept the traditions and cultures of

the country as their own, and get integrated into a national community. He also discussed the essential characteristics of the negative Hindutva and positive Hindutva. He held that the RSS stood for positive Hindutva which would lay stress upon internally strengthening the social organisation of the Hindus. The negative Hindutva was a means to secure political power. But he was of the opinion that political power was an inadequate means to achieve social progress.

7.9 KEY WORDS

V.D. Savarkar: Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, was an Indian independence activist, politician, lawyer, writer and the formulator of the Hindutva philosophy.

Chaturvarna: CHATURVARNA is Sanskrit word – Chatur means four and Varna means 'Groups', means four groups. There were four groups of people Brahmins (Teachers), Kshatriya (Fighters), Vaishya (Traders) and Sudra (Producers), mind it, it is Sudra and not Kshudra (meaning insignificant) or Shudra.

Indus River: The Indus River (Locally Called Sindhu) is one of the longest rivers in Asia. Originating in the Tibetan Plateau in the vicinity of Lake Manasarovar, the river runs a course through the Ladakh, in the disputed Kashmir region.

Hindutva: Hindutva is the predominant form of Hindu nationalism in India. The term was popularised by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1923. It is championed by the Hindu nationalist volunteer organization.

RSS: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, abbreviated as RSS, is an Indian right-wing, Hindu nationalist, paramilitary volunteer organization.

7.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

3. Describe briefly causes of emergence of politics of Hindutva in India.
4. What according to Savarkar, is the role of social reforms in strengthening the Hindu nation?
5. Discuss the main features of Hindu nationalism of V. D. Savarkar.
6. Examine briefly Golwalkar's ideas on Hindu nationalism.

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7.12 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 7.2

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) See the sub-section 7.3
- 2) See the sub-section 7.4

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) See the sub-section 7.5